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**Job Number: = 252500112**

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# [***An Important Victory***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B5R-S8F1-JBG3-6047-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 24, 2024 Wednesday 09:51 EST

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1864 words

**Highlight:** New Hampshire was Nikki Haley’s best opportunity to change the trajectory of the race. She didn’t.

**Body**

New Hampshire was Nikki Haley’s best opportunity to change the trajectory of the race. She didn’t.

Is the Republican presidential primary over already?

Not quite, but it’s a reasonable question after New Hampshire’s first-in-the-nation primary delivered a clear victory for Donald Trump last night. And if your definition of “over” is whether Trump is now on track to win without a serious contest, the answer is probably “yes.”

With nearly all the counting done, he won 55 percent of the vote. His only remaining rival, Nikki Haley, won 43 percent.

Trump’s 12-point margin of victory is not extraordinarily impressive in its own right. In fact, he won by a smaller margin than many pre-election polls suggested.

What makes Trump’s victory so important — and what raises the question about whether the race is over — is that New Hampshire was Haley’s best opportunity to change the trajectory of the race. It was arguably her best opportunity to win a state, period.

If she couldn’t win here, she might not be able to win anywhere — not even in her home state of South Carolina, where the race turns next. And even if she did win her home state, she would still face a daunting path forward.

Trump leads the national polls by [*more than 50 percentage points*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/polls/president-primary-r/2024/national/) with just six weeks to go until Super Tuesday, when nearly half of all the delegates to the Republican convention will be awarded. Without an enormous shift, he would secure the nomination in mid-March.

Haley’s best chance

Why was New Hampshire such an excellent opportunity for her?

* The polls: New Hampshire was the only state where the polls showed her within striking distance. She trailed by a mere 15 points in the state, compared with her 50-plus-point deficit nationwide. She isn’t within 30 points in any other state, including her home state of South Carolina.

1. History: The state has a long track record of backing moderate and mainstream Republican candidates, including John McCain and Mitt Romney. Trump won the state with 35 percent of the vote in 2016, but mostly because the moderate vote was divided.
2. The electorate: Haley fares best among college graduates and moderates, and the New Hampshire electorate is full of those voters. The state ranks eighth in the college-educated share of the population, and unlike in many states, unaffiliated voters are allowed to participate in the Republican primary.
3. The media: New Hampshire’s first-in-the-nation primary receives far more media attention than later contests. It offered the possibility — if only a faint one — that a win could change her fortunes elsewhere.

Haley made good on all of these advantages yesterday. She won 74 percent of moderates, according to the exit polls, along with 58 percent of college graduates and 66 percent of voters who weren’t registered Republicans.

Conservative votes

But it wasn’t close to enough. Haley lost Republicans by a staggering 74 percent to 25 percent — an important group in a Republican primary. Conservatives gave Trump a full 70 percent of the vote. Voters without a college degree backed Trump by 2 to 1.

In other Republican primaries, numbers like these will yield a rout. Conservatives, Republicans and voters without a degree will represent a far greater share of the electorate. There is no credible path for her to win the nomination of a conservative, ***working-class*** party while falling this short among conservative, ***working-class*** voters.

Worse, Haley’s strength among independents and Democrats will make it even harder for her to expand her appeal, as Trump and other Republicans will depict her campaign as a liberal Trojan horse.

If Haley had won New Hampshire, the possibility of riding the momentum into later states and broadening her appeal would have remained. Not anymore. Instead, it’s Trump who has the momentum. He has gained nationwide in polls taken since the Iowa caucuses. Even skeptical Republican officials who were seen as Haley’s likeliest allies, like Tim Scott or Marco Rubio, have gotten behind the former president in recent days.

Whether the race is “over” or not, the New Hampshire result puts Trump on a comfortable path to the nomination. If he’s convicted of a crime, perhaps he’ll lose the nomination at the convention. But by the usual rules of primary elections, there’s just not much time for the race to change. If it doesn’t, Trump could easily sweep all 50 states.

Related: “It is now clear that Donald Trump will be the Republican nominee,” President Biden [*said in a statement*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/01/23/us/new-hampshire-primary/fb7ca319-1d53-56d7-9c37-d30757d49ca2?smid=url-share). “The stakes could not be higher.”

More on the Republican primary

* Trump [*called Haley an “impostor”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/23/us/politics/trump-win-new-hampshire-haley.html) who “had a very bad night” and urged her to drop out. “I don’t get too angry, I get even,” he added.

1. Haley [*vowed to continue*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/23/us/politics/nikki-haley-new-hampshire-loss-speech.html?smid=url-share) through the South Carolina primary next month. She said the race was “far from over” and challenged Trump to a debate. [*Read about her options*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/24/us/politics/nikki-haley-trump-south-carolina-republican-primary.html).
2. The old guard of Republicans — families like the Bushes and Romneys as well as Wall Street donors — have become largely irrelevant. [*See more takeaways*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/23/us/politics/new-hampshire-takeaways-trump-haley.html?smid=url-share) from the race.
3. [*Watch a video*](https://www.nytimes.com/video/us/elections/100000009279944/what-happened-at-the-new-hampshire-primary.html)of Shane Goldmacher, a Times political reporter, explaining what happened in the primary.
4. Most New Hampshire Republican primary voters said Trump would be fit for the presidency even if he were convicted, [*The Washington Post reports*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/01/23/new-hampshire-voters-trump-trials-2020-election/).
5. A [*woman with an RV full of Trump merchandise*](https://www.concordmonitor.com/Trump-wins-New-Hampshire-primary-2024-53802360) and [*a man with Trump tattooed on his calf*](https://www.concordmonitor.com/Trump-GOP-thoughts-53786659): The Concord Monitor profiled Trump supporters in New Hampshire.

More on the Democratic primary

* Biden won New Hampshire’s Democratic primary, [*despite not being on the ballot*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/23/us/politics/biden-wins-democratic-primary-new-hampshire.html), after his allies organized a write-in campaign.

1. Dean Phillips, a Democratic congressman who campaigned heavily there, [*placed second*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/01/23/us/elections/results-new-hampshire-democratic-primary.html).
2. Biden [*criticized Trump at a rally for abortion rights*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/23/us/politics/biden-abortion-gaza-protesters.html), calling him “the person most responsible for taking away this freedom in America.”

Commentary

* Trump isn’t a sitting president, but he “is functionally an incumbent and voters are reacting to him as such,” [*Josh Kraushaar*](https://twitter.com/JoshKraushaar/status/1749968368113791443) of Jewish Insider posted on social media.
* “The battle is now between the former president and the current one,” The Washington Post’s [*Karen Tumulty*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2024/01/23/biden-trump-2024-rematch-after-new-hampshire/) writes. “The slog between now and November will be long and grim and bitter.”

1. Still, the New Hampshire results were close enough to suggest “that we were only a few what-ifs away from a more competitive campaign,” [*Ross Douthat*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/24/opinion/trump-haley-new-hampshire.html) argues in a Times Opinion column.
2. “Trump’s attempts to dismiss Haley might serve to make her more committed to staying in,” [*Monica Potts*](https://abcnews.go.com/538/live-updates/new-hampshire-primary-2024-live-blog/final-thought-trump-acting-like-the-race-is-over-might-fuel-haleys-hate-fire-106623247?id=106579003) of FiveThirtyEight writes.
3. [*Late night hosts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/24/arts/television/late-night-new-hampshire-primary.html)processed the primary.

THE LATEST NEWS

Israel-Hamas War

* Israeli forces said a blast that killed around 20 troops came after militants fired on them while they were demolishing a neighborhood to [*create a buffer between Gaza and Israel*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/01/24/world/israel-hamas-gaza-news?smid=url-share#israel-says-a-buffer-zone-would-protect-its-people-critics-say-the-policy-could-be-a-war-crime). The U.S. opposes a buffer zone.

1. Palestinian detainees recounted being [*stripped and beaten by Israeli forces*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/23/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-palestinian-detainees.html). A U.N. office has said Israel’s treatment of Gazan detainees might amount to torture.
2. U.S. forces again struck the Houthis in Yemen as well as [*other Iran-linked militias in Iraq*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/23/world/middleeast/us-strikes-sites-iraq.html).
3. The war has given the Houthis [*an international audience*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/24/world/middleeast/yemen-houthis-propaganda.html) for their anti-American and anti-Israeli message. Read how the Houthis became [*an effective militia*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/24/us/politics/houthis-red-sea-airstrikes.html).

International

* Turkey’s Parliament [*approved Sweden’s bid to join NATO*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/23/world/europe/turkey-sweden-nato.html), leaving Hungary as the lone holdout.

1. In Colombia, gangs are [*targeting foreign men on dating apps*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/23/world/americas/colombia-dating-apps-sedatives-deaths.html). Dates drug the men so accomplices can rob them.
2. Archaeologists found remnants of [*sprawling ancient cities*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/23/science/ecuador-amazon-cities-discovery.html) in the Amazon.

Politics

* Senator Bob Menendez, a New Jersey Democrat facing corruption charges, said the F.B.I. [*“ransacked” his home*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/23/nyregion/robert-menendez-bribery-home-searches.html) in a 2022 search that found gold bars and half a million dollars in cash.

1. Lawmakers in at least 10 states — [*including Vermont*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/23/us/wealth-tax-vermont-legislature.html) — have introduced or are planning bills to tax wealth. (Separately, more than [*250 billionaires and millionaires*](https://qz.com/more-taxes-please-billionaires-davos-letter-1851173265#:~:text=More%20than%20250%20billionaires%20and%20millionaires%20have%20signed%20on%20to,public%20services%20around%20the%20world.) recently asked world leaders to tax them more, Quartz reports.)

Other Big Stories

* In San Diego, [*heavy rainfall*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/22/us/san-diego-storm-flood.html) shut highways, swept away cars and damaged homes.

1. See how [*manufacturing or installation flaws*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/01/23/business/boeing-alaska-airlines-door-plug.html) could have allowed a panel to fall off a Boeing jet, leaving a hole mid-flight.
2. A New York man was [*convicted of murder*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/23/nyregion/wrong-driveway-shooting-ny.html) for shooting a woman in a car that mistakenly pulled into his driveway.

Opinions

Benny Gantz, a centrist former general who has argued that Netanyahu has damaged Israel, could become his replacement. Anshel Pfeffer [*has a profile*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/24/opinion/gantz-netanyahu-israel-election.html).

The growing practice of “swatting” public officials — using false emergency calls to draw armed police to their homes — [*threatens American democracy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/23/opinion/swatting-political-violence.html), Barbara McQuade writes.

The allegations against District Attorney Fani Willis jeopardize her case against Trump. [*She should step aside*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/24/opinion/fani-willis-trump-georgia.html), Clark Cunningham argues.

Here are columns by Bret Stephens on [*Gaza’s tunnels*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/23/opinion/tunnels-gaza-hamas.html) and Thomas Edsall on [*Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/24/opinion/trump-republican-nomination-coalition.html).

MORNING READS

San Giovanni Lipioni: A small Italian town has the oldest average population in an aging nation. [*It’s trying to lure new residents*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/22/world/europe/italy-san-giovanni-lipioni-aging.html).

An eternal question, answered: How much potato [*must a chip contain*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/24/world/europe/walkers-poppadoms-crisps-uk-ruling.html)

Rise and dine: Not a morning person? These 24 recipes could [*help you get out of bed*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/best-breakfast-recipes.html).

Look up: Walking with your face buried in a smartphone affects your mood — [*and your stride*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/23/well/smartphone-walking-posture-mood.html).

Lives Lived: Charles Osgood hosted “CBS Sunday Morning” for 22 years. But his passion was radio, where he told unconventional stories in unconventional ways, often in rhyme. Osgood [*died at 91*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/23/business/media/charles-osgood-dead.html).

SPORTS

N.B.A.: The Milwaukee Bucks shocked the league by [*firing their head coach*](https://theathletic.com/5222540/2024/01/23/adrian-griffin-fired-bucks/), Adrian Griffin, just 43 games into his tenure, which he finished 30-13. The former Celtics and Sixers coach Doc Rivers is a leading candidate to replace him.

Baseball: Adrián Beltré, Todd Helton and Joe Mauer [*were elected*](https://theathletic.com/5222917/2024/01/23/baseball-hall-of-fame-election-beltre-mauer-helton/) to the Hall of Fame, the organization announced.

A unique donation: The former Ohio State quarterback C.J. Stroud, who now plays for the Houston Texans, [*gave a large sum*](https://theathletic.com/5221939/2024/01/23/cj-stroud-ohio-state-nil-donation/) directly to the school’s name, image and likeness collective, the first publicly known contribution of the sort.

ARTS AND IDEAS

The race begins: Christopher Nolan’s “Oppenheimer” leads the Oscars pack this year, with 13 nominations. “Barbie” earned eight, including for best picture — though its director, Greta Gerwig, and star, Margot Robbie, were [*notably overlooked*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/23/movies/oscars-snubs-surprises-2024.html). The best picture nominees are [*an eclectic mix*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/01/23/movies/oscar-nominations-academy-awards/best-picture-nominees-are-an-eclectic-bunch?smid=url-share), with foreign films — “Zone of Interest” and “Anatomy of a Fall” — alongside smaller independent movies like “Poor Things” and “The Holdovers,” and epics like Martin Scorsese’s “Killers of the Flower Moon.”

[*See the full list of Oscar nominees*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/23/movies/2024-oscar-nominees-list.html).

More on culture

* The Los Angeles Times, losing money, is [*laying off more than 20 percent of its journalists*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/23/business/media/los-angeles-times-layoffs-newsroom.html).

1. A fire in Abkhazia, a Russian-backed breakaway region of Georgia, [*destroyed thousands of paintings*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/23/arts/design/abkhazia-art-fire.html).

THE MORNING RECOMMENDS …

Simmer cherry tomatoes and raw pasta to [*make this one-pot spaghetti*](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1018322-one-pot-spaghetti-with-cherry-tomatoes-and-kale).

Try a [*power-building workout*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/22/well/move/power-strength-aging-workout.html).

Improve [*your meal prep*](https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/reviews/meal-prep-cheap-tools/).

GAMES

Here is [*today’s Spelling Bee*](https://www.nytimes.com/puzzles/spelling-bee). Yesterday’s pangram was toothpick.

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

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PHOTO: Donald Trump (PHOTOGRAPH BY Doug Mills/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** January 24, 2024

**End of Document**



[***‘The First Year’ Review: Allende’s Rule in Chile; Critic’s Pick***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6944-G3N1-DXY4-X01C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 7, 2023 Thursday 09:39 EST

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**Section:** MOVIES

**Length:** 387 words

**Byline:** Devika Girish

**Highlight:** The French-language version of a 1971 documentary by Patricio Guzmán is an extraordinary document of a nation in transition.

**Body**

The French-language version of a 1971 documentary by Patricio Guzmán is an extraordinary document of a nation in transition.

A few years before Patricio Guzmán directed his tripartite masterpiece, “[*The Battle of Chile*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/06/arts/the-battle-of-chile-bam.html),” about the events leading to the C.I.A.-backed military coup that toppled the socialist government of President Salvador Allende in 1973, the Chilean filmmaker made “The First Year”: an account of the inaugural 12 months of Allende’s rule. Guzmán traveled through Chile, interviewing the ***working class*** about Allende’s socialist policies and accumulating a crackling portrait of hope and incipient change.

The French filmmaker Chris Marker saw the documentary in 1971 and decided to help show it in France, enlisting numerous actors, including Delphine Seyrig, to dub the Spanish dialogue in French. That version, arriving this week in a sparkling restoration at Anthology Film Archives, is a remarkable document not only of a fleeting moment of historical promise, but also of an earnest gesture of international solidarity.

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](http://youtube.com/embed/6Xv0M-AR1_M)]

Guzmán’s documentary is a people’s microhistory of a nation in transition. He talks to Indigenous peasants about Allende’s land-redistribution programs, miners and factory workers about the nationalization of resources that were being exploited by American business, fishermen about policies designed to liberate them from predatory middlemen. Guzmán’s camera is dynamic, probing faces and gazes with curiosity, and his interviewees are forthright. The film throbs with jubilant energy, culminating with Fidel Castro’s visit to Chile in 1971.

To this capsule of a time and place, Marker adds framing context for a French audience, summarizing the colonial history of Chile in a pithy prologue. This sense of a dual perspective permeates the film: The faint audio of the Spanish interviews mingles with the French dub, like a whispered dialogue, simultaneously local and global in its address.

The First Year

Not rated. In French, with subtitles. Running time: 1 hour 30 minutes. In theaters.

Not rated. In Spanish, with subtitles. Running time: 1 hour 30 minutes. In theaters.

PHOTO: President Salvador Allende of Chile, in the documentary “The First Year,” directed by Patricio Guzmán. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ICARUS FILMS) This article appeared in print on page C6.

**Load-Date:** September 14, 2023

**End of Document**



[***The Line Between Good and Evil Cuts Through Evangelical America***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BVP-BJT1-JBG3-6032-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 22, 2024 Monday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2024 The New York Times Company

**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 22; DAVID FRENCH

**Length:** 1674 words

**Byline:** By David French

**Body**

I'm afraid that an exit poll question has confused America.

Every four years, voters are asked, ''Are you a white evangelical or born-again Christian?'' And every time, voters from a broad range of Protestant Christian traditions say yes, compressing a diverse religious community into a single, unified mass.

It's not that the question is misleading. People who answer yes do represent a coherent political movement. Not only do they vote overwhelmingly for Republicans; they're also quite distinct from other American political groups in their views on a host of issues, including on disputes regarding race, immigration and the Covid vaccines.

But in other ways, this exit poll identity misleads us about the nature and character of American evangelicalism as a whole. It's far more diverse and divided than the exit poll results imply. There are the rather crucial facts that not all evangelicals are white and evangelicals of color vote substantially differently from their white brothers and sisters. Evangelicals of color are far more likely to vote Democratic, and their positions on many issues are more closely aligned with the American political mainstream. But the differences go well beyond race.

In reality, American evangelicalism is best understood as a combination of three religious traditions: fundamentalism, evangelicalism and Pentecostalism. These different traditions have different beliefs, different cultures and different effects on our nation.

The distinction between fundamentalism and evangelicalism can be the hardest to parse, especially since we now use the term ''evangelical'' to describe both branches of the movement. The conflict between evangelicalism and fundamentalism emerged most sharply in the years following World War II, when so-called neo-evangelicals arose as a biblically conservative response to traditional fundamentalism's separatism and fighting spirit. I say ''biblically conservative'' because neo-evangelicals had the same high view of Scripture as the inerrant word of God that fundamentalists did, but their temperament and approach were quite different.

The difference between fundamentalism and neo-evangelicalism can be summed up in two men, Bob Jones and Billy Graham. In a 2011 piece about the relationship between Jones and Graham, the Gospel Coalition's Justin Taylor called them the ''exemplars of fundamentalism and neo-evangelicalism.'' Jones was the founder of the university that bears his name in Greenville, S.C., one of the most influential fundamentalist colleges in America.

Bob Jones University barred Black students from attending until 1971, then banned interracial dating until 2000. The racism that plagued Southern American fundamentalism is a key reason for the segregation of American religious life. It's also one reason the historically Black Protestant church is distinct from the evangelical tradition, despite its similar views of the authority of Scripture.

Graham attended Bob Jones University for a semester, but soon left and took a different path. He went on to become known as ''America's pastor,'' the man who ministered to presidents of both parties and led gigantic evangelistic crusades in stadiums across the nation and the world. While Jones segregated his school, Graham removed the red segregation rope dividing white and Black attendees at his crusades in the South -- before Brown v. Board of Education -- and shared a stage with Martin Luther King Jr. at Madison Square Garden in 1957.

But since that keen Jones/Graham divide, the lines between evangelicalism and fundamentalism have blurred. Now the two camps often go to the same churches, attend the same colleges, listen to the same Christian musicians and read the same books. To compound the confusion, they're both quite likely to call themselves evangelical. While the theological differences between fundamentalists and evangelicals can be difficult to describe, the temperamental differences are not.

''Fundamentalism,'' Richard Land, the former head of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, once told me, ''is far more a psychology than a theology.'' That psychology is defined by an extreme sense of certainty, along with extreme ferocity.

Roughly speaking, fundamentalists are intolerant of dissent. Evangelicals are much more accepting of theological differences. Fundamentalists place a greater emphasis on confrontation and domination. Evangelicals are more interested in pluralism and persuasion. Fundamentalists focus more on God's law. Evangelicals tend to emphasize God's grace. While many evangelicals are certainly enthusiastic Trump supporters, they are more likely to be reluctant (and even embarrassed) Trump voters, or Never Trumpers, or Democrats. Fundamentalists tend to march much more in lock step with the MAGA movement. Donald Trump's combative psychology in many ways merges with their own.

A Christian politics dominated by fundamentalism is going to look very different from a Christian politics dominated by evangelicalism. Think of the difference between Trump and George W. Bush. Bush is conservative. He's anti-abortion. He's committed to religious liberty. These are all values that millions of MAGA Republicans would claim to uphold, but there's a yawning character gap between the two presidents, and their cultural influence is profoundly different.

While the difference between evangelicalism and fundamentalism can be difficult to discern, Pentecostalism is something else entirely. American evangelicals can trace their roots to the Reformation; the Pentecostal movement began a little over 100 years ago, during the Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles in 1906. The movement was started by a Black pastor named William Seymour, and it is far more supernatural in its focus than, say, the Southern Baptist or Presbyterian church down the street.

At its heart, Pentecostalism believes that all of the gifts and miracles you read about in the Bible can and do happen today. That means prophecy, speaking in tongues and gifts of healing. Pentecostalism is more ***working class*** than the rest of the evangelical world, and Pentecostal churches are often more diverse -- far more diverse -- than older American denominations. Hispanics in particular have embraced the Pentecostal faith, both in the United States and in Latin America, and Pentecostalism has exploded in the global south.

When I lived in Manhattan, my wife and I attended Times Square Church, a Pentecostal congregation in the heart of the city, and every Sunday felt like a scene from the book of Revelation, with people ''from every nation, tribe, people and language'' gathered together to worship with great joy.

Pentecostalism is arguably the most promising and the most perilous religious movement in America. At its best, the sheer exuberance and radical love of a good Pentecostal church is transformative. At its worst, the quest for miraculous experience can lead to a kind of frenzied superstition, where carnival barker pastors and faux apostles con their congregations with false prophecies and fake miracles, milking them for donations and then wielding their abundant wealth as proof of God's favor.

The Pentecostal church, for example, is the primary home of one of the most toxic and dangerous Christian nationalist ideas in America -- the Seven Mountain Mandate, which holds that God has ordained Christians to dominate the seven ''mountains'' of cultural influence: the family, the church, education, media, arts, the economy and government. This is an extreme form of Christian supremacy, one that would relegate all other Americans to second-class status.

Pentecostalism is also the primary source for the surge in prophecies about Trump that I've described before. It's mostly Pentecostal pastors and leaders who have told their flocks that God has ordained Trump to rule -- and to rule again. Combine the Seven Mountain Mandate with Trump prophecies, and you can see the potential for a kind of fervent radicalism that is immune to rational argument. After all, how can you argue a person out of the idea that God told him to vote for Trump? Or that God told him that Christians are destined to reign over the United States?

When I look at the divisions in American evangelicalism, I'm reminded of the Homer Simpson toast: ''To alcohol! The cause of, and solution to, all of life's problems.'' The American church has been the cause of much heartache and division. It is also the source of tremendous healing and love. We saw both the love and the division most vividly in the civil rights movement, when Black Christians and their allies faced the dogs and hoses all too often unleashed by members of the white Southern church. We saw this on Jan. 6, when violent Christians attacked the Capitol, only to see their plans foiled by an evangelical vice president who broke with Trump at long last to uphold his constitutional oath and spare the nation a far worse catastrophe.

I've lived and worshiped in every major branch of American evangelicalism. I was raised in a more fundamentalist church, left it for evangelicalism and spent a decade of my life worshiping in Pentecostal churches. Now I attend a multiethnic church that is rooted in both evangelicalism and the Black church tradition. I've seen great good, and I've seen terrible evil.

That long experience has taught me that the future of our nation isn't just decided in the halls of secular power; it's also decided in the pulpits and sanctuaries of American churches. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn wrote that the line between good and evil ''cuts through the heart of every human being.'' That same line also cuts through the heart of the church.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/21/opinion/christianity-fundamentalist-evangelical-pentacostal.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/21/opinion/christianity-fundamentalist-evangelical-pentacostal.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A22.

**Load-Date:** April 22, 2024

**End of Document**



[***More People Than Ever Before Are Burdened by Rent***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B6K-WPR1-DXY4-X03R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 28, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section RE; Column 0; Real Estate Desk; Pg. 6

**Length:** 824 words

**Byline:** By Ronda Kaysen

**Body**

A new Harvard report says 22.4 million households in the United States now spend more than 30 percent of their income in rent, with 12.1 million spending more than 50 percent.

Half of all renters in the United States spend more than 30 percent of their income on rent and utilities, more than at any other time in history, according to a new report by Harvard's Joint Center for Housing Studies.

The center's analysis of 2022 census data found that 22.4 million renter households are burdened, with a record 12.1 million spending more than half their income on housing. The surge in housing costs affects a wide swath of renters, from low-income households to higher earners. Middle-income renters earning from $30,000 to $74,999 saw the sharpest rise in cost burden since 2019. And a record number of Americans -- 653,100 -- were homeless on a given night in January 2023, the report found.

''It was astounding to see,'' said Whitney Airgood-Obrycki, a senior research associate at Harvard's Joint Center for Housing Studies. ''Really broadly, across the income spectrum, it was getting worse for everyone.''

Renters are still paying the financial consequences of the pandemic, when rents in cities across the country rose by double-digit percent increases as Americans moved during a period of remote work. Even as the rental market cools -- asking rents fell by almost 1 percent in 2023 -- they are still up 19 percent from the start of the pandemic, according to Apartment List. ''It's definitely worse than it's ever been,'' said Cea Weaver, a campaign coordinator at Housing Justice for All in New York. ''Middle class people, lower middle class people, ***working class*** people, they cannot afford their rent.''

There is reason for optimism, at least in the short-term. Vacancies are up. And 1 million new multifamily units are under construction, almost entirely rentals, the most the country has seen in decades, according to the National Association of Home Builders. Dr. Airgood-Obrycki described the change as ''a glimmer of hope.''

Interviews and correspondence with scores of renters around the country revealed deep financial insecurity, as their rents grew far faster than their incomes. Struggling with rising food costs, renters skipped meals, drove less to save gas money or eliminated social activities. While some renters put basic expenses on their credit cards, others borrowed money from friends and family or tapped their retirement funds. While some renters were unemployed or relied on public assistance, most interviewed for this article held full-time jobs and held college or postgraduate degrees.

For many, making ends meet feels like an impossible puzzle to solve.

''Will this ever end? Will it ever get better? Can I get out of this?'' said Alex Larraza, 29, who said he pays 49 percent of his $55,000 annual salary toward rent and utilities for a duplex in North Kingstown, R.I. ''It's gotten so bad. Should I eat or should I worry about the heat getting turned off?''

He said he is behind in his utility bills and has abandoned any hobbies that cost money. Sometimes, he skips meals. ''I'll make my daughter lunch, feed her dinner and then I'll just not eat,'' said Mr. Larraza, who works for a defense contractor. With a college degree and 11 years of military service, he finds his current situation baffling. ''I never thought that someone who took all these steps would be struggling so much,'' he said. Next month his rent, now $1,950 a month, is going up another $150.

In Manhattan, Margaret Tomasiewicz, 27, a project associate at a health care technology company, said she spends 44 percent of her $64,350 annual salary on rent and utilities in a two-bedroom apartment she shares with a roommate on the Upper East Side. Once, she didn't have money for a subway ride home from work, and slipped onto the bus without paying instead. The stress takes an emotional toll. ''There are days when I can't get out of bed,'' she said.

Ms. Tomasiewicz moved to New York from Wisconsin in 2022, and said she underestimated how expensive it would be to live in the city, wrongly assuming that she would have enough disposable income left over after paying her $2,350 monthly rent. ''My roommate will go and hang out with our friends or see a show, do New York things,'' she said. ''And I can't do my laundry because I don't have any cash.''

Even renters who spend less of their income on rent, like Wendy Ross, 55, a nurse in Flagstaff, Ariz., feel the squeeze. ''In my mid-50s I'm teaching myself how to camp so I that can take vacations,'' she said. A single mother with two sons, Ms. Ross earns about $86,000 a year and pays $2,250 a month for a three-bedroom townhouse. She is counting down the months until her younger son, a sophomore in high school, graduates, and she can leave Flagstaff. She is considering buying an R.V. and working as a traveling nurse. But for now, she said, ''We do without.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/25/realestate/rent-prices-housing.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/25/realestate/rent-prices-housing.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MAANSI SRIVASTAVA/THE NEW YORK TIMES

JOHN BURCHAM FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page RE6.

**Load-Date:** January 28, 2024

**End of Document**



[***The Battle for Blue-Collar White Voters Raging in Biden’s Birthplace***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66RM-CRX1-DXY4-X2H6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 30, 2022 Sunday 08:09 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1896 words

**Byline:** Shane Goldmacher

**Highlight:** Among white ***working-class*** voters in places like northeast Pennsylvania, the Democratic Party has both the furthest to fall and the most to gain.

**Body**

Follow our live coverage of the [*2022 midterm elections*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/11/10/us/election-updates-midterms-results) for the latest news and updates.

SCRANTON, Pa. — The fate of the Democratic Party in northeastern Pennsylvania lies in the hands of people like Steve Papp.

A 30-year veteran carpenter, he describes his job almost poetically as “hanging out with your brothers, building America.” But there has been a harder labor in his life of late: selling his fellow carpenters, iron workers and masons on a Democratic Party that he sees as the protector of a “union way of life” but that they see as being increasingly out of step with their cultural values.

“The guys aren’t hearing the message,” Mr. Papp said.

Perhaps no place in the nation offers a more symbolic and consequential test of whether Democrats can win back some of the white ***working-class*** vote than Pennsylvania — and particularly the state’s northeastern corner, the birthplace of President Biden, where years of economic decline have scarred the coal-rich landscape. This region is where a pivotal Senate race could be decided, where two seats in the House of Representatives are up for grabs and where a crucial governorship hangs in the balance.

No single constituency, of course, will determine the outcome of these races in a state as big as Pennsylvania, let alone the 2022 midterms. Turning out Black voters in cities is critical for Democrats. Gaining ground in the swingy suburbs is a must for Republicans. But it is among white ***working-class*** voters in rural areas and smaller towns — places like Sugarloaf Township, where Mr. Papp lives — where the Democratic Party has, in some ways, both the furthest to fall and the most to gain.

Sitting in the Scranton carpenters’ union hall, where Democratic lawn signs leaned up against the walls, Mr. Papp said that he often brought stickers to the job site for those he converted, but that he had recently been giving away fewer than he would like. He ticked through what he feels he has been up against. Talk radio. Social media. The Fox News megaphone. “Misinformation and lies,” as he put it, about the Black Lives Matter movement and the L.G.B.T.Q. community.

“It’s about cultural issues and social issues,” Mr. Papp lamented. “People don’t even care about their economics. They want to hate.”

Republicans counter that Democratic elites are the ones alienating the ***working class*** by advocating a “woke” cultural agenda and by treating them as deplorables. And they also argue that the current economy overseen by Democrats has been the issue pushing voters toward the right.

The stakes are far higher than one corner of one state in one election.

White blue-collar voters are a large and crucial constituency in a number of top Senate battlegrounds this year, including in Wisconsin, Nevada, New Hampshire and Ohio. And the need for Democrats to lose by less is already an urgent concern for party strategists heading into 2024, when Donald J. Trump, who accelerated the movement of blue-collar voters of all races away from Democrats, has signaled he plans to run again.

[*One study*](https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2020/06/02/democratic-edge-in-party-identification-narrows-slightly/#democrats-hold-sizable-advantage-among-college-educated-voters) from Pew Research Center showed that as recently as 2007, white voters without a college degree were about evenly divided in their party affiliations. But by 2020, Republicans had opened up an advantage of 59 percent over Democrats’ 35 percent.

“You can’t get destroyed,” Christopher Borick, the director of the Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion in Pennsylvania, said of the task in front of Democrats. “Cutting into Republican gains in the Trump era among white ***working-class*** voters is essential.”

There are, quite simply, a lot of white voters without college degrees in America. Another Pew study found that such voters accounted for [*42 percent of all voters*](https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2021/06/30/behind-bidens-2020-victory/) in the 2020 presidential election. And, by some estimates, they could make up [*nearly half*](https://twitter.com/EchelonInsights/status/1582078398007943169) the vote in Pennsylvania this year.

Luzerne County, just south of Scranton, had been reliably Democratic for years and years. Then, suddenly, in 2016, Mr. Trump won Luzerne in a nearly 20-point landslide. He won it again in 2020, but by 5 points fewer. There are Obama-Trump voters here, and Obama-Trump-Biden voters, too. The region may have tacked to the right politically in recent years, but it is still a place where the phrase “Irish Catholic Democrat” was long treated as almost a single word, and where it might be more possible to nudge at least some ancestral Democrats back toward the party.

Scranton, a former coal town nestled in the scenic Wyoming Valley, has become synonymous with this voting bloc. Representative Kevin McCarthy of California, who hopes to become the next House speaker, visited the region this fall to unveil the Republican agenda, and both Mr. Biden and Mr. Trump traveled to the area for events kicking off the fall campaign.

This year, the Pennsylvania Senate race looms especially large.

The Democratic nominee, Lt. Gov. John Fetterman, was [*seemingly engineered*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/08/us/politics/fetterman-pennsylvania-senate-race.html) for the task of appealing to the ***working class***. A bald and burly man with a political persona that revolves around Carhartt sweatshirts and tattoos, Mr. Fetterman has vowed from the start to compete in even the reddest corners of Pennsylvania. He is running against Mehmet Oz, a wealthy, out-of-state television celebrity who, according to polls, has been viewed skeptically from the start by the Republican base, and who talked of buying crudités at the grocery in a widely ridiculed video.

Yet local Democrats said Mr. Fetterman was still facing an uphill climb among white ***working-class*** voters in the region, [*even before his halting debate performance as he recovers from a stroke*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/25/us/politics/fetterman-oz-debate-senate-pa.html). For those Democrats concerned about competing for the state’s biggest voting bloc, the success or failure of Mr. Fetterman’s candidacy has become an almost existential question: If not him and here, then who and where?

Mr. Fetterman’s strategy to cut into Republican margins in red counties is displayed on his lawn signs: “Every county. Every vote.” But Republicans have worked relentlessly to undercut the blue-collar image Mr. Fetterman honed as the former mayor of Braddock, a downtrodden former steel town just outside Pittsburgh.

“It’s a costume,” Tucker Carlson, the Fox News host, said in [*one segment*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pB7VA-uP7BU&amp;t=527s) last month. Republicans have highlighted Mr. Fetterman’s Harvard degree, his middle-class suburban upbringing, the financial support he received from his parents into his 40s and, most recently, a barrage of advertising that has cast him as a soft-on-crime liberal.

Both sides are targeting voters like Chris Tigue, a 39-year-old who runs a one-man painting company and lives in Dunmore, a town bordering Scranton known for its enormous landfill. Mr. Tigue, a registered Republican, has gone on a political journey that may seem uncommon in most of the country but is more familiar here.

He voted twice for Barack Obama. Then he voted twice for Donald Trump.

As Mr. Tigue sat outside Roosevelt Beer Garden, a watering hole where the portrait of Franklin D. Roosevelt on the wall was a reminder of the area’s Democratic heritage, he explained that Mr. Fetterman had won him back, not just because of his ***working class*** “curb appeal,” but because of his stances on abortion and medical cannabis.

Mr. Tigue said he was voting for Mr. Fetterman knowing that Mr. Fetterman would probably support the president’s economic agenda in the Senate, a prospect he called “a little scary.” But he said he was looking past that fact. “I’m focusing on the person,” he said.

Justin Taylor, the mayor of nearby Carbondale, is another Obama-Trump voter. Elected as a 25-year-old Democrat almost two decades ago, he endorsed Mr. Trump in 2020 and grew increasingly more Republican, just like the city he serves.

Today, he is adamantly opposed to Mr. Fetterman, calling him a liberal caricature and the kind of candidate the left thinks will appeal to the people of Carbondale, a shrinking town of under 10,000 people that was founded on anthracite coal. “I think, quite honestly, he is an empty Carhartt sweatshirt and the people who are ***working class*** in Pennsylvania see that,” Mr. Taylor said.

Mr. Taylor is still technically a registered Democrat, he said, but he feels judged by his own party. “The Democratic Party forces it down your throat,” he said, “and they make you a bigot, they make you a racist, they make you a homophobe if you don’t understand a concept, or you don’t 100 percent agree.”

Still, Mr. Taylor said he might not vote in the Senate race at all. Of his fellow Fetterman doubters, and of Oz skeptics, he asked, “Do they stay home? That becomes the big question.”

Northeastern Pennsylvania is also home to two bellwether House races with embattled Democratic incumbents.

One race features Representative Matt Cartwright, who is the rarest of political survivors — the only House Democrat nationwide running this year who held a district that Mr. Trump carried in both 2016 and 2020. The other includes Representative Susan Wild, who is defending a swing district that contains one of only two Pennsylvania counties that Mr. Biden flipped in 2020.

To emphasize his cross-partisan appeal, Mr. Cartwright has [*run an ad*](https://twitter.com/danielmarans/status/1580957706923278338) this year featuring endorsements from one man in a Trump hat and another in a Biden shirt. In an interview, he said the area’s long-term economic downturn, which he traced to the free-trade deals of the 1990s, had caused many people to work multiple jobs, sapping morale and even affecting the region’s psyche.

“When something like that happens, who do you vote for?” Mr. Cartwright said. “You vote for the change candidate. And that’s what we saw a lot of. They voted for Obama twice. They voted for Trump twice. And my own view of it is when they vote that way, it’s a cry for help.”

Demographic shifts in politics happen in both directions. As Democrats have hemorrhaged white ***working-class*** voters, they have made large gains with college-educated white voters who were once the financial and electoral base of Republicans. In Pennsylvania, the Philadelphia suburbs have become strongly Democratic, while the state’s less populated areas have become more Republican.

Alexis McFarland Kelly, a 59-year-old former owner of a gourmet market near Scranton, is the kind of voter Democrats are newly winning over. Raised as a Republican, she was often warned by her father, a business owner, and her grandfather, a corporate vice president, of the excesses of labor and the left. But now, she is planning to vote for Mr. Fetterman.

Her biggest misgiving is the hoodie-wearing persona that might appeal to the ***working class***. “I just wish he’d put a suit on once in a while,” she said.

Last year, she went to the local Department of Motor Vehicles and declared that she wanted to change her party registration to become a Democrat. The clerk was shocked. “She basically dropped her pen and said, ‘What?! A Democrat!’” Ms. Kelly recalled. “‘Everyone is going the other way.’”

Nina Feldman contributed reporting.

Nina Feldman contributed reporting.

PHOTOS: Scranton, Pa., looms large in the Senate contest between Lt. Gov. John Fetterman, a Democrat, and Mehmet Oz, a Republican.; Representative Matt Cartwright, left, has run an ad featuring endorsements from a Trump backer and a Biden supporter.; Steve Papp, a carpenter and union member, says he battles “misinformation and lies” by the right.(PHOTOGRAPHS BY RUTH FREMSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A11) This article appeared in print on page A1, A11.

**Load-Date:** November 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[***Anthony Boyle Is Moving Forward by Looking Backward***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BJN-5Y91-DXY4-X054-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 15, 2024 Friday 11:57 EST

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**Section:** ARTS; television

**Length:** 1137 words

**Byline:** Christopher Kuo Chris Kuo covers arts and culture as a member of the 2023-24 Times Fellowship class.

**Highlight:** The actor has broken out on TV this year in the historical series “Masters of the Air” and “Manhunt.”

**Body**

The actor has broken out on TV this year in the historical series “Masters of the Air” and “Manhunt.”

Anthony Boyle was out of luck. He had been expelled from his Catholic boys school for “behavioral problems.” He had also been fired from his job at a nightclub after getting caught drinking while working.

And so Boyle, then 16, figured it was as good a time as any to chase the dream that had begun to take shape in his head. He typed a string of words into Google search: “Belfast male acting auditions.”

He eventually landed some unorthodox roles, including a part in a production of “Romeo and Juliet” that was staged on a massive chessboard and a stint in a ghost tour, in which he wore a black bag over his head and scared people by pretending to be the wrathful spirit of an 18th-century Irish revolutionary.

Though Boyle would later return to school, he didn’t stop acting.

“I never felt like there was another option,” he said in a recent video interview. “I never felt like there was like a backup plan that I could go and study medicine or go and do something else. It was always just acting.”

More than a decade later, Boyle has arrived at another turning point in his performing career. Despite finding success on the stage in London and New York, he had landed only minor roles onscreen before this year.

Now, the man who hated school suddenly seems to be the go-to actor for televised historical dramas. Boyle plays Major Harry Crosby, an airborne navigator battling airsickness and self-doubt, in the Apple TV+ series [*“Masters of the Air,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/arts/television/masters-of-the-air-spielberg-hanks.html) about the travails faced by America’s 100th Bomb Group in World War II and executive produced by Steven Spielberg, Tom Hanks and Gary Goetzman.

He also has a leading role in “Manhunt,” which premieres on Apple TV+ on Friday, as the actor John Wilkes Booth, who assassinates Abraham Lincoln and tries to evade capture.

For Boyle, 29, this momentum hasn’t come a moment too soon. He still looks young, with an impish grin, thick brown hair and a boyish face, but he has also grown more conscious of time slipping by. During a recent interview, someone had asked him how he felt about turning 30, which will happen in June.

“I was having a mild existential crisis in the middle of the interview,” he said, laughing.

Boyle comes from a ***working-class*** family in the Catholic, west side of Belfast. His mother was a receptionist, and his father worked in security. None of his relatives or anyone else he knew had ever gone into acting. Boyle grew up watching films like “Quadrophenia” and “This Is England” and imagining himself onscreen.

Traditional schooling never suited him, and he received a string of suspensions for impersonating his teachers. After getting expelled at 16, he was transferred with a group of other unruly boys to a large Catholic girls school that had just decided to accept boys.

During this time, he performed in small local theaters, including a role in a Simon Stephens play called “Herons.” A teacher from the Royal Welsh College of Music &amp; Drama saw him in that production and convinced him to enroll as a student.

Leaving Belfast to attend the posh college in Wales — a school where people ate foods he had never tried and performed in Shakespearean dramas — felt like entering a new culture, Boyle said.

“I remember calling my family and saying, ‘They’re offering me hummus,’ and my family screamed on the phone, ‘Don’t eat it! Don’t eat it!’” he said.

Attending the school allowed him to reach new heights in his acting. After two years there, he left to take the role of Scorpius Malfoy in the West End and Broadway productions of “Harry Potter and the Cursed Child,” a performance that earned him an Olivier Award and a Tony nomination.

“My longest run before that was five days in a community center in East Belfast, and then it was the West End, so it was a real shift,” he said. “It was a baptism of fire.”

He later had minor roles in “Tolkien,” a 2019 film about the early life of the author J.R.R. Tolkien, and “Tetris,” a 2023 thriller from Apple TV+, before being cast in “Masters of the Air.”

Boyle gravitated to Crosby because of the airman’s diffidence and humanity. He was a conflicted character who vomited on his fellow crew members and accidentally led his plane astray into enemy-occupied France.

In 2021, to prepare for this role, Boyle and the rest of the cast, including Austin Butler, Barry Keoghan and Callum Turner, headed to boot camp.

“Most rehearsal processes, you’re sitting there with a director and cast and you’re leafing through a script and you’re drinking lattes and talking about childhood trauma,” he said. “This was like you got there, and there was a guy yelling at you and calling you by your character name and saying, ‘Drop and give me 20, maggot.’”

For three weeks, Boyle did push-up routines and other fitness exercises and learned how to study maps for navigation. Filming took place in replica B-17s that were suspended 50 feet in the air and surrounded by 360-degree screens.

After filming on “Masters of the Air” wrapped up, Boyle had about three months to grow a bushy mustache for his next role as a historical figure, the infamous John Wilkes Booth. Monica Beletsky, an executive producer who is also the creator and showrunner of “Manhunt,” said Boyle was the right choice to play Booth because of his charisma and cheekiness, as well as his background.

“He has a classic training,” she said. “And I think that lends itself to being convincing in other time periods.”

To ready himself for the role, Boyle spend weeks with a group of cowboys, drinking whiskey, chewing tobacco and learning how to ride a horse. In “Manhunt,” he trades his Irish accent for an American one and renders Booth as a charismatic, narcissistic figure, steeped in rage and racism.

His string of historical dramas will continue with “Say Nothing,” a show FX is developing about the sectarian conflict in Northern Ireland known as the Troubles; Boyle was cast as an Irish Republican Army officer. He also plays an investigator in the Disney+ series “Shardlake,” a whodunit about a murder in 16th-century England that will premiere later this year.

Boyle still doesn’t seem to know exactly why he keeps getting cast in historical roles. But he has a theory.

“I got a face that looks like it can’t comprehend the internet,” he said.

PHOTOS: Until this year, Anthony Boyle had stage success, but had only minor roles onscreen. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MAX MIECHOWSKI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (C1); Anthony Boyle, top, plays a conflicted navigator in the Apple TV+ series “Masters of the Air,” above left, while, above right, on “Manhunt,” another show on Apple TV+, he portrays the actor John Wilkes Booth, who assassinated Abraham Lincoln. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MAX MIECHOWSKI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; APPLE TV+) (C5) This article appeared in print on page C1, C5.

**Load-Date:** March 19, 2024

**End of Document**



[***A Friend of Obama Who Could Soon Share the World Stage With Trump***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BVG-GX81-DXY4-X1MR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 21, 2024 Sunday 09:53 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; europe

**Length:** 1423 words

**Byline:** Mark Landler Mark Landler is the London bureau chief of The Times, covering the United Kingdom, as well as American foreign policy in Europe, Asia and the Middle East. He has been a journalist for more than three decades.

**Highlight:** After Britain’s next election, David Lammy is likely to be foreign secretary. He’s setting out a “progressive realist” policy — and forging ties on the U.S. right, just in case.

**Body**

After Britain’s next election, David Lammy is likely to be foreign secretary. He’s setting out a “progressive realist” policy — and forging ties on the U.S. right, just in case.

Few British politicians have American ties as deep as those of David Lammy, who is set to become Britain’s foreign secretary if the opposition Labour Party wins the coming election, as the polls suggest it will.

A son of [*Guyanese immigrants*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/04/opinion/coronation-king-charles.html) who grew up poor in [***working-class*** *London*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/04/opinion/coronation-king-charles.html), he spent summers with relatives in Brooklyn and Queens, working at Con Edison, before earning a master&#39;s degree at Harvard Law School and befriending Barack Obama, for whom he canvassed in Chicago during his first presidential campaign.

Yet now, on the cusp of becoming Britain’s chief diplomat, Mr. Lammy finds himself facing an uncertain, even potentially hostile, American political landscape. President Biden and the Democrats, with whom Mr. Lammy has cultivated a deep network of contacts, are fighting to hold off a resurgent Donald J. Trump.

Having been chosen by the Labour leader, [*Keir Starmer*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/04/opinion/coronation-king-charles.html), partly because of his trans-Atlantic credentials, Mr. Lammy, 51, is scrambling to build ties with Republicans and, more challengingly, with those around Mr. Trump. It’s a very different American establishment from the Democratic one he knows so well.

Would Mr. Lammy pay a visit to Mar-a-Lago, Mr. Trump’s Palm Beach estate, as David Cameron, Britain’s current foreign secretary, did [*two weeks ago*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/04/opinion/coronation-king-charles.html) to lobby the former president on military aid to Ukraine?

“Of course,” he said in an interview this past week in Portcullis House, the parliamentary office building across the street from Big Ben. Noting that he was headed soon to New York and Washington, he said, “I’m happy to talk to whomever the American people decide they want to run the country.”

That’s a time-tested answer for any foreign politician during an American election year, especially one from a party that has held a [*double-digit polling lead*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/04/opinion/coronation-king-charles.html) over the governing Conservatives for 18 months. But unlike many Europeans, who regard Mr. Trump with a mix of fear and bemusement, Mr. Lammy genuinely seems to believe he can find common ground with those in Mr. Trump’s orbit.

He has held meetings with former Trump officials like [*Mike Pompeo*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/04/opinion/coronation-king-charles.html), who served as secretary of state and C.I.A. director, and [*Robert C. O’Brien*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/04/opinion/coronation-king-charles.html), who was Mr. Trump’s last national security adviser. And he has struck up a relationship with Senator J.D. Vance, the Ohio Republican and [*enthusiastic Trump convert*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/04/opinion/coronation-king-charles.html).

Mr. Vance’s best-selling memoir, “[*Hillbilly Elegy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/04/opinion/coronation-king-charles.html),” he said, bore parallels to his own story, growing up with a single mother and an absent, alcoholic father, in Tottenham, where race riots convulsed the streets. Mr. Lammy, whose memoir is titled “Out of the Ashes,” said Mr. Vance’s book “reduced me to tears.”

“I said to J.D., ‘Look, we’ve got different politics, but we’re both quite strong Christians and we both share quite a tough upbringing,’” said Mr. Lammy, who would be Britain’s second Black foreign secretary after James Cleverly, a Conservative.

The challenge for Mr. Lammy is that he shares more with Mr. Obama, who was a few years ahead of him at Harvard. The two men, who met 20 years ago at a gathering for Black alumni, had dinner when Mr. Obama [*visited London*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/04/opinion/coronation-king-charles.html) last month. In Mr. Obama’s Washington office hangs a portrait of the former president made by Mr. Lammy’s wife, Nicola Green, an artist who [*chronicled*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/04/opinion/coronation-king-charles.html) his 2008 campaign.

One of Mr. Obama’s former advisers, Benjamin J. Rhodes, introduced Mr. Lammy to other Democratic lawmakers and has also become a friend. In the event of a Labour government and a second Biden administration, he predicted, “You would see a much more aligned U.S. and U.K. relationship.”

But Mr. Rhodes said Mr. Lammy’s gregarious manner and pragmatic politics would give him at least a fighting chance with a Trump administration. “I think he believes that through force of personality, he could develop relationships in that circle,” Mr. Rhodes said.

For now, Mr. Lammy is determined not to offend. Asked about Mr. Trump’s recent statement that he would tell the Russians to do “[*whatever the hell they want*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/04/opinion/coronation-king-charles.html)” to any NATO member that did not pay its fair share of the alliance’s costs, Mr. Lammy seized on the reference to burden sharing.

“Is Donald Trump right?” he said. “100 percent.”

Too many NATO countries, Mr. Lammy said, still failed to meet the alliance’s target of military spending equal to 2 percent of gross domestic product (Britain spends roughly 2.2 percent). The Labour Party has vowed to raise that to 2.5 percent, and Mr. Lammy accused the Conservatives of bleeding Britain’s armed forces down to a size they had not seen since the Napoleonic era.

“I recognize in Donald Trump an ability to use language to concentrate minds,” he said.

Other Labour veterans bear no illusions about the chemistry between a Labour government and Mr. Trump. The former president [*clashed with Theresa May*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/04/opinion/coronation-king-charles.html), a Conservative prime minister, though he had better relations with Boris Johnson and praised the current prime minister, Rishi Sunak, for seeking to [*water down Britain’s climate goals*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/04/opinion/coronation-king-charles.html). Mr. Cameron, years before he visited Mar-a-Lago, called Mr. Trump’s threat to ban Muslims from entering the United States “[*divisive, stupid and wrong*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/04/opinion/coronation-king-charles.html).”

“A Trump government would be very difficult for a Labour government, but it would also be difficult for a Rishi Sunak government,” said Jonathan Powell, who served as chief of staff to a Labour prime minister, Tony Blair.

With the risk of a turbulent stretch in trans-Atlantic relations, Mr. Lammy is emphasizing Britain’s own neighborhood. In a new [*essay in Foreign Affairs magazine*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/04/opinion/coronation-king-charles.html) that lays out a foreign policy based on what he calls “progressive realism,” he said Britain needed to focus on rebuilding its security ties with the European Union, which have withered in the aftermath of Brexit.

Mending fences with Europe, Mr. Lammy said, is necessary regardless of whether Mr. Biden or Mr. Trump wins in November because the United States is increasingly preoccupied by its rivalry with China.

“For that reason, the U.K. must play its part here in Europe,” Mr. Lammy said, adding that Labour was better placed than the Conservatives to rebuild trust because of European suspicion of Brexiteers like Mr. Johnson. “Europe is keen to turn the page. The United States is keen for the U.K. to turn the page.”

Even as their strategic priorities diverge, the United States and Britain remain lashed together in conflict zones like the Middle East. British and American warplanes jointly helped repel Iran’s aerial assault on Israel.

Britain’s position on the Israel-Gaza war mirrors that of the United States, and Labour has stayed largely in sync with the Conservatives, despite pressure from its left wing to take a harder line on Israel. Mr. Lammy described the conditions in Gaza as “hell on earth,” but he has not called for Britain to suspend arms sales to Israel, as have legal experts and some members of Parliament.

While Mr. Lammy said he was “very concerned” that Israel might be violating international law, which would trigger a suspension of arms exports, he did not want to get ahead of a judgment by the government’s lawyers.

“I’m also very conscious that I and Keir Starmer might be officeholders” within the coming weeks, Mr. Lammy said, pointing to speculation that if the Conservatives suffer dire losses in local elections in early May, Mr. Sunak might [*call a general election*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/04/opinion/coronation-king-charles.html).

As he contemplated that possibility, Mr. Lammy’s thoughts came back to the United States, where he said the struggles of civil rights leaders like the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the election of Mr. Obama symbolized a bend in the moral arc toward racial justice that has transformed Britain as well.

“If I have the privilege of becoming foreign minister,” he said, “I’m very conscious that I’ll be the first — it almost makes me emotional as I say it — the first foreign secretary who is the descendant of enslaved people.”

PHOTOS: David Lammy, center left, who is on the cusp of becoming Britain’s chief diplomat, at a market in Tottenham, England, the area of north London where he grew up. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW TESTA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); An infant Mr. Lammy with his parents. His memoir describes growing up with a single mother and an absent father in a tough neighborhood.; At 11, Mr. Lammy, far left, received a choral scholarship to a cathedral school in Peterborough, England. (PHOTOGRAPHS VIA DAVID LAMMY) This article appeared in print on page A4.

**Load-Date:** April 22, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Betye Saar Remains Guided by the Spirit; Artist’s Questionnaire***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C06-BJK1-DXY4-X010-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 8, 2024 Wednesday 22:27 EST

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**Section:** T-MAGAZINE

**Length:** 1652 words

**Byline:** Evan Nicole Brown

**Highlight:** The 97-year-old artist’s newest works reflect her decades-long interest in cultural artifacts and self-emancipation.

**Body**

The American assemblage artist Betye Saar spent her childhood salvaging lost, discarded and forgotten things, like small glass beads, broken necklaces and scraps of colored paper left in trash bins or littering the ground where she walked. Born in 1926, she was raised during the Great Depression and so, Saar wrote to me recently, she was taught to “use it up, wear it out, make it do or do without.” That manifesto has guided both her lifelong habit of collecting curios and relics — picked up during her travels to Nigeria, Senegal, Mexico, Haiti and Brazil, and at swap meets in her hometown of Los Angeles — as well as her more than 60-year artistic practice, which similarly brings together and recontextualizes symbols and totems of the Black diaspora. “My daughter Tracye calls me a hoarder who found her calling,” Saar says. Some of the objects that Saar collects have sat unused in her converted-garage studio for years before finding their way into one of her artworks. Saar, who is 97, decides what to reach for based on something she has referred to over the years as “mother wit”: she feels when a wooden statue, antique doll or rusted dagger is calling to be used.

Saar considers this selection process to be a sacred one. “I’ve always felt that old objects hold a power,” she says. “They’ve survived, and they have a sense of the previous owner. They have a spirit.”

In her studio, which is attached to her shingle-adorned, garden-guarded home in Los Angeles’s Laurel Canyon neighborhood, she keeps a curved metal bookshelf that resembles the bow of a ship, passed along by her granddaughter, who had bought it at an auction. It brings to mind one of her newest works: the large-scale installation “[*Drifting Toward Twilight*](https://huntington.org/exhibition/betye-saar-drifting-toward-twilight),” a 17-foot-long vintage canoe that sits atop a bed of brambles harvested from the grounds of Los Angeles County’s Huntington Library, Art Museum and Botanical Gardens. On view at the museum through November of next year, the readymade sculpture has been imaginatively altered by Saar. She added wood burrows to either end of the boat in order to disrupt the manufactured vessel with the delightful deformity of nature and, inside the boat, in place of passengers, she installed antlers, some of which are attached to the salvaged parts of an old merry-go-round. The canoe, itself a symbol of early America and the country’s long history of trade and forced migration, displays other antlers inside of antique cages. These last objects recur through Saar’s work as a shorthand for captivity. For decades, Saar’s own career was confined by the prejudices of the art establishment; although she has consistently shown and sold her work widely, it wasn’t until she was in her 90s that major museums and institutions took significant notice.

“‘Drifting Toward Twilight’ is truly a legacy work; it’s full circle,” Saar says. “I used to come to the Huntington with my mother when I was a child. She loved to garden, especially African violets, and she passed that love of plants and nature on to me.” Saar grew up in Watts, one of Los Angeles’s historically ***working-class*** neighborhoods, before her family moved outside of the city proper to the more affluent Pasadena, not far from the museum’s grounds. Beginning her career as a printmaker, she encountered the work of Joseph Cornell at the Pasadena Museum of Art in 1967, after which Saar began experimenting with what would become her signature mixed-media style. “They were beautiful and funny and fascinating,” Saar says of Cornell’s shadow box assemblages, many of which were made of repurposed junk. “I saw his work and realized that it was OK to make art out of anything.” One of her most famous pieces combines the influence of Cornell with an activist spirit: “The Liberation of Aunt Jemima” (1972), an assemblage that centers on a derogatory mammy figurine standing atop a bed of cotton. Created in the aftermath of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s 1968 assassination, Saar’s doll turned the caricature of Black women as domestic servants on its head; arming her with a rifle and a hand grenade, Saar makes Aunt Jemima into a heroine, a protector, a self-emancipating revolutionary.

Nearly six decades later, the artist’s assemblages continue to bring together seemingly disparate references and symbols, transforming them into tributes to Black power. At [*Saar’s solo show*](https://huntington.org/exhibition/betye-saar-drifting-toward-twilight) at Roberts Projects in Los Angeles, which closes tomorrow, eight small, decorative boxes hold antique masks, vintage textiles and hand-carved ephemera. These objects are juxtaposed alongside digital detritus — circuit boards, resistors — that line the wooden boxes like wallpaper. Saar has been collecting computer parts since a monthlong residency at M.I.T. in 1987, but the scraps on view at Roberts Projects came from her grandson, who was getting rid of an old device.

Through the years, Saar has remained singularly committed to her art. “I make art because I enjoy the process of creating, of finding interesting objects and putting them together to create a feeling or tell a story. If you like my artwork, fine. If you don’t, that’s fine, too,” she says. She describes her house as “an altar that is made up of mini-altars.” “I have big windows to see out to the hills of my canyon, to see nature. I have my studios full of things to make art. I have everything I need.” From that home in the hills, Saar wrote responses to T’s [*Artist’s Questionnaire*](https://huntington.org/exhibition/betye-saar-drifting-toward-twilight).

What is your day like? How much do you sleep, and what’s your work schedule? How many hours of creative work do you think you do in a day?

Well, I do like my bed. When I wake up, I can turn and look out a window and see my plants and a few houses on the hill. I ease into my day unless I have an appointment or meeting. After breakfast and getting dressed, I’ll wander into the studio and maybe work on some watercolors. My daughter Tracye is my studio director and, when she’s over, we’ll do office things or work together on larger projects. I get a bit tired around 5 p.m. and start to wrap things up. I’m 97, after all.

What’s the first piece of art you ever made?

I still have a crayon drawing from when I was a child. But I guess my first artworks are my prints from the 1960s. My assemblages came later, in the ’70s.

What’s the worst studio you ever had?

I wouldn’t say I’ve ever had a bad studio. Sure, things may have been small or awkward or inconvenient — I used to have trays of printmaking acid with young children around — but I’ve always made do with what I had. If you have a small studio, you make small art. I’ve been very fortunate to be able to add a studio on to my house, and I have an Airstream trailer studio out in the desert.

What’s the first work you ever sold?

I think the first real artwork I sold was a little enameled box [for about $3 to $5 around 1950]. I had been making enamel giftware with a friend, the artist and educator Curtis Tann, and we had a business called Brown &amp; Tann. (Brown was my maiden name.) Later, in the ’60s, I started to sell my prints.

When you start a new piece, where do you begin? How do you know when you’re done?

I start with the found materials. Sometimes it’s an old wooden box, sometimes it’s an object to go inside of a box. I combine and alter objects and swap things out in a kind of stream-of-consciousness way. I know when it feels right. I know when it feels complete.

Do you listen to music when you’re making art?

I like silence. Sometimes an assistant will play classical music softly, but I’d rather have silence and my own thoughts. I like hearing the background sounds of my house and my neighborhood.

When did you first feel comfortable saying you’re a professional artist?

I was always attracted to art and creating ever since I was a child. I received a B.A. in Design from U.C.L.A. and did my greeting cards and enamelware designs, then I started learning printmaking. I kept trying new mediums and, when I hit on assemblage art, it all felt right. I felt like things really came together when I received [my first] National Endowment of the Arts fellowship in 1974 and realized then that I was an artist.

Is there a meal you eat on repeat when you’re working?

Not a meal so much as a few things that are always on my shopping list: fresh watermelon and Dr Pepper. Occasionally an In-N-Out hamburger.

What’s the last thing that made you cry?

I’ve had a lot of deaths in my family recently. I guess that’s what happens when you get old.

What do you usually wear when you work?

I don’t like being cold, so I wear lots of layers. Cozy sweatpants, T-shirts, flannels and maybe a Uniqlo vest. If I’m doing something messy, I’ll wear a big denim shirt as a smock.

What embarrasses you?

Not a lot, because I’m 97 and I’ve been there, done that and moved on!

What are you reading?

I subscribe to The New Yorker, but it’s hard to keep up. I buy a lot of art books that I browse through, including some of my own catalogs. I recently autographed a copy of my exhibition catalog “Still Tickin’” (2017) for a neighbor. It’s a really nice book!

What’s your favorite artwork by someone else?

There are many artists whose work I admire, such as Joseph Cornell, Charles White, Suzanne Jackson, Nick Cave, David Hammons, Gustav Klimt — and of course my daughters Lezley and Alison Saar. But I guess my favorite work of art is Simon Rodia’s [*Watts Towers*](https://huntington.org/exhibition/betye-saar-drifting-toward-twilight). When I was a child, I’d visit my grandmother who lived in Watts and we’d walk by the towers as Simon was making them. We didn’t know what the heck he was doing, but it was beautiful. I didn’t know it was art because I was just used to seeing paintings but, unbeknown to me at the time, it was very formative to my becoming an artist, and especially an assemblage artist.

This interview has been edited and condensed.

PHOTOS: Above, part of Betye Saar’s extensive collection of objects. Below, Ms. Saar in her home studio. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MAX HEMPHILL) This article appeared in print on page D3.

**Load-Date:** May 16, 2024

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[***Adams Announces 'Painful' Budget Cuts for Police, Libraries and Schools***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69N7-3HD1-DXY4-X0F8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 17, 2023 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 21

**Length:** 1317 words

**Byline:** By Emma G. Fitzsimmons

**Body**

Mr. Adams said the migrant crisis made the deep budget cuts necessary. Progressive Democrats called the reductions dangerous and unnecessary.

Mayor Eric Adams announced painful budget cuts to New York City services on Thursday that would freeze police hiring and close libraries on Sunday and warned that more cuts would be necessary without additional federal funding to manage the migrant crisis.

The budget cuts would bring the number of Police Department officers below 30,000 for the first time since the 1980s, slash the Education Department budget by $1 billion over two years and delay the rollout of composting in the Bronx and Staten Island -- one of the mayor's signature initiatives to address rats and climate change. The cuts would also weaken two popular programs: summer school and universal prekindergarten.

Mr. Adams said in a statement that he had to make cuts across city agencies in response to the rising costs of the migrant crisis, slowing tax revenues and the ending of federal pandemic aid.

''No city should be left to handle a national humanitarian crisis largely on its own, and without the significant and timely support we need from Washington, D.C., today's budget will be only the beginning,'' he said.

The cuts to New York City's $110 billion budget come as Mr. Adams is facing two crises that could come to define his mayoralty and his chances at winning a second term -- an influx of migrants from the southern border that he has said could destroy the city, and a federal investigation into his campaign's fund-raising.

Mr. Adams, a Democrat in his second year in office, had warned at a news conference on Tuesday that the budget cuts would be ''extremely painful for New Yorkers.''

''In all my time in government, this is probably one of the most painful exercises I've gone through,'' he said.

Progressive Democrats immediately criticized the mayor's cuts and said they would hurt ***working-class*** families. Lincoln Restler, a chair of the City Council's progressive caucus, said his group would not cooperate with the cuts.

''Mayor Adams's unnecessary, dangerous and draconian budget cuts will only worsen New York's affordability crisis and delay our city's economic recovery by cutting funding for the schools, child care, food assistance and more that help New Yorkers live and raise families in this city,'' Mr. Restler said.

Mr. Adams said that the cost of the migrant crisis was growing and expected to cost nearly $11 billion over two years and that next year's budget had a major $7 billion gap. The cuts go into effect immediately, city officials said, and the mayor can implement hiring freezes on his own.

The City Council has a role in approving certain budget changes, including when funding is shifted among agencies or increased. It can approve budget modifications or vote them down. But the Council is more likely to fight the mayor's cuts by negotiating the budget for the next fiscal year, which is due in June and requires Council approval.

The Council speaker, Adrienne Adams, said in a statement that some essential programs like libraries and the City University of New York should be spared from deep cuts. She said the city should explore approving new revenues and shift migrant services to nonprofits.

''The administration's response in providing services for asylum seekers has relied far too much on expensive emergency contracts with for-profit companies that cost the city billions of dollars,'' she said.

The police union president, Patrick Hendry, said that the police hiring freeze -- which city officials said involved postponing five classes of new officers -- would make New Yorkers less safe. The last time the city had fewer than 30,000 officers was in 1984, according to the city's Independent Budget Office.

''This is truly a disaster for every New Yorker who cares about safe streets,'' he said. ''Cops are already stretched to our breaking point, and these cuts will return us to staffing levels we haven't seen since the crime epidemic of the '80s and '90s. We cannot go back there.''

Mr. Adams had said on Tuesday that eliminating a new class of 250 school safety agents would mean that schools would be ''leaning into parents and parent groups to do some volunteerism.'' He said that he would do everything he could to keep schools safe with fewer resources.

''We are going to be straining at a very high level to get this done correctly,'' he said.

Library leaders announced that the budget cuts would force them to close branches on Sunday starting in December.

''Without sufficient funding, we cannot sustain our current levels of service, and any further cuts to the libraries' budgets will, unfortunately, result in deeper service impacts,'' the leaders of the Brooklyn, Queens and New York Public Library said in a statement.

Nonprofit leaders have criticized the cuts and said they would hurt essential services, including food pantries, domestic violence shelters, after-school programs and legal services. Michelle Jackson, executive director of the Human Services Council, which represents dozens of nonprofits, had asked the city to spare those services, arguing that the cuts would ''make our city less fair, less safe, and less stable for years to come.''

Leaders of the left-leaning Working Families Party said that Mr. Adams was unfairly blaming migrants for the cuts when he should shoulder the blame.

''Mayor Adams is pursuing an agenda of death by a thousand cuts,'' the group said. ''As any teacher, librarian, or health care worker will tell you: There's nothing left to cut.''

Many of the city's top Democrats assailed the cuts. The city comptroller, Brad Lander, said that the city must continue to push for more state and federal funding, but called on Mr. Adams to ''stop suggesting that asylum seekers are the reason for imposing severe cuts when they are only contributing to a portion of these budget gaps, much of which already existed.''

The city's public advocate, Jumaane Williams, said the mayor should use a scalpel instead of making broad cuts and ''reconsider the administration's annual opposition to supporting common sense revenue-raising options that ensure the city can continue to uphold its fiscal responsibility and moral responsibility at the same time.''

Only a day earlier, Mr. Adams had celebrated the first increase in student enrollment at New York City public schools in eight years -- due largely to an influx of migrants from the southern border. For the current school year, enrollment increased about 1 percent -- or roughly 8,000 students -- bringing the total number of students to 915,000.

Now city schools will be making cuts at a moment when educators say they need more resources to help the new students and also continue academic recovery following pandemic school closures. City officials said that the Education Department would be cut by $547 million this fiscal year and $600 million next year. In addition to making cuts to the Summer Rising summer program for middle school students and eliminating thousands of spots for universal prekindergarten for 3-year-olds, community schools are being cut by $10 million in the current fiscal year.

Michael Mulgrew, president of the United Federation of Teachers, said that 653 schools would be forced to make midyear budget cuts -- roughly 43 percent of the school system.

''Class sizes will rise, and school communities will be needlessly damaged,'' he said.

Mr. Adams, a former police captain who ran for mayor as a ***working-class*** hero, acknowledged on Tuesday that some of his key policy priorities would be harmed by the budget cuts.

''It is more than painful for New Yorkers -- it's painful for us,'' Mr. Adams said. ''I've seen a great deal of just personal pain from the members of my team. These are initiatives that we fought hard for.''

Maria Cramer contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/16/nyregion/nyc-budget-cuts-schools-police-trash.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/16/nyregion/nyc-budget-cuts-schools-police-trash.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: ''No city should be left to handle a national humanitarian crisis largely on its own,'' Mayor Eric Adams said in a statement. (PHOTOGRAPH BY STEPHANIE KEITH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A21.

**Load-Date:** November 17, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Democrats Are Out of Step With Public Opinion on Immigration***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B4N-8171-DXY4-X0NT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 19, 2024 Friday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2024 The New York Times Company

**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 10

**Length:** 1807 words

**Byline:** By David Leonhardt

**Body**

The Democrats are out of step with public opinion when it comes to immigration.

I keep a running list of issues on which either the Republican Party or the Democratic Party is out of step with public opinion.

For Republicans, abortion now tops my list, followed by Donald Trump's attitudes toward democracy. For Democrats, I think immigration policy has moved to the top of the list.

In a newsletter last week, I described the shift in the Democratic Party's immigration policy over the past decade. Before Trump ran for president, Democrats tended to combine passionate support for many forms of immigration with a belief in strong border security. But Trump's harsh anti-immigration stance pushed the party toward the opposite end of the spectrum.

Today, many Democratic politicians are willing to accept high levels of undocumented immigration and oppose enforcement measures that the party once favored. Some Democrats, especially on the left, argue that the government doesn't even have the power to reduce migration much.

This shift has created political vulnerabilities for Democrats -- because most Americans are closer to the party's old position than to its new one. Today, I'll walk through public opinion on the issue.

'A serious problem'

The first thing to know is that views on immigration aren't static. During Trump's presidency, Americans became more favorable to immigration, evidently in reaction to Trump's opposition to it. Consider this: By the end of his presidency, the number of Americans who favored increasing immigration exceeded the number who favored decreasing it for the first time in six decades of Gallup polling.

That trend has since reversed, as you can see in the chart. The biggest reason seems to be a surge of illegal immigration during President Biden's term. One cause of that surge has been the Biden administration's approach. Many would-be migrants now believe -- correctly -- that so long as they can reach U.S. soil, they will be able to stay for years.

In response, the number of Americans who say that illegal immigration is a serious problem has risen, according to YouGov:

To reduce these migration flows, congressional Republicans are pushing for new border policies. Democrats often criticize the proposals as extreme, but many are quite popular. Polls frequently find majority support for a border wall, for instance, especially when the question doesn't mention Trump's name. In a recent New York Times/Siena College survey of six battleground states, 53 percent of respondents favored a wall, compared with 44 percent who opposed one.

A recent Fox News survey (and, yes, other pollsters respect Fox's polling) found majority support for several other enforcement measures, too:

I don't mean to suggest that the Democratic Party's shift on immigration is simply about Trump. It's part a larger story -- namely, the class inversion of American politics, in which the Democratic Party increasingly reflects the views of socially liberal professionals. On immigration, these affluent, highly educated voters tend to favor more open policies, while ***working-class*** voters prefer less immigration.

Race plays a nuanced role in these views. White voters do tend to be more skeptical of immigration than Asian, Black and Hispanic voters. But a large chunk of voters of color, especially ***working-class*** voters, also favor tighter border security than many leading Democrats do. Immigration appears to be one reason, among many, that Biden's support among voters of color has deteriorated.

During the past few years -- as Democrats have changed their approach to immigration -- Republicans have made gains with Asian, Black and Hispanic voters. Some of the biggest gains have come in the border areas of Texas (as this Times map shows). Among Hispanic voters, illegal immigration is one of the Democratic Party's weakest issues, along with crime and the economy, a Times poll in 2022 found; the party's strongest issues include abortion, climate, student debt cancellation and Trump's criminal charges.

Democrats assumed that a more open immigration policy would help increase their support among voters of color. Instead, the opposite has happened.

The rule of law

Even with all their current concerns, Americans are not opposed to immigration. Most say that legal immigrants strengthen the country, and many believe the U.S. should remain a haven for people fleeing repression. But most Americans also think that the country's immigration laws should mean something and that citizens of other countries should not be able to enter this country simply because they want to.

Today's Democratic Party is often uncomfortable taking a firm position on immigration. As a result, the issue has become a problem for Biden's re-election campaign -- and an advantage for Trump.

Related: Migrants in New York camped in snow, waiting for identification cards they hoped would help them find work.

THE LATEST NEWS

China

China's population has shrunk and its birthrate has continued to fall despite government efforts to encourage women to have more babies.

The Chinese economy grew last year, but its longer-term growth is slowing in part because of high debt and a shrinking work force.

China has restarted measuring youth unemployment -- this time with different criteria that lowered the figure.

Middle East

The Biden administration plans to return the Houthis to a list of terrorist groups.

The U.S. struck Houthi targets in Yemen for the third time, destroying missiles the military said were a threat to ships in the Red Sea.

Two missing Navy SEALs were part of an operation to seize Iranian weapons bound for Yemen, the Pentagon said.

Iran hit Pakistan and Iraq with airstrikes. Iran said it was targeting terrorists behind recent attacks, but Pakistan and Iraq said the strikes had killed civilians.

War in Gaza

The Israeli military is trying to take control of the tunnels under Khan Younis, in southern Gaza, The Wall Street Journal reports. The area is crowded with refugees.

Qatar said it had brokered a deal between Israel and Hamas that will allow medication to be delivered to hostages in return for additional humanitarian aid to Gaza.

2024 Election

As Republican candidates campaign across New Hampshire, Nikki Haley is focusing on independents, who can vote in the primary there next Tuesday.

ABC News canceled a debate scheduled for Thursday in New Hampshire, after Haley refused to attend unless Trump also participated.

Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who is running as an independent, is trying to create his own political party in an effort to get on the ballot in six states.

White House officials believe a Trump rematch is Biden's best chance of winning re-election, Peter Baker writes.

More on Politics

Trump's lawyers plan to accuse the intelligence community of bias in the classified documents case, court filings show.

Donald Trump visited New York for the start of a second defamation suit filed by E. Jean Carroll.

In Congress, top Democrats and Republicans agreed on a plan to expand the child tax credit and restore business tax breaks, but the deal faces a difficult path to become law.

The Senate took the first step in advancing a stopgap spending bill to avoid a partial government shutdown at the end of the week.

Business

Elon Musk demanded more than $80 billion in additional stock from Tesla's board and threatened to work on projects elsewhere.

A federal judge blocked JetBlue from acquiring Spirit Airlines. The Justice Department had argued against the merger.

E.V. batteries struggle in very cold weather, leading to long lines and frustration at charging stations.

Other Big Stories

New York City went 701 days without significant snowfall. That run ended yesterday.

A New Zealand lawmaker quit after video was published of her allegedly shoplifting.

Two Malaysian prisoners at Guantánamo Bay pleaded guilty to conspiring in the 2002 nightclub bombings in Bali, Indonesia.

Opinions

The U.S. needs to prioritize its own interests and pressure Israel to avoid a wider war, Daniel Levy, a former Israeli peace negotiator, writes.

The charges of genocide against Israel are a moral obscenity that dilute the term's power, Bret Stephens writes.

Popular support for Taiwanese democracy in both the U.S. and Taiwan is risking a Chinese invasion, Michael Beckley writes.

MORNING READS

31 years, 5 months: A man in Portugal claimed to have the world's oldest dog. After widespread skepticism, though, his Guinness record is in doubt.

New York: For most of his life, Hakim Jeffrey's only connections to Representative Hakeem Jeffries were Brooklyn and their names. Then they crossed paths.

Lives Lived: Despite working in a political town removed from the coastal entertainment capitals, Tom Shales wielded enormous influence during his three-decade career as The Washington Post's chief television critic. He died at 79.

SPORTS

N.F.L.: The Michigan coach Jim Harbaugh interviewed for the Atlanta Falcons' coaching vacancy. And Mike Tomlin, the Pittsburgh Steelers coach, told players he would return to the team for next season, quieting doubts about his future.

Sport switch: The 22-year-old Welsh rugby star Louis Rees-Zammit is leaving the sport to attempt a career in the N.F.L.

Lawsuit: A woman accused James Dolan, the businessman behind Madison Square Garden and the New York Knicks, of pressuring her into unwanted sex. Dolan denied the allegations.

ARTS AND IDEAS

Congrats and goodbye: Between 2010 and 2023, the number of TV shows in the U.S. rose almost every year. But after a year of strikes and shrinking studio profits, Hollywood executives have pulled back. Monday's Emmy Awards ceremony ''felt in many ways like a bookend to the so-called Peak TV era,'' The Times's John Koblin writes. ''There is a good chance that television may start to look a lot like television from a couple of decades ago.''

More on culture

Nelson Mandela's daughter will auction some of his belongings after winning a legal battle with the South African government, which claimed they were national artifacts.

''If you've ever wondered what is the polar opposite of M.L.K. Day, it is the Iowa Republican caucus'': The late-night hosts joked about Trump's victory.

THE MORNING RECOMMENDS ...

Prepare crisp gnocchi with brussels sprouts and brown butter in 20 minutes.

Learn a new language. It may be beneficial for brain health in old age.

Ride out winter storms with these tools.

GAMES

Here is today's Spelling Bee. Yesterday's pangram were littleneck and telekinetic.

And here are today's Mini Crossword, Wordle, Sudoku and Connections.

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

Sign up here to get this newsletter in your inbox. Reach our team at [*themorning@nytimes.com*](mailto:themorning@nytimes.com)

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/17/briefing/immigration-policy-democrats.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/17/briefing/immigration-policy-democrats.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A10.

**Load-Date:** January 19, 2024

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[***Eric Adams Slashes Budgets for Police, Libraries and Schools***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69N3-6SS1-JBG3-622B-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 16, 2023 Thursday 14:59 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1337 words

**Byline:** Emma G. Fitzsimmons

**Highlight:** Mr. Adams said the migrant crisis made the deep budget cuts necessary. Progressive Democrats called the reductions dangerous and unnecessary.

**Body**

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The cuts to New York City’s $110 billion budget come as Mr. Adams is facing two crises that could come to define his mayoralty and his chances at winning a second term — an influx of migrants from the southern border that he has said could destroy the city, and a federal [*investigation into his campaign’s fund-raising*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/10/nyregion/adams-fbi-investigation-phones.html).

Mr. Adams, a Democrat in his second year in office, had warned at a news conference on Tuesday that the budget cuts would be “extremely painful for New Yorkers.”

“In all my time in government, this is probably one of the most painful exercises I’ve gone through,” he said.

Progressive Democrats immediately criticized the mayor’s cuts and said they would hurt ***working-class*** families. Lincoln Restler, a chair of the City Council’s progressive caucus, said his group would not cooperate with the cuts.

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“This is truly a disaster for every New Yorker who cares about safe streets,” he said. “Cops are already stretched to our breaking point, and these cuts will return us to staffing levels we haven’t seen since the crime epidemic of the ’80s and ’90s. We cannot go back there.”

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Many of the city’s top Democrats assailed the cuts. The city comptroller, Brad Lander, said that the city must continue to push for more state and federal funding, but called on Mr. Adams to “stop suggesting that asylum seekers are the reason for imposing severe cuts when they are only contributing to a portion of these budget gaps, much of which already existed.”

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Maria Cramer contributed reporting.

PHOTO: “No city should be left to handle a national humanitarian crisis largely on its own,” Mayor Eric Adams said in a statement. (PHOTOGRAPH BY STEPHANIE KEITH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A21.

**Load-Date:** November 17, 2023

**End of Document**



[***To Woo Moderates, Britain's Leader Is on His Third Political Makeover***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69MT-5141-JBG3-60V2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 15, 2023 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 13

**Length:** 1255 words

**Byline:** By Mark Landler and Stephen Castle

**Body**

Rishi Sunak's reshuffle was a bold attempt to win back more moderate Conservatives. But it could backfire, analysts said.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's dramatic shake-up of his cabinet on Monday was a bold gamble that tacking to the center will give him a lift in the polls that his lurch to the populist right this summer failed to accomplish.

But as Britain's political establishment digested the news -- the return of a more centrist former prime minister, David Cameron, and the ouster of a hard edged home secretary, Suella Braverman, who lashed out at Mr. Sunak on Tuesday -- analysts said the prime minister's pivot smacked of a politician casting about for an identity.

Far from a winning electoral formula, some predict that the reshuffle could fracture the coalition that delivered a landslide victory for the Conservative Party in 2019. By trying to shore up the party's traditional heartland in the south of England, they said, Mr. Sunak risked alienating the ***working-class*** voters in the ''red wall,'' who once flocked to the Tory slogan, ''Get Brexit done.''

''It doesn't make any more sense than most of Sunak's moves since the summer,'' said Timothy Bale, a professor of politics at Queen Mary University of London. ''And it's unlikely to make a blind bit of difference to his chances of turning things around before the general election.''

Mr. Bale said that in a general election, which is likely to be held next fall, Britons will cast their votes based on issues like the cost of living and rising rates on home mortgages, rather than primarily on identity politics.

This is Mr. Sunak's third political makeover since he replaced Liz Truss as prime minister 13 months ago. First, he was a pragmatic technocrat, who stabilized the economy after Ms. Truss's proposed tax cuts. Then he adopted divisive policies on climate change, immigration, and crime to try to put the opposition Labour Party on the defensive.

Keeping on Ms. Braverman, with her inflammatory language on immigration, was part of that strategy. Some predict she will emerge as an internal challenger to Mr. Sunak, leading a right-wing insurgency that could torment the prime minister, much as euro skeptic right-wingers tormented Mr. Cameron a decade ago.

On Tuesday, Ms. Braverman released a withering three-page letter to Mr. Sunak, in which she said he ''manifestly and repeatedly failed to deliver on every single one'' of the policies that she claimed they had agreed on when she joined his cabinet and helped him to become prime minister. ''Someone needs to be honest,'' Ms. Braverman said, ''your plan is not working, we have endured record election defeats, your resets have failed and we are running out of time.''

For all that, there were few signs on Tuesday of a mushrooming rebellion within the party. While one Conservative lawmaker, Andrea Jenkyns, submitted a letter of no-confidence in Mr. Sunak, describing him as a leader who had been rejected by both the party's members and the public, she was not followed by a flood of others.

It would take similar protests from a total of 15 percent of the 350 Conservative Party lawmakers to trigger a challenge to Mr. Sunak. Having changed their leader -- and Britain's prime minister -- twice since the last general election, a further switch would stretch credibility.

Still, some analysts said Mr. Sunak's pivot to the center is not without risks internally, since the ranks of Conservative lawmakers are filled with people elected in 2019 on a populist, pro-Brexit message. In addition to Mr. Cameron, who voted against Brexit, the chancellor of the Exchequer, Jeremy Hunt, also voted to remain.

James Cleverly, whom Mr. Sunak moved from foreign secretary to replace Ms. Braverman at the Home Office, did vote for Brexit, but he is also viewed as a more moderate, less ideological figure. That leaves Mr. Sunak as the only conspicuously right-wing occupant of what are called Britain's four great offices of state.

''Ending up with three moderates in the top four positions is not going to be great for his party politics,'' said Jonathan Powell, who served as chief of staff to a former Labour prime minister, Tony Blair. ''A centrist cabinet in a right-wing party is a dangerous combination for a prime minister.''

Mr. Sunak's calculation, other analysts said, is that he will get credit for standing up to the party's hard right among traditional Tory voters. In these Conservative strongholds, many affluent, cosmopolitan and more liberal voters were alienated by Ms. Braverman's increasingly harsh rhetoric. But the big electoral threat in such regions often comes from the smaller, centrist Liberal Democrat party, rather than Labour.

In 2019, these traditional Conservative voters largely stuck with the party, while many former Labour voters in the north and middle of England -- known as the ''red wall'' because of the opposition party's campaign colors -- were won over by former Prime Minister Boris Johnson's populist campaign.

The problem for Mr. Sunak is that Brexit has faded as an issue, with most voters more concerned about the squeeze on their living standards, exacerbated by Ms. Truss's disastrous impact on the economy, and the lamentable state of the National Health Service. Labour is now under the centrist leadership of Keir Starmer.

''There does seem to be a growing awareness in all wings of the Conservative Party, that it's going to be very difficult, perhaps impossible, to hold together the coalition of 2019,'' said Robert Ford, a professor of political science at Manchester University.

At his party's conference last month, Mr. Sunak made ''an attempt to hold on to the 'red wall,' and what we're seeing now is a kind of U-turn and focus on the 'blue wall,''' Professor Ford said. ''And the problem is that they can't have both.''

Mr. Sunak's attempt to put on a populist mantle failed for another reason.

While he shares much of Ms. Braverman's thinking, he had not proved effective in selling it. His public image is of a ''cosmopolitan, technocratic, California-loving, globe-trotting tech-bro type,'' Professor Ford said. ''That sort of anti-woke, anti-immigration politics just seems very jarring coming from someone who is perceived in that way, even though it's very likely to be pretty close to his actual personal politics.''

One risk for the Conservatives is that their pivot gives more space to Reform UK, the successor to the Brexit Party once led by Nigel Farage, a right-wing firebrand. A reinvigorated Reform UK could siphon off votes from the Conservatives, allowing Labour to win back ''red wall'' seats under Britain's winner-takes-all electoral system.

Perhaps the biggest question is whether moderate Conservatives will view the return of Mr. Cameron, who embodies many of their values, as the restoration of their brand of politics. Many of those voters blame Brexit for Britain's stagnating economy, as well as for unleashing the populism that has dominated their party since 2016 and often seemed to caricature them as members of a privileged metropolitan elite.

Mr. Cameron, of course, called the referendum that resulted in Brexit. And after losing the campaign to stay in the European Union, he resigned.

''They have had a seven-year barrage of abuse from their traditional party and now, as a way of trying to win them back, that party puts into the House of Lords the guy who kicked off the whole barrage of abuse and then ran away,'' said Professor Ford. ''There's no guarantee that it will work.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/14/world/europe/uk-sunak-david-cameron.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/14/world/europe/uk-sunak-david-cameron.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: By trying to shore up the Conservative Party's core, analysts said, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak risked alienating ***working-class*** voters. (POOL PHOTO BY KIN CHEUNG)

David Cameron, a more centrist former prime minister, was added to the cabinet while the home secretary Suella Braverman, with her inflammatory language on immigration, was ousted. Some predict she will emerge as an internal challenger to Mr. Sunak. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY KIN CHEUNG/ASSOCIATED PRESS

TOBY MELVILLE/REUTERS) This article appeared in print on page A13.

**Load-Date:** November 15, 2023

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[***Representative Ro Khanna tells Silicon Valley how he can help. 'You need me to tell a story of America so there is not a massive populist backlash.'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69Y4-X7F1-DXY4-X3XS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 24, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section MM; Column 0; Magazine Desk; Pg. 11

**Length:** 3168 words

**Byline:** By David Marchese and Mamadi Doumbouya

**Body**

For a relatively green, relatively unheralded (but very ambitious) member of Congress, Representative Ro Khanna, a Democrat from California, has managed to position himself squarely at the intersection of competing, if not outright contradictory, interests and ideas that could shape his party's future. The 47-year-old, whose district includes parts of Silicon Valley and who served in the Department of Commerce under President Barack Obama and later as a co-chairman of Bernie Sanders's 2020 presidential campaign, is trying to cast progressivism in a more economically focused light. He calls his approach ''progressive capitalism'' and ''new economic patriotism,'' and he believes it is the key to broadening the progressive coalition to include the struggling middle of the country and those who might otherwise associate progressivism with economic redistribution rather than growth. That shift in emphasis is also what he thinks is crucial to President Biden's re-election chances. ''We can't just have a triumphant 'Look at all the great things we've done' message,'' says Khanna, who is often mentioned as a possible 2028 presidential candidate. ''Meet people where they are. They don't think we're in a great place.''

Where do you see the greatest tension between the two parts of a term like ''progressive capitalism''? The core progressive animating idea has largely been redistribution: We've got to tax the wealthy. There are challenges that I would pose to that. I'm for taxing the rich more, but there has to be a focus on economic production -- on how do we grow the pie? Not just redistribution, but giving more people the opportunity to create wealth. That has to be part of the progressive vision, and that has to involve the private sector. You can't build new steel factories in this country in Ashtabula, Ohio, or Johnstown, Pa., if you don't work with the private sector. So on challenging the progressive side: Have a focus on production, and be open to a partnership with the private sector. On the capitalism side: You have to care about place. You can't just say let's have all this macroeconomic growth and not focus on every district in America. Make sure that you understand that it is a bad thing for America that my district has $10 trillion of company value and other districts are totally in despair.

When you talk about manufacturing and economic concerns, do those ideas resonate for voters who feel culturally alienated from the Democratic Party? Joe Biden talks about those things, and if you look at polling, it doesn't seem like voters give him credit.1 Where is the disconnect? I'd say two things: One, we have to start by acknowledging people's anger, a sense that the system is not working for them. The president can say: ''Look, for years we've had this offshoring globalization debacle. We've had ***working-class*** wages decline. We've had communities hollowed out.'' Don't try to tell them that they should think that we're in a great place. The second thing is: Let's ask people in these communities what they want. I'm proud of having co-authored the CHIPS Act,2 but if you go to Johnstown or Warren, Ohio, they're not saying, ''We want semiconductor factories.'' They're open to it, but they want steel. Can you imagine if Joe Biden was in Warren, Ohio, saying, ''I'm the president who's bringing back steel to America''? So the two things are: recognizing people's anger, and doing it on a bigger scale in every district.

And your feeling is that Biden is not doing that? I think he could do more. He won South Carolina.3 Why not convene a summit in South Carolina and invite the H.B.C.U. leaders and every tech leader in America. They'd all show up! Have an economic summit and say: ''Only 1 percent of venture capital is going to Black business leaders, and Black women and men are underrepresented in tech. I want you to pledge to have technology jobs created for this state.'' Every person in D.C. loves Lyndon Johnson's record, right? They're always like, ''He did Medicare, Medicaid; he did the Voting Rights Act; he did the Immigration Reform Act.'' But every street in this country is named after John F. Kennedy,4 because Kennedy captured the public imagination. What we have to do as Democrats is not just think legislatively, but think, How do we capture the public imagination?

I want to stick with the idea of how progressives might capture imaginations. Your messaging is pretty different from high-profile progressives like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez or Ilhan Omar.5 I respect them.

It's inarguable that they have captured people's imaginations.6 How do you think about what you're trying to do in the context of what they do? My aspiration is to inspire not just progressives but a majority of this country. My argument is that the central concern people have, including progressives, is that the American dream has slipped away, that people don't think that their lives or their kids' lives are going to be as good as the lives of their parents. So how do we capture the economic imagination of the country to believe that their prospects are going to be better? Having a perpetual economic-development council at the White House -- which we don't have -- is important. Then doing things in communities that have lost steel; say, look, we're going to put up new steel plants in these communities. That would go a huge way in capturing the imagination and getting the ***working class*** that has been left out to say, ''We're going to be part of this economy.'' The downside is, OK, this is not necessarily going to speak right away to maybe the emotional sense of the traditional progressive, the progressive slogans. But it is a way of framing the goals that we all share in a way that can attract majoritarian support.

Do you think the majoritarian aspirations that you have are possible if the more fiery members of the progressive caucus remain its face? You have a way of asking very provocative questions in a very sober -- like, ''What did you eat for breakfast?'' [Laughs.] I think you can't have a majoritarian progressive coalition without the fire and without some of the extraordinary members of Congress who are reaching young people and mobilizing them. But it has to be broader than that.

You got your start in politics on Obama's State Senate campaign.7 From Barack Obama to Bernie Sanders:8 That's a path that moves left. Have your fundamental ideas about politics also moved? I think that Barack Obama is the greatest modern political figure. He changed the definition of political leadership in this country and what the face of leadership looks like. That said, I have become increasingly aware of the challenges of wealth disparity, income inequality, the sense that we need much stronger progressive policies. We need higher taxes on the very wealthy. We need Medicare for All and free public college. These are ideas that are much more progressive than where President Obama was. I believe that we now have a mobilized constituency in this country that makes those things much more plausible to achieve than when Obama was president. So I'd say my politics are probably in between Obama's and Bernie Sanders's.

Is that just sophisticated triangulation? When you look at my record, it is deeply progressive, but I also believe that we have to understand the importance of the multiracial coalition that President Obama built and have humility as we are talking to Black and brown voters. Too often they have not been sufficiently part of the progressive coalition. There's not going to be anyone who's going to articulate the blueprint of a multiracial, multiethnic democracy better than Obama, but to get there maybe we start with the economics. Say we can build things together: immigrants and people who trace their heritage back to the Mayflower, people of color and people of the white ***working class***. Americans love money. They love economic opportunity. Maybe economics is one way of starting to unify this country.

You said that Black and brown voters have not sufficiently been part of the progressive coalition. People have noted minorities moving to the right.9 What needs to change about the progressive message to those voters? We can't have people going down to the Black South and telling them what it means to be progressive. So one is to pay appropriate deference and understand where those communities are coming from, and not just go there with our message and say, ''We figured it out.'' We need to have more of an effort to listen organically to the Black community, to the members of the Congressional Black Caucus. There's got to be a humility about it. Going to the right? There I think we need an economic message. OK, wonderful, we've appointed one of the best Supreme Court justices, Ketanji Brown Jackson. What are we doing for the economic empowerment of these communities? Are we funding small businesses? Are we providing tangible relief on student loans? We have to deliver on the economics.

When people have asked you recently about the lack of a Democratic challenger to Biden, you've pointed to the power of incumbency and the fact that no challenger is going to have the name recognition that he has. I don't hear you making arguments that have to do with enthusiasm for Biden's ideas or achievements. Is that telling? The president has done a good job. It's a challenge, because we have to say he has done a good job while acknowledging that people don't feel good about the economy. That's hard. But when you look at what he promised when he ran, he has delivered a lot of that. On foreign policy, I think he has restored the NATO alliance; he stood up to Putin. He has, in my view, gotten China policy pretty right. I would push a little heavier on reducing trade deficits, but he is standing up to China while not pushing us into a cold war. He has a lot of experience for the volatile times we're in. I guess there's no one in our party right now -- in the absence of Barack Obama -- who I would say, ''Put that person in,'' and they would do a better job to lead this nation.

I was reading your first book10 and saw a blurb from Elon Musk.11 I suspect that you didn't send him your most recent book12 for a blurb. What do you make of his political turn? Well, I still keep in touch with Elon, so here's what I say: As an entrepreneur and innovator, he is unparalleled in genius. The fact is, he thought about electric vehicles and made that work. He figured out how to get rocket launches to be far cheaper. He figured out how to get Starlink into places of conflict. If you spend 15 minutes talking to him, you'll realize his brilliance. But I wish he would pay more attention to issues of the role of the government that enabled him, and I wish we had insisted, when the government gave the loan to Elon for Tesla,13 that it have labor neutrality for unionization. I wish he realized that there has to be a more inclusive benefit to innovation. That's where we have philosophical differences. He can be schizophrenic, as a lot of entrepreneurs are. I had an hourlong conversation with him, with Mike Gallagher, chairman of the China committee, on A.I., and he was incredibly thoughtful. Then you see his tweet that's like a seventh grader. It's a lot that you can't defend.

Did you read ''The Techno-Optimist Manifesto,'' by Marc Andreessen?14 I did. I know Marc.

He and guys like him have a pretty unadulterated belief that government has to get out of the way. What are the counterarguments that you can discuss with him, or thinkers like him, that suggest common ground? I make two arguments to tech leaders. The first one is that Silicon Valley emerged because of government investment in ARPA, in DARPA, in the N.S.F.15 Thoughtful folks realize the role that government investment had in making Silicon Valley possible. They realize it today in defense technology, how much the decisions of the Pentagon are going to matter in terms of the adoption of some of the new technology. So as a base line, I say, ''Look, government investment was critical.'' The second point I make is, I know everyone in Silicon Valley thinks they're self-made. But most of them didn't have to worry about health care. Most of them never had to worry about massive credit-card debt. They got to go to the dentist. They had enormous advantages. I say, ''Why can't we have that for everyone?'' The third point I make, which is probably the most compelling to them, is: ''You don't need me to make more money. You need me to tell a story of America so there is not a massive populist backlash in this country. It is not sustainable in this country for my district to have $10 trillion and places in the rest of America saying, 'What's going on with the American dream?' If we don't solve this, the tech backlash is only going to increase.''

Is it possible that a little more populist backlash in that regard might be helpful? If you look at the polling on Amazon, on Google, on Apple, they're much more popular than Congress.16

It doesn't take much.17 It doesn't take much, no. But they're actually pretty high approval brands. I think that there needs to be pushback on technology in terms of taxing the wealth, in terms of requiring labor standards, in terms of making sure they aren't violating antitrust law. But I don't think a reflexive ''We hate everything about tech'' is going to create the economic opportunities in places that are left out.

How do you understand the aggrieved sense that seems to emanate from people like Musk or Andreessen? Society's winners railing against how broken everything is. It seems profoundly blindered. It can be offensive to people in the ***working class*** who are actually struggling. I have no patience or tolerance for it, but I explain it by saying that a lot of these folks had a chip on their shoulder. They weren't accepted by the San Francisco bankers and the lawyers and the standard finance companies. These folks were outsiders and underdogs in the '80s and '90s, and they took huge risks, and some of them don't realize that they've won. The introspection that needs to happen is to say: ''OK, now you've become the system. You're no longer fighting the system. Look at the people who are really struggling in this country. It's not you.''

If Andreessen is a supporter,18 if you're able to have conversations in Silicon Valley, if you keep getting re-elected in Silicon Valley, might that suggest that people see you as fundamentally nonthreatening or malleable? Look, I've taken them on with the Internet Bill of Rights. I supported Senator Amy Klobuchar's antitrust legislation that some of them had issues with. I would point to my labor record. Then you start adding it up, and you say, ''Why are they supporting you?'' I think one of the reasons they're supporting me is that I am a technology optimist. I do believe that we can use technology in ways that are important to reindustrialize the country and create economic opportunities. So they like the work I've done in co-authoring the CHIPS and Science Act. They like the fact that I understand and take the effort to be curious about technology.

The notion of you as someone willing and even eager to find compromises is notable. We're in this political moment where compromising is seen as weakness. I mean, there are two different frames for me. The more positive frame is: I'm very consistent in my progressive values, but I want to build a majoritarian coalition for these progressive values, and I want to do so with a hopeful, unifying vision and the recognition that I don't have a monopoly on the truth. We need this temperament to make progressivism not just 20 to 30 percent of the party but a majoritarian part. The negative spin would be: This is opportunistic or not pure enough. I may end up upsetting both the progressives and the moderates, or I may succeed. That remains to be seen.

This interview has been edited and condensed for clarity from two conversations.

David Marchese is a staff writer for the magazine and the columnist for Talk. He recently interviewed Alok Vaid-Menon about transgender ordinariness, Joyce Carol Oates about immortality and Robert Downey Jr. about life after Marvel.

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1. In a recent Times/Siena poll of voters in six swing states, 59 percent said Donald Trump would do a better job on the economy, compared with 37 percent for Biden.

2. The act, which was signed into law in August 2022, was a combination of two bills: the Chips for America Act, aimed at increasing American semiconductor production, and the Endless Frontier Act, designed to support American high-tech research, which was introduced by Khanna and Representative Mike Gallagher, a Republican from Wisconsin.

3. Biden won the 2020 Democratic primary in South Carolina by nearly 30 points over Bernie Sanders. Trump won the state's presidential election by almost 12 points.

4. In 2013, Slate created an interactive online feature listing every street, park, airport and school named after Kennedy worldwide.

5. Both of whom, as well as the other members of the progressive Squad, have, I think it's fair to say, a much more aggressive, combative style of public rhetoric than Khanna.

6. Just by way of comparison, Ocasio-Cortez currently has 13.2 million followers on X, Omar has 2.9 million and Khanna has 321,600.

7. As a student volunteer in 1996. Khanna attended the University of Chicago.

8. Khanna endorsed Sanders for president in 2016.

9. In a compilation of Times/Siena polls taken over the past two years, Biden leads Trump by 53 percent to 28 percent among registered nonwhite voters. Biden won more than 70 percent of those voters in 2020.

10. ''Entrepreneurial Nation: Why Manufacturing Is Still Key to America's Future,'' published in 2012.

11. The Tesla chief executive and X owner's blurb praised Khanna's book for charting ''the path America can take to lead the world for years to come.''

12. ''Dignity in a Digital Age: Making Tech Work for All of Us,'' published in 2022.

13. In 2010, the Energy Department issued a $465 million loan to Tesla to produce electric vehicles and to develop a manufacturing facility in Fremont, Calif., which is in Khanna's congressional district. Khanna has represented the district since 2017.

14. In mid-October, Andreessen, a founder of the venture-capital firm Andreessen Horowitz as well as the early internet browser Netscape, published a lengthy essay in which he argued that technological innovation is the engine of a prosperous future and that anything getting in the way of its development is an enemy to humanity, broadly speaking.

15. The Defense Department's Advanced Research Projects Agency and Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, and the National Science Foundation.

16. The polling to which Khanna is referring is from 2018.

17. According to an October Gallup poll, job approval for Congress was at 13 percent.

18. He has contributed to Khanna's political campaigns.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/15/magazine/rep-ro-khanna-has-a-reminder-for-democrats-americans-love-money.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/15/magazine/rep-ro-khanna-has-a-reminder-for-democrats-americans-love-money.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY MAMADI DOUMBOUYA) (MM11)

Opposite page: Khanna with former Prime Minister Tony Blair of Britain at Web Summit 2019 in Lisbon. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CODY GLENN/SPORTSFILE, VIA GETTY IMAGES) (MM12)

Above: Representative Ro Khanna with Senator Bernie Sanders at a rally in California in 2020 for Sanders's presidential campaign. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BRITTANY HOSEA-SMALL/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, VIA GETTY IMAGES) (MM13) This article appeared in print on page MM11, MM12, MM13.

**Load-Date:** December 24, 2023

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[***A 2024 Vulnerability***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B47-XTV1-JBG3-601V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 17, 2024 Wednesday 00:09 EST

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1790 words

**Highlight:** The Democrats are out of step with public opinion when it comes to immigration.

**Body**

The Democrats are out of step with public opinion when it comes to immigration.

I keep a running list of issues on which either the Republican Party or the Democratic Party is out of step with public opinion.

For Republicans, [*abortion now tops my list*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/12/us/politics/house-republicans-abortion-ban.html), followed by [*Donald Trump’s attitudes toward democracy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/16/upshot/trump-effect-midterm-election.html). For Democrats, I think immigration policy has moved to the top of the list.

In a newsletter last week, I described [*the shift in the Democratic Party’s immigration policy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/10/briefing/immigration-policy-democrats.html) over the past decade. Before Trump ran for president, Democrats tended to combine passionate support for many forms of immigration with a belief in strong border security. But Trump’s harsh anti-immigration stance pushed the party toward the opposite end of the spectrum.

Today, many Democratic politicians are willing to accept high levels of undocumented immigration and oppose enforcement measures that the party once favored. Some Democrats, especially on the left, argue that the government doesn’t even have the power to reduce migration much.

This shift has created political vulnerabilities for Democrats — because most Americans are closer to the party’s old position than to its new one. Today, I’ll walk through public opinion on the issue.

‘A serious problem’

The first thing to know is that views on immigration aren’t static. During Trump’s presidency, Americans became more favorable to immigration, evidently in reaction to Trump’s opposition to it. Consider this: By the end of his presidency, the number of Americans who favored increasing immigration exceeded the number who favored decreasing it for the first time in six decades of Gallup polling.

That trend has since reversed, as you can see in the chart. The biggest reason seems to be a surge of illegal immigration during President Biden’s term. One cause of that surge has been the Biden administration’s approach. Many would-be migrants now believe — correctly — that so long as they can reach U.S. soil, they will be able to stay for years.

In response, the number of Americans who say that illegal immigration is a serious problem has risen, according to YouGov:

To reduce these migration flows, congressional Republicans are [*pushing for new border policies*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/04/us/politics/biden-immigration-republicans-democrats.html). Democrats often criticize the proposals as extreme, but many are quite popular. Polls frequently find majority support for a border wall, for instance, especially when the question doesn’t mention Trump’s name. In a recent New York Times/Siena College survey of six battleground states, 53 percent of respondents favored a wall, compared with 44 percent who opposed one.

A recent Fox News survey (and, yes, other pollsters respect Fox’s polling) found majority support for several other enforcement measures, too:

I don’t mean to suggest that the Democratic Party’s shift on immigration is simply about Trump. It’s part a larger story — namely, [*the class inversion of American politics*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/07/briefing/democratic-party-covid-georgia.html), in which the Democratic Party increasingly reflects the views of socially liberal professionals. On immigration, these affluent, highly educated voters tend to favor more open policies, while ***working-class*** voters prefer less immigration.

Race plays a nuanced role in these views. White voters do tend to be more skeptical of immigration than Asian, Black and Hispanic voters. But a large chunk of voters of color, especially ***working-class*** voters, also favor tighter border security than many leading Democrats do. Immigration appears to be one reason, among many, that Biden’s support among voters of color [*has deteriorated*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/05/upshot/biden-trump-black-hispanic-voters.html).

During the past few years — as Democrats have changed their approach to immigration — Republicans have made gains with Asian, Black and Hispanic voters. Some of the biggest gains have come in the border areas of Texas ([*as this Times map shows*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/11/05/us/texas-election-results.html)). Among Hispanic voters, illegal immigration is one of the Democratic Party’s weakest issues, along with crime and the economy, a Times poll in 2022 found; the party’s strongest issues include abortion, climate, student debt cancellation and Trump’s criminal charges.

Democrats assumed that a more open immigration policy would help increase their support among voters of color. Instead, the opposite has happened.

The rule of law

Even with all their current concerns, Americans are not opposed to immigration. Most say that legal immigrants [*strengthen the country*](https://static.foxnews.com/foxnews.com/content/uploads/2023/12/Fox_December-10-13-2023_National_Topline_December-17-Release.pdf), and many believe the U.S. should remain a haven for people fleeing repression. But most Americans also think that the country’s immigration laws should mean something and that citizens of other countries should not be able to enter this country simply because they want to.

Today’s Democratic Party is often uncomfortable taking a firm position on immigration. As a result, the issue has become a problem for Biden’s re-election campaign — and an advantage for Trump.

Related: Migrants in New York camped in snow, [*waiting for identification cards*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/17/nyregion/migrants-shelter-snow-nyc.html) they hoped would help them find work.

THE LATEST NEWS

China

* China’s population has shrunk and [*its birthrate has continued to fall*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/business/china-birth-rate-2023.html) despite government efforts to encourage women to have more babies.

1. The Chinese economy grew last year, but its [*longer-term growth is slowing*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/business/china-gdp-q4-2023.html) in part because of high debt and a shrinking work force.
2. China has restarted measuring youth unemployment — this time with different criteria that [*lowered the figure*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/17/business/china-youth-unemployment.html).

Middle East

* The Biden administration plans to return the Houthis [*to a list of terrorist groups*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/us/politics/houthis-terrorism-designation.html?smid=url-share).

1. The U.S. [*struck Houthi targets*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/world/middleeast/us-strikes-houthis-yemen.html) in Yemen for the third time, destroying missiles the military said were a threat to ships in the Red Sea.
2. Two missing Navy SEALs were part of an operation to [*seize Iranian weapons bound for Yemen*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/world/middleeast/navy-seals-houthis-iran.html), the Pentagon said.
3. Iran [*hit Pakistan and Iraq*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/world/middleeast/iraq-us-europe-iran-attack-kurdistan.html) with airstrikes. Iran said it was targeting terrorists behind recent attacks, but Pakistan and Iraq said the strikes had killed civilians.

War in Gaza

* The Israeli military is trying to [*take control of the tunnels*](https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/israel-war-gaza-hamas-perilous-phase-1ed3ea9b?mod=hp_lead_pos7) under Khan Younis, in southern Gaza, The Wall Street Journal reports. The area is crowded with refugees.

1. Qatar said it had brokered [*a deal between Israel and Hamas*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/01/17/world/israel-hamas-news/israel-hamas-hostages-medicine-qatar?smid=url-share) that will allow medication to be delivered to hostages in return for additional humanitarian aid to Gaza.

2024 Election

* As Republican candidates campaign across New Hampshire, Nikki Haley is [*focusing on independents*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/us/politics/haley-new-hampshire-independents-trump.html), who can vote in the primary there next Tuesday.

1. ABC News [*canceled a debate*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/us/politics/haley-trump-biden-debate.html) scheduled for Thursday in New Hampshire, after Haley refused to attend unless Trump also participated.
2. Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who is running as an independent, is trying to [*create his own political party*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/us/politics/rfk-jr-we-the-people-ballots.html) in an effort to get on the ballot in six states.
3. White House officials believe a Trump rematch is Biden’s [*best chance of winning re-election*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/us/politics/biden-trump-opponent.html), Peter Baker writes.

More on Politics

* Trump’s lawyers plan to accuse the [*intelligence community of bias*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/us/politics/trump-documents-intelligence.html) in the classified documents case, court filings show.

1. Donald Trump visited New York for the start of a [*second defamation suit filed by E. Jean Carroll*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/15/nyregion/e-jean-carroll-trump-defamation-trial.html).

* In Congress, top Democrats and Republicans [*agreed on a plan*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/us/politics/tax-deal-congress.html) to expand the child tax credit and restore business tax breaks, but the deal faces a difficult path to become law.

1. The Senate took the first step in advancing a stopgap spending bill to [*avoid a partial government shutdown*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/world/europe/senate-government-shutdown-bill.html) at the end of the week.

Business

* Elon Musk [*demanded more than $80 billion in additional stock*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/business/tesla-elon-musk-stock.html) from Tesla’s board and threatened to work on projects elsewhere.
* A federal judge blocked JetBlue from [*acquiring Spirit Airlines*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/business/jetblue-spirit-airlines-ruling-merger.html). The Justice Department had argued against the merger.

1. E.V. batteries [*struggle in very cold weather*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/17/business/tesla-charging-chicago-cold-weather.html), leading to long lines and frustration at charging stations.

Other Big Stories

* New York City went 701 days without significant snowfall. [*That run ended yesterday*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/nyregion/snow-nyc.html).

1. A New Zealand lawmaker quit after [*video was published of her allegedly shoplifting*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/world/asia/new-zealand-lawmaker-shoplifting-golriz-ghahraman.html).

* Two Malaysian prisoners at Guantánamo Bay pleaded guilty to conspiring in [*the 2002 nightclub bombings*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/us/politics/bali-bombing-case.html) in Bali, Indonesia.

Opinions

The U.S. needs to [*prioritize its own interests*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/17/opinion/biden-israel-war-washington.html) and pressure Israel to avoid a wider war, Daniel Levy, a former Israeli peace negotiator, writes.

The charges of genocide against Israel are a moral obscenity [*that dilute the term’s power*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/opinion/israel-hamas-war-genocide.html), Bret Stephens writes.

Popular support for Taiwanese democracy in both the U.S. and Taiwan is [*risking a Chinese invasion*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/17/opinion/taiwan-china-election-war.html), Michael Beckley writes.

MORNING READS

31 years, 5 months: A man in Portugal claimed to have the [*world’s oldest dog*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/world/europe/worlds-oldest-dog-bobi.html). After widespread skepticism, though, his Guinness record is in doubt.

New York: For most of his life, Hakim Jeffrey’s only connections to Representative Hakeem Jeffries were Brooklyn and their names. [*Then they crossed paths*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/17/nyregion/hakim-jeffrey-nycha-hakeem-jeffries-brooklyn.html).

Lives Lived: Despite working in a political town removed from the coastal entertainment capitals, Tom Shales wielded enormous influence during his three-decade career as The Washington Post’s chief television critic. [*He died at 79.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/arts/television/tom-shales-dead.html)

SPORTS

N.F.L.: The Michigan coach Jim Harbaugh interviewed for [*the Atlanta Falcons’ coaching vacancy*](https://theathletic.com/5207683/2024/01/16/jim-harbaugh-falcons-interview/). And Mike Tomlin, the Pittsburgh Steelers coach, [*told players*](https://theathletic.com/5206709/2024/01/16/cam-heyward-mike-tomlin-steelers/) he would return to the team for next season, quieting doubts about his future.

Sport switch: The 22-year-old Welsh rugby star Louis Rees-Zammit is leaving the sport to [*attempt a career*](https://theathletic.com/5205993/2024/01/16/louis-rees-zammit-nfl-international-player-program/) in the N.F.L.

Lawsuit: A woman accused James Dolan, the businessman behind Madison Square Garden and the New York Knicks, of [*pressuring her into unwanted sex*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/arts/music/james-dolan-harvey-weinstein-sexual-assault-lawsuit.html). Dolan denied the allegations.

ARTS AND IDEAS

Congrats and goodbye: Between 2010 and 2023, the number of TV shows in the U.S. rose almost every year. But after a year of strikes and shrinking studio profits, Hollywood executives [*have pulled back*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/business/media/emmys-tv-streaming.html). Monday’s Emmy Awards ceremony “felt in many ways like a bookend to the so-called Peak TV era,” The Times’s John Koblin writes. “There is a good chance that television may start to look a lot like television from a couple of decades ago.”

More on culture

* Nelson Mandela’s daughter will [*auction some of his belongings*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/17/arts/auction-of-nelson-mandela-items-set-after-court-fight-with-government.html) after winning a legal battle with the South African government, which claimed they were national artifacts.
* “If you’ve ever wondered what is the polar opposite of M.L.K. Day, it is the Iowa Republican caucus”: The late-night hosts [*joked about Trump’s victory*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/17/arts/television/late-night-trump-iowa.html).

THE MORNING RECOMMENDS …

Prepare [*crisp gnocchi*](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1020453-crisp-gnocchi-with-brussels-sprouts-and-brown-butter) with brussels sprouts and brown butter in 20 minutes.

Learn a new language. It may be [*beneficial for brain health in old age*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/well/mind/dementia-bilingual-language.html).

Ride out winter storms with [*these tools*](https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/reviews/best-blizzard-snow-storm-gear/).

GAMES

Here is [*today’s Spelling Bee*](https://www.nytimes.com/puzzles/spelling-bee). Yesterday’s pangram were littleneck and telekinetic.

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

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

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

This article appeared in print on page A10.

**Load-Date:** January 19, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Should Wildlife Advocates Help Set Hunting Rules in Vermont?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BMY-60D1-JBG3-602H-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 26, 2024 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 15

**Length:** 1245 words

**Byline:** By Jenna Russell

**Body**

A bill that would add people who don't hunt to the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board has stirred an outcry in a state known for both progressive politics and rural traditions.

Legislators in Vermont are considering shaking up the state board that drafts hunting and fishing rules -- by adding members who don't hunt or fish.

The proposal has touched off fierce disagreement between hunters and wildlife protection advocates in a state known for both its progressive politics and its traditional rural culture, steeped for generations in hunting, fishing and trapping.

Supporters of the measure say that decisions affecting the state's wildlife should be shaped by a board that reflects residents' diverse perspectives. The proposal cites people who watch, photograph or listen to wildlife as examples of potential new board members, joining hunters, fishermen and trappers.

''Even people who don't care about wildlife care about democracy, and believe it shouldn't be a privileged special interest group making policy,'' said Brenna Galdenzi, president of Protect Our Wildlife, an advocacy group based in Stowe that has pushed for the bill.

Hunters say there is nothing wrong with the current system: a 14-member volunteer board made up of hunters, trappers and fishermen from every county, appointed by the governor. The board fleshes out detailed regulations based on laws enacted by the Legislature, with input from the public and state scientists.

The proof of its success, they say, is the healthy status of game species in the state.

''Every one is abundant and flourishing, and that's where the rubber meets the road,'' said Chris Bradley, president of the Vermont Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs. ''So what's the problem?''

The back and forth has been contentious, a reflection of bigger tensions in a state where a persistent influx of wealthier newcomers has accelerated since the pandemic. Some critics have framed the legislation as an affront by ''privileged'' liberal interest groups with time and money to spare against ***working-class*** gun owners with fewer resources. Proponents of the bill say it is outlandish for hunters to claim victimhood when the board's membership has been drawn entirely from their ranks for generations.

After Gov. Phil Scott, a Republican, said he would probably veto the bill, legislators last week amended it to try to win enough votes for an override. While the bill previously specified that the board must include members without hunting licenses, and stripped the governor's power to appoint them, the revised version merely mandates ''balanced viewpoints'' on the board and lets the governor select 14 of 16 members.

Similar efforts have been made in other states, part of a larger national strategy by animal advocates to boost their influence in government. A bipartisan bill to shake up the state game commission in New Mexico passed in the State Legislature last year, but died when Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham opted not to sign it into law.

In New Jersey, a lawsuit filed last year by a former state legislator argued that the state Fish and Game Council, made up largely of appointees from hunting and fishing clubs, violates the State Constitution because its members function as a de facto legislative body.

''We're trying to challenge the status quo, because there's a huge gap right now between state policy and the views of the American people,'' said Michelle Lute, co-director of Wildlife for All, a national organization based in New Mexico whose mission, in part, is to make state wildlife management more ''compassionate.''

In Vermont, data shows a steady decline since the 1990s in the number of new hunting licenses and combination hunting and fishing licenses. The number of total active licenses has stabilized since 2017, when the state began requiring lifetime license holders to reactivate their licenses each year they intend to hunt. Those reactivations boosted the number of active resident licenses to 70,000 last year -- up from 57,000 in 2016, but still well below the roughly 96,000 active licenses in the mid-1980s.

Since there are no fees required for license reactivations, and the volume of paid licenses has declined, Ms. Galdenzi said, taxpayers who don't hunt are shouldering more of the cost of managing wildlife, ''but we don't have a voice at the table.'' When she has tried to provide input at board hearings, she said, she has felt disrespected and dismissed.

Christopher Herrick, the state fish and wildlife commissioner, challenged that assertion, describing an intensive process of public engagement used by the board to solicit and consider input. He compared the process to his own as a father of four children: ''I always listened to them, but I didn't always do what they said.''

Hunters say the pro-democracy talk by the bill's supporters is little more than camouflage for its true purpose: to pave the way for crackdowns on hunting. State Senator Russ Ingalls, a Republican from northern Vermont, said the proposal has deeply angered his constituents, who feel their heritage and identity are under attack.

''We have families who eat wildlife to survive, who are going to have a hard year if they don't have a couple of deer in the freezer,'' he said. ''If I don't like something, I don't do it, but if liberals or progressives don't like it, they don't want you to do it either.''

Tensions around hunting in Vermont have simmered for years, recently flaring over moose management -- the state has issued moose hunting permits with the goal of reducing a booming tick population -- and the use of dogs to hunt coyotes. The Legislature asked for tighter controls on such dogs after some residents complained about property damage and alarming run-ins with packs of hounds.

The wildlife board says it complied by requiring the dogs to wear tracking collars, but critics -- including Protect Our Wildlife -- say the collars aren't enough, and have filed a lawsuit. In a twist designed to prevent such standoffs, the proposed legislation would diminish the board's power, relegating it to an advisory role while handing the responsibility for rule making to the state Fish and Wildlife Department.

It would also require board members to ''prioritize science'' and to be trained in subjects including climate change and hunting ethics that proponents see as critical for ''modern'' wildlife management. The bill, which passed in the Senate on Friday by a 21-8 vote, would also ban the practice of hunting coyotes with dogs.

Mr. Herrick, the wildlife commissioner, said that shifting more responsibility to the department would burden his already overworked staff at a time when the budget is stretched thin, slowing down conservation projects already underway.

''We appreciate what this bill is trying to do around bringing different stakeholders together, and we're not opposed to improving how Vermont makes hunting and fishing regulations,'' the commissioner said in a statement Friday. But, he said, even the amended bill ''is not the right way to do it.''

State Senator Christopher Bray, a Democrat from Addison County and the bill's sponsor, said it reflects the state's changing reality, and the need to build bridges between residents with widely divergent values and experience.

''The most important word that's not in the bill is respect,'' he said. ''For other people, for different points of view and for all living things in the environment.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/25/us/vermont-lawmakers-hunting-rules.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/25/us/vermont-lawmakers-hunting-rules.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: A proposal for changes to the board that makes hunting and fishing rules is dividing Vermonters. Brenna Galdenzi, above, said, ''Even people who don't care about wildlife care about democracy.'' Chris Bradley, below, believes the current system is working. Every species ''is abundant and flourishing,'' he said. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY CALEB KENNA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A15.

**Load-Date:** March 26, 2024

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[***Sunak, Take 3: Why Britain’s Leader Is on His 3rd Political Makeover***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69MM-RGD1-DXY4-X2HS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 14, 2023 Tuesday 23:47 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; europe

**Length:** 1329 words

**Byline:** Mark Landler and Stephen Castle

**Highlight:** Rishi Sunak’s reshuffle was a bold attempt to win back more moderate Conservatives. But it could backfire, analysts said.

**Body**

Rishi Sunak’s reshuffle was a bold attempt to win back more moderate Conservatives. But it could backfire, analysts said.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak’s dramatic shake-up of his cabinet on Monday was a bold gamble that tacking to the center will give him a lift in the polls that his lurch to the populist right this summer failed to accomplish.

But as Britain’s political establishment digested the news — the return of a more centrist former prime minister, David Cameron, and the ouster of a hard edged home secretary, Suella Braverman, who lashed out at Mr. Sunak on Tuesday — analysts said the prime minister’s pivot smacked of a politician casting about for an identity.

Far from a winning electoral formula, some predict that the reshuffle could fracture the coalition that delivered a landslide victory for the Conservative Party in 2019. By trying to shore up the party’s traditional heartland in the south of England, they said, Mr. Sunak risked alienating the ***working-class*** voters in the “red wall,” who once flocked to the Tory slogan, “Get Brexit done.”

“It doesn’t make any more sense than most of Sunak’s moves since the summer,” said Timothy Bale, a professor of politics at Queen Mary University of London. “And it’s unlikely to make a blind bit of difference to his chances of turning things around before the general election.”

Mr. Bale said that in a general election, which is likely to be held next fall, Britons will cast their votes based on issues like the cost of living and rising rates on home mortgages, rather than primarily on identity politics.

This is Mr. Sunak’s third political makeover since he replaced Liz Truss as prime minister 13 months ago. First, he was a pragmatic technocrat, who stabilized the economy after Ms. Truss’s proposed tax cuts. Then he adopted divisive policies on climate change, immigration, and crime to try to put the opposition Labour Party on the defensive.

Keeping on Ms. Braverman, with her inflammatory language on immigration, was part of that strategy. Some predict she will emerge as an internal challenger to Mr. Sunak, leading a right-wing insurgency that could torment the prime minister, much as euro skeptic right-wingers tormented Mr. Cameron a decade ago.

On Tuesday, Ms. Braverman released a withering [*three-page letter*](https://twitter.com/SuellaBraverman/status/1724465401982070914) to Mr. Sunak, in which she said he “manifestly and repeatedly failed to deliver on every single one” of the policies that she claimed they had agreed on when she joined his cabinet and helped him to become prime minister. “Someone needs to be honest,” Ms. Braverman said, “your plan is not working, we have endured record election defeats, your resets have failed and we are running out of time.”

For all that, there were few signs on Tuesday of a mushrooming rebellion within the party. While one Conservative lawmaker, Andrea Jenkyns, submitted a letter of no-confidence in Mr. Sunak, describing him as a leader who had been rejected by both the party’s members and the public, she was not followed by a flood of others.

It would take similar protests from a total of 15 percent of the 350 Conservative Party lawmakers to trigger a challenge to Mr. Sunak. Having changed their leader — and Britain’s prime minister — twice since the last general election, a further switch would stretch credibility.

Still, some analysts said Mr. Sunak’s pivot to the center is not without risks internally, since the ranks of Conservative lawmakers are filled with people elected in 2019 on a populist, pro-Brexit message. In addition to Mr. Cameron, who voted against Brexit, the chancellor of the Exchequer, Jeremy Hunt, also voted to remain.

James Cleverly, whom Mr. Sunak moved from foreign secretary to replace Ms. Braverman at the Home Office, did vote for Brexit, but he is also viewed as a more moderate, less ideological figure. That leaves Mr. Sunak as the only conspicuously right-wing occupant of what are called Britain’s four great offices of state.

“Ending up with three moderates in the top four positions is not going to be great for his party politics,” said Jonathan Powell, who served as chief of staff to a former Labour prime minister, Tony Blair. “A centrist cabinet in a right-wing party is a dangerous combination for a prime minister.”

Mr. Sunak’s calculation, other analysts said, is that he will get credit for standing up to the party’s hard right among traditional Tory voters. In these Conservative strongholds, many affluent, cosmopolitan and more liberal voters were alienated by Ms. Braverman’s increasingly harsh rhetoric. But the big electoral threat in such regions often comes from the smaller, centrist Liberal Democrat party, rather than Labour.

In 2019, these traditional Conservative voters largely stuck with the party, while many former Labour voters in the north and middle of England — known as the “red wall” because of the opposition party’s campaign colors — were won over by former Prime Minister Boris Johnson’s populist campaign.

The problem for Mr. Sunak is that Brexit has faded as an issue, with most voters more concerned about the squeeze on their living standards, exacerbated by Ms. Truss’s disastrous impact on the economy, and the lamentable state of the National Health Service. Labour is now under the centrist leadership of [*Keir Starmer*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/07/world/europe/keir-starmer-labour-party-uk.html).

“There does seem to be a growing awareness in all wings of the Conservative Party, that it’s going to be very difficult, perhaps impossible, to hold together the coalition of 2019,” said Robert Ford, a professor of political science at Manchester University.

At his party’s conference last month, Mr. Sunak made “an attempt to hold on to the ‘red wall,’ and what we’re seeing now is a kind of U-turn and focus on the ‘blue wall,’” Professor Ford said. “And the problem is that they can’t have both.”

Mr. Sunak’s attempt to put on a populist mantle failed for another reason.

While he shares much of Ms. Braverman’s thinking, he had not proved effective in selling it. His public image is of a “cosmopolitan, technocratic, California-loving, globe-trotting tech-bro type,” Professor Ford said. “That sort of anti-woke, anti-immigration politics just seems very jarring coming from someone who is perceived in that way, even though it’s very likely to be pretty close to his actual personal politics.”

One risk for the Conservatives is that their pivot gives more space to Reform UK, the successor to the Brexit Party once led by Nigel Farage, a right-wing firebrand. A reinvigorated Reform UK could siphon off votes from the Conservatives, allowing Labour to win back “red wall” seats under Britain’s winner-takes-all electoral system.

Perhaps the biggest question is whether moderate Conservatives will view the return of Mr. Cameron, who embodies many of their values, as the restoration of their brand of politics. Many of those voters blame Brexit for Britain’s stagnating economy, as well as for unleashing the populism that has dominated their party since 2016 and often seemed to caricature them as members of a privileged metropolitan elite.

Mr. Cameron, of course, called the referendum that resulted in Brexit. And after losing the campaign to stay in the European Union, he resigned.

“They have had a seven-year barrage of abuse from their traditional party and now, as a way of trying to win them back, that party puts into the House of Lords the guy who kicked off the whole barrage of abuse and then ran away,” said Professor Ford. “There’s no guarantee that it will work.”

PHOTOS: By trying to shore up the Conservative Party’s core, analysts said, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak risked alienating ***working-class*** voters. (POOL PHOTO BY KIN CHEUNG); David Cameron, a more centrist former prime minister, was added to the cabinet while the home secretary Suella Braverman, with her inflammatory language on immigration, was ousted. Some predict she will emerge as an internal challenger to Mr. Sunak. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY KIN CHEUNG/ASSOCIATED PRESS; TOBY MELVILLE/REUTERS) This article appeared in print on page A13.

**Load-Date:** November 15, 2023

**End of Document**



[***The One Privilege Liberals Ignore***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:695J-M7N1-JBG3-61NX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 14, 2023 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 24; NICHOLAS KRISTOF

**Length:** 1017 words

**Byline:** By Nicholas Kristof

**Body**

American liberals have led the campaign to reduce child poverty since Franklin Roosevelt, and it's a proud legacy. But we have long had a blind spot.

We are often reluctant to acknowledge one of the significant drivers of child poverty -- the widespread breakdown of family -- for fear that to do so would be patronizing or racist. It's an issue largely for ***working-class*** whites, Blacks and Hispanics, albeit most prevalent among African Americans. But just as you can't have a serious conversation about poverty without discussing race, you also can't engage unless you consider single-parent households. After all:

Families headed by single mothers are five times as likely to live in poverty as married-couple families.

Children in single-mother homes are less likely to graduate from high school or earn a college degree. They are more likely to become single parents themselves, perpetuating the cycle.

Almost 30 percent of American children now live with a single parent or with no parent at all. One reason for the sensitivities is large racial disparities: Single parenting is less common in white and Asian households, but only 38 percent of Black children live with married parents.

''The data present some uncomfortable realities,'' writes Melissa S. Kearney, an economist at the University of Maryland, in an important book on this topic to be published next week. ''Two-parent families are beneficial for children,'' she adds. ''Places that have more two-parent families have higher rates of upward mobility. Not talking about these facts is counterproductive.''

We liberals often perceive the world through prisms of privilege, but we rarely discuss one of the most important privileges of all -- and it's the title of Kearney's book, ''The Two-Parent Privilege.''

Let me interrupt this column with a shower of caveats. Many children raised in part by single moms do extraordinarily well; one was a two-term president in the 1990s and another served two terms until 2017. And I think the big driver for the rise in single-parent households is bad decisions by policymakers that led to mass incarceration and a collapse of earnings for ***working-class*** men.

Yet this is still so wrenching to discuss.

That goes back to 1965, when Daniel Patrick Moynihan wrote a prescient report about the decline of marriage among Black Americans. Moynihan, who himself had been raised mostly in poverty by a single mother, warned that family breakdown would exacerbate social problems, but he was denounced by liberals for racism and victim-blaming.

Scholars ran for cover. It helped greatly that the eminent African American sociologist William Julius Wilson of Harvard later conducted research in this area and praised Moynihan's work as ''prophetic.'' But even today there is a deep discomfort in liberal circles about acknowledging these realities.

A scholarly organization in the field published a call in 2021 to ''dismantle family privilege'' (such as championing two-parent families), which it warned was embedded in ''white supremacist society.'' And while 91 percent of college-educated conservatives agree that ''children are better off if they have married parents,'' only 30 percent of college-educated liberals agree, according to a report to be released next week by the Institute for Family Studies.

In fact, children simply do better on average in school and typically earn more in adulthood if they have married parents, and this is particularly true of boys. It doesn't seem to matter if the two parents are a mom and dad or a same-sex couple.

One advantage of a two-parent family is simply a function of arithmetic: Two parents can earn two incomes, meaning less poverty.

Two-parent households seem to benefit not just their own kids but the neighborhood as well. Harvard's Opportunity Insights group found that upward mobility was more likely for Black boys in neighborhoods with a higher share of Black dads living with their children.

One stunning and depressing gauge of racial inequity in the United States: The study found that 62 percent of white children live in low-poverty areas with fathers present in most homes, while only 4 percent of Black children do.

The collapse of marriage has happened mostly among less-educated Americans, including those who are white, Black or Hispanic. While many college graduates in theory embrace all kinds of family relationships, they remain traditional in their personal behaviors, mostly having children after marriage and raising their own kids in two-parent households. Brad Wilcox, a sociologist and family expert at the University of Virginia, calls this ''talk left, walk right.''

The United States is an outlier in family breakdown. A Pew study of 130 countries found that American children were more likely to live with a single parent than those of any other nation. Conservatives sometimes argue that increases in welfare benefits undermined marriage, but this appears not to be a major factor -- partly because European countries have both stronger social welfare programs and more two-parent families.

The proposed solutions from conservatives, such as marriage promotion efforts tried under the George W. Bush administration, likewise have had little impact. What does appear to strengthen marriage is lifting earnings of low-education men. This makes them more ''marriageable,'' researchers find.

Lifting earnings is where liberals have the solutions: strengthened labor unions, community college support, skills training initiatives such as high school career academies and groups that provide technical training like Per Scholas.

The breakdown of family primarily among low-income Americans may be uncomfortable to talk about, but it is part of the apparatus of inequality in the United States. It doesn't help when we avert our eyes, ignore the data and deny the existence of two-parent privilege.

The Times is committed to publishing a diversity of letters to the editor. We'd like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some tips. And here's our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](mailto:letters@nytimes.com)

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/13/opinion/single-parent-poverty.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/13/opinion/single-parent-poverty.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A24.

**Load-Date:** September 14, 2023

**End of Document**



[***New York City Might Pay You to Construct or Retrofit a 'Granny Flat' in Your Backyard***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69PG-XD81-DXY4-X038-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 23, 2023 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 11

**Length:** 576 words

**Byline:** By Mihir Zaveri

**Body**

Fifteen New Yorkers living in single-family homes could get up to nearly $400,000 to build an extra apartment on their properties.

To address the big problem of New York's housing crisis, the city is trying something small: payments to homeowners to build apartments in their garages and attics.

On Tuesday, officials announced a program that would give 15 owners of single-family homes up to $400,000 each for such projects, which could include building detached units or retrofitting basements.

Recipients will be restricted by income -- the ceiling for a family of four will be $232,980, with priority given to lower incomes -- and those interested will be able to apply on the city's website on Tuesday. Rents in the new apartments would also be capped, at around $2,600 for a one-bedroom apartment, for example.

Maria Torres-Springer, the city's deputy mayor for housing, economic development and work force, acknowledged the effort was modest.

''We hope that it's just the type of program that builds momentum, shows what's possible and that demonstrates to New Yorkers how we can build housing in every neighborhood in the city,'' she said in an interview.

Mayor Eric Adams said in a statement that the program was a ''tangible win for families'' and gave ***working class*** New Yorkers the ''tools they need to thrive in this city.''

Making it easier to build basements, cottages and other extra units has become an attractive way to encourage development in states and cities dealing with high housing costs.

Supporters say the model helps homeowners earn money and can be great for older people trying to find affordable places near their families, which is why the units are often called ''granny flats.''

But complicated regulations make them costly to build and maintain in New York City -- at least legally, said Howard Slatkin, executive director of the Citizens Housing and Planning Council, a nonprofit advocacy group.

Plenty of unregulated homes already exist illegally, in basements and cellars that can be so unsafe that they can turn deadly in floods and fires.

Government attempts to change the regulations and encourage the development of such units under rules that make them safer have largely failed. Suburban legislators helped stymie Gov. Kathy Hochul's attempt this year to ease some of the restrictions.

A pilot program in New York City that started under Mayor Bill de Blasio to convert basements into safe and legal apartments failed mainly because of the cost of renovation. Only one basement is being converted through the program so far. In some cases, regulations would have forced homeowners to add sprinklers in every room or protective railings along the roof if they wanted to add a unit in the basement.

The program announced on Tuesday targets areas where current codes already allow homeowners to add another unit. It comes as Mr. Adams's administration is also pushing zoning changes that would allow people in a broader swath of the city to add additional units.

While most people might think of New York City as a dense place with big apartment buildings, lower-density neighborhoods make up more than half of the city's land, Mr. Slatkin said.

That's why the program seems promising, he said. It ''helps ordinary homeowners who don't have the kind of access to capital that a builder on their own might have,'' he said.

''This is the way that you can produce housing at a relatively low cost,'' he said.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/21/nyregion/nyc-accessory-dwelling-units.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/21/nyregion/nyc-accessory-dwelling-units.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A11.

**Load-Date:** November 23, 2023

**End of Document**



[***The One Privilege Liberals Ignore; Nicholas Kristof***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:695F-GGV1-DXY4-X09F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 13, 2023 Wednesday 23:03 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1013 words

**Byline:** Nicholas Kristof

**Highlight:** We can’t have a serious conversation about poverty and inequality without contemplating the breakdown of marriage and family.

**Body**

American liberals have led the campaign to reduce child poverty since Franklin Roosevelt, and it’s a proud legacy. But we have long had a blind spot.

We are often reluctant to acknowledge one of the significant drivers of child poverty — the widespread breakdown of family — for fear that to do so would be patronizing or racist. It’s an issue largely for ***working-class*** whites, Blacks and Hispanics, [*albeit most*](https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2021/04/number-of-children-living-only-with-their-mothers-has-doubled-in-past-50-years.html) prevalent among African Americans. But just as you can’t have a serious conversation about poverty without discussing race, you also can’t engage unless you consider single-parent households. After all:

* Families headed by single mothers are five times as likely to live in poverty as married-couple families.

1. Children in single-mother homes are less likely to graduate from high school or earn a college degree. They are more likely to become single parents themselves, perpetuating the cycle.
2. Almost 30 percent of American children now live with a single parent or with no parent at all. One reason for the sensitivities is large racial disparities: Single parenting is less common in white and Asian households, but only 38 percent of Black children live with married parents.

“The data present some uncomfortable realities,” writes [*Melissa S. Kearney*](https://www.econ.umd.edu/facultyprofile/kearney/melissa), an economist at the University of Maryland, in an important book on this topic to be published next week. “Two-parent families are beneficial for children,” she adds. “Places that have more two-parent families have higher rates of upward mobility. Not talking about these facts is counterproductive.”

We liberals often perceive the world through prisms of privilege, but we rarely discuss one of the most important privileges of all — and it’s the title of Kearney’s book, [*“The Two-Parent Privilege.”*](https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/T/bo205550079.html)

Let me interrupt this column with a shower of caveats. Many children raised in part by single moms do extraordinarily well; one was a two-term president in the 1990s and another served two terms until 2017. And I think the big driver for the rise in single-parent households is bad decisions by policymakers that led to mass incarceration and a collapse of earnings for ***working-class*** men.

Yet this is still so wrenching to discuss.

That goes back to 1965, when [*Daniel Patrick Moynihan*](https://www.nytimes.com/2003/03/27/nyregion/daniel-patrick-moynihan-is-dead-senator-from-academia-was-76.html) wrote a prescient [*report*](https://web.stanford.edu/~mrosenfe/Moynihan's%20The%20Negro%20Family.pdf) about the decline of marriage among Black Americans. Moynihan, who himself had been raised mostly in poverty by a single mother, warned that family breakdown would exacerbate social problems, but he was [*denounced*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/12/opinion/when-liberals-blew-it.html) by liberals for racism and victim-blaming.

Scholars ran for cover. It helped greatly that the eminent African American sociologist William Julius Wilson of Harvard later conducted [*research*](https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/T/bo13375722.html) in this area and [*praised*](https://www.aapss.org/news/william-julius-wilson-on-daniel-patrick-moynihans-agenda-setting-contributions-to-social-science/) Moynihan’s work as “prophetic.” But even today there is a deep discomfort in liberal circles about acknowledging these realities.

A scholarly organization in the field [*published*](https://www.ncfr.org/events/ncfr-webinars/toward-dismantling-family-privilege-and-white-supremacy-family-science) a call in 2021 to “dismantle family privilege” (such as championing two-parent families), which it warned was embedded in “white supremacist society.” And while 91 percent of college-educated conservatives agree that “children are better off if they have married parents,” only 30 percent of college-educated liberals agree, according to a report to be released next week by the Institute for Family Studies.

In fact, children simply do better on average in school and typically earn more in adulthood if they have married parents, and this is particularly true [*of boys*](https://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/21/business/economy/as-men-lose-economic-ground-clues-in-the-family.html). It doesn’t seem to matter if the two parents are a mom and dad or a same-sex couple.

One advantage of a two-parent family is simply a function of arithmetic: Two parents can earn two incomes, meaning less poverty.

Two-parent households seem to benefit not just their own kids but the neighborhood as well. Harvard’s Opportunity Insights group [*found*](https://opportunityinsights.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/race_paper.pdf) that upward mobility was more likely for Black boys in neighborhoods with a higher share of Black dads living with their children.

One stunning and depressing gauge of racial inequity in the United States: The study found that 62 percent of white children live in low-poverty areas with fathers present in most homes, while only 4 percent of Black children do.

The collapse of marriage has happened mostly among less-educated Americans, including those who are white, Black or Hispanic. While many college graduates in theory embrace all kinds of family relationships, they remain traditional in their personal behaviors, mostly having children after marriage and raising their own kids in two-parent households. Brad Wilcox, a sociologist and family expert at the University of Virginia, calls this “talk left, walk right.”

The United States is an outlier in family breakdown. A [*Pew study*](https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2019/12/12/u-s-children-more-likely-than-children-in-other-countries-to-live-with-just-one-parent/) of 130 countries found that American children were more likely to live with a single parent than those of any other nation. Conservatives sometimes argue that increases in welfare benefits undermined marriage, but this appears not to be a major factor — partly because European countries have both stronger social welfare programs and more two-parent families.

The proposed solutions from conservatives, such as marriage promotion efforts tried under the George W. Bush administration, likewise have had little impact. What does appear to strengthen marriage is lifting earnings of low-education men. This makes them more “marriageable,” researchers find.

Lifting earnings is where liberals have the solutions: strengthened labor unions, community college support, skills training initiatives such as high school [*career academies*](https://www.mdrc.org/publication/career-academies-long-term-impacts-work-education-and-transitions-adulthood) and groups that provide technical training like [*Per Scholas*](https://perscholas.org/about-per-scholas/).

The breakdown of family primarily among low-income Americans may be uncomfortable to talk about, but it is part of the apparatus of inequality in the United States. It doesn’t help when we avert our eyes, ignore the data and deny the existence of two-parent privilege.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/31/opinion/letters/letters-to-editor-new-york-times-women.html) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://help.nytimes.com/hc/en-us/articles/115014925288-How-to-submit-a-letter-to-the-editor). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](mailto:letters@nytimes.com).

This article appeared in print on page A24.

**Load-Date:** September 13, 2023

**End of Document**



[***​Should Wildlife Advocates Help Set Hunting Rules in Vermont?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BMR-HWS1-JBG3-618N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 25, 2024 Monday 10:34 EST

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 1299 words

**Byline:** Jenna Russell Jenna Russell is the lead reporter covering New England for The Times. She is based near Boston.

**Highlight:** A bill that would add people who don’t hunt to the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board has stirred an outcry in a state known for both progressive politics and rural traditions.

**Body**

A bill that would add people who don’t hunt to the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board has stirred an outcry in a state known for both progressive politics and rural traditions.

Legislators in Vermont are considering shaking up the state board that drafts hunting and fishing rules — by adding members who don’t hunt or fish.

The proposal has touched off fierce disagreement between hunters and wildlife protection advocates in a state known for both its progressive politics and its traditional rural culture, steeped for generations in hunting, fishing and trapping.

Supporters of the measure say that decisions affecting the state’s wildlife should be shaped by a board that reflects residents’ diverse perspectives. The proposal cites people who watch, photograph or listen to wildlife as examples of potential new board members, joining hunters, fishermen and trappers.

“Even people who don’t care about wildlife care about democracy, and believe it shouldn’t be a privileged special interest group making policy,” said Brenna Galdenzi, president of Protect Our Wildlife, an advocacy group based in Stowe that has pushed for the bill.

Hunters say there is nothing wrong with the current system: a 14-member volunteer board made up of hunters, trappers and fishermen from every county, appointed by the governor. The board fleshes out detailed regulations based on laws enacted by the Legislature, with input from the public and state scientists.

The proof of its success, they say, is the healthy status of game species in the state.

“Every one is abundant and flourishing, and that’s where the rubber meets the road,” said Chris Bradley, president of the Vermont Federation of Sportsmen’s Clubs. “So what’s the problem?”

The back and forth has been contentious, a reflection of bigger tensions in a state where a persistent influx of wealthier newcomers has accelerated since the pandemic. [*Some critics have framed the legislation as an affront by “privileged” liberal interest groups*](https://www.sevendaysvt.com/news/wild-bill-long-at-odds-with-vermonts-fish-and-wildlife-board-activists-would-like-to-strip-its-powers-40311294) with time and money to spare against ***working-class*** gun owners with fewer resources. Proponents of the bill say it is outlandish for hunters to claim victimhood when the board’s membership has been drawn entirely from their ranks for generations.

After Gov. Phil Scott, a Republican, said he would probably veto the bill, legislators last week amended it to try to win enough votes for an override. While the bill previously specified that the board must include members without hunting licenses, and stripped the governor’s power to appoint them, the revised version merely mandates “balanced viewpoints” on the board and lets the governor select 14 of 16 members.

Similar efforts have been made in other states, part of a larger national strategy by animal advocates to boost their influence in government. A bipartisan bill to shake up the state game commission in New Mexico passed in the State Legislature last year, [*but died when Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham opted not to sign it into law*](https://www.sevendaysvt.com/news/wild-bill-long-at-odds-with-vermonts-fish-and-wildlife-board-activists-would-like-to-strip-its-powers-40311294).

In New Jersey, [*a lawsuit filed last year by a former state legislator*](https://www.sevendaysvt.com/news/wild-bill-long-at-odds-with-vermonts-fish-and-wildlife-board-activists-would-like-to-strip-its-powers-40311294) argued that the state Fish and Game Council, made up largely of appointees from hunting and fishing clubs, violates the State Constitution because its members function as a de facto legislative body.

“We’re trying to challenge the status quo, because there’s a huge gap right now between state policy and [*the views of the American people*](https://www.sevendaysvt.com/news/wild-bill-long-at-odds-with-vermonts-fish-and-wildlife-board-activists-would-like-to-strip-its-powers-40311294),” said Michelle Lute, co-director of Wildlife for All, a national organization based in New Mexico whose mission, in part, is to make state wildlife management more “compassionate.”

In Vermont, data shows a steady decline since the 1990s in the number of new hunting licenses and combination hunting and fishing licenses. The number of total active licenses has stabilized since 2017, when the state began requiring lifetime license holders to reactivate their licenses each year they intend to hunt. Those reactivations boosted the number of active resident licenses to 70,000 last year — up from 57,000 in 2016, but still well below the roughly 96,000 active licenses in the mid-1980s.

Since there are no fees required for license reactivations, and the volume of paid licenses has declined, Ms. Galdenzi said, taxpayers who don’t hunt are shouldering more of the cost of managing wildlife, “but we don’t have a voice at the table.” When she has tried to provide input at board hearings, she said, she has felt disrespected and dismissed.

Christopher Herrick, the state fish and wildlife commissioner, challenged that assertion, describing an intensive process of public engagement used by the board to solicit and consider input. He compared the process to his own as a father of four children: “I always listened to them, but I didn’t always do what they said.”

Hunters say the pro-democracy talk by the bill’s supporters is little more than camouflage for its true purpose: to pave the way for crackdowns on hunting. State Senator Russ Ingalls, a Republican from northern Vermont, said the proposal has deeply angered his constituents, who feel their heritage and identity are under attack.

“We have families who eat wildlife to survive, who are going to have a hard year if they don’t have a couple of deer in the freezer,” he said. “If I don’t like something, I don’t do it, but if liberals or progressives don’t like it, they don’t want you to do it either.”

Tensions around hunting in Vermont have simmered for years, recently flaring over moose management — the state has issued moose hunting permits with the goal of [*reducing a booming tick population*](https://www.sevendaysvt.com/news/wild-bill-long-at-odds-with-vermonts-fish-and-wildlife-board-activists-would-like-to-strip-its-powers-40311294) — and the use of dogs to hunt coyotes. The Legislature asked for tighter controls on such dogs after some residents complained about property damage and alarming run-ins with packs of hounds.

The wildlife board says it complied by requiring the dogs to wear tracking collars, but critics — including Protect Our Wildlife — say the collars aren’t enough, and have filed a lawsuit. In a twist designed to prevent such standoffs, the proposed legislation would diminish the board’s power, relegating it to an advisory role while handing the responsibility for rule making to the state Fish and Wildlife Department.

It would also require board members to “prioritize science” and to be trained in subjects including climate change and hunting ethics that proponents see as critical for “modern” wildlife management. The bill, which passed in the Senate on Friday by a 21-8 vote, would also ban the practice of hunting coyotes with dogs.

Mr. Herrick, the wildlife commissioner, said that shifting more responsibility to the department would burden his already overworked staff at a time when the budget is stretched thin, slowing down conservation projects already underway.

“We appreciate what this bill is trying to do around bringing different stakeholders together, and we’re not opposed to improving how Vermont makes hunting and fishing regulations,” the commissioner said in a statement Friday. But, he said, even the amended bill “is not the right way to do it.”

State Senator Christopher Bray, a Democrat from Addison County and the bill’s sponsor, said it reflects the state’s changing reality, and the need to build bridges between residents with widely divergent values and experience.

“The most important word that’s not in the bill is respect,” he said. “For other people, for different points of view and for all living things in the environment.”

PHOTOS: A proposal for changes to the board that makes hunting and fishing rules is dividing Vermonters. Brenna Galdenzi, above, said, “Even people who don’t care about wildlife care about democracy.” Chris Bradley, below, believes the current system is working. Every species “is abundant and flourishing,” he said. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY CALEB KENNA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A15.

**Load-Date:** March 26, 2024

**End of Document**



[***A Republican Who Is Making Harvard Sweat***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BTM-GN51-JBG3-603P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 17, 2024 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1525 words

**Byline:** By Anemona Hartocollis

**Body**

Virginia Foxx, the Republican congresswoman from North Carolina, has spent the last few months giving elite schools a hard time.

As the chairwoman of the House committee on education, she oversaw a tense hearing in December that spurred the resignations of the presidents of University of Pennsylvania and Harvard. She has led an investigation of a half-dozen institutions for their handling of antisemitism claims. She has subpoenaed internal documents, and called Jewish students to testify.

On Wednesday, she will preside over another hearing, this time with officials at Columbia University.

The drubbing is part of a campaign by Republicans against what they view as double standards within elite education establishments -- practices that they say favor some groups over others, and equity over meritocracy. Others see it as partisan attack.

Representative Foxx, 80, does not like the term ''elite,'' and questions whether these schools even deserve the title.

''I call them the most expensive universities in the country,'' she said the other day, while traveling around her district, which winds through small ***working-class*** towns in the Blue Ridge Mountains.

She is known for her conservative views and blunt manner. But her current work, she said, is rooted in personal experience. Over her years in office, she has repeatedly told her life story, of growing up in a sparsely populated rural area, in a house without running water or electricity. She and her brother, Butch, carried drinking water from a spring. There was no outhouse, so ''we went to the woods,'' she recalled.

She went on to junior college, state college and graduate school, eventually earning a doctorate from the University of North Carolina, leveraging her way into intertwined careers in politics and education, becoming president of a community college.

But it is her religious beliefs and identification with the underdog, she said, that inform how she is dealing with the bitter campus protests over the Israel-Hamas war.

''The people here believe that the Jews are God's chosen people, and I grew up in the Baptist Church believing that,'' she said.

After reading news accounts last fall of rising antisemitism on prominent campuses, she said that she resolved to investigate these institutions that most of her constituents cannot imagine ever attending.

''It was unconscionable what was happening,'' she said. ''Students were unsafe, and the administration was doing nothing to help them.''

''As chair of the committee,'' she said, ''How do I ignore that?''

Others see a not-so-hidden agenda.

''Both sides are using higher education as proxies in a culture war,'' said Jon Fansmith, head of government relations for the American Council on Education, a trade association. ''And to a real degree, we've seen that reflected in this Congress in the Education and Workforce Committee, in a way we haven't before. She sets the agenda.''

Representative Foxx represents a solidly Republican district in a purple state, and her views reflect that.

She is against abortion rights and against allowing trans women to compete on women's teams in college sports.

She has said she has ''little tolerance'' for students who graduate from college with large student loan debt.

Arguing against a hate crimes bill in 2009, she called it a ''hoax'' to say that Matthew Shepard, a University of Wyoming student, had been killed a decade earlier because he was gay. After an outcry, she apologized to his mother.

She voted against federal aid for New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, and once said there was more to fear from Obamacare than from terrorists.

When a reporter asked about Republican efforts to overturn the 2020 election at a news conference, the congresswoman told her to ''shut up.''

In a district tour, along curvy, two-lane mountain roads, she seemed eager to show a softer side, bringing a favorite cousin, Helen Pritchard.

Dr. Foxx was born in New York City, the first of four children to parents who never made it past ninth grade. Her father, Nunzio Palmieri, a construction worker, was a son of Italian immigrants in New York. Her mother, Dollie Garrison, was the daughter of a coal miner.

In 1950, when she was 6, they moved to western North Carolina, living in a house shared with Ms. Pritchard's family.

To get there, ''you had to ford the river and then open two cattle gates,'' Dr. Foxx said. ''No, seven,'' Ms. Pritchard corrected.

Just then, the driver yielded for a barking dog that was blocking the car. ''Go forward,'' Dr. Foxx urged. ''You can't be cowed by a dog. That dog has got enough sense to get out of your way.''

In high school, a teacher gave her a list of 100 classic books to read, advising her to go to college and marry a man with a degree.

She listened. She married Tom Foxx at 20, and had a daughter. It took her seven circuitous years to earn her bachelor's degree in English from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, working the whole way.

She went on to earn a master's in sociology from Chapel Hill, and a doctorate in education from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Her brother had a different trajectory, becoming a carpenter. Because of him, she considers it her mandate to help people who are, as she put it, ''un-degreed.''

''There are millions of people in this country who say the same thing my brother would say, 'I don't want to be a second-class citizen,''' she said.

In the same vein, she forbids her staff to use ''the T-word'' -- ''training'' -- instead of ''education.''

''You train dogs and you educate people,'' she said. ''Electrician, plumber, I don't care what the skill is, you need a person who can think.''

Her political career began in the mid-70s, after a friend challenged her to run for school board.

When she said that she was not qualified, he replied, ''You mean you're not as qualified as those turkeys?''

''Like many women I doubted my capabilities,'' she says now.

With her husband's encouragement, she won in 1976, and remained on the board for 12 years.

As an assistant dean at Appalachian State, she campaigned for the Equal Rights Amendment, incensed by a tire salesman who refused to give her a line of credit without her husband's authorization.

''I thought well, this is wrong,'' she says now. ''I can understand why there were people who were skeptical of the E.R.A., but at the time, I was a supporter.''

On leave from the relatively liberal outpost at Appalachian State in the mid-'80s, and working for a Republican governor, she won the presidency of Mayland Community College.

She is touchy about anything that implies community colleges are lower status institutions. ''Community colleges in particular use the T-word a lot,'' she said.

Her loyalty to these institutions is real, said Peter Lake, director of the Center for Excellence in Higher Education Law and Policy at Stetson University College of Law.

''The community college world sometimes have felt like they were the second cousins at the third table,'' he said.

Her seven-year tenure at Mayland, however, was dogged by a lawsuit accusing the college of purging Democratic administrators and faculty, using financial pressure as a pretext. She says now that she did not care about their political affiliation, and would have guessed they were Republican, because almost everybody was. A jury found for her and the trustees.

In an interview, John West Gresham, a lawyer for the plaintiffs, said the faculty ''were good people.''

She was so partisan, he said, that he thinks her concerns about antisemitism are more about politics. ''It casts those liberal universities in a bad light, doesn't it? he said.

Her political savvy helped lead to a stint in the State Legislature, before she entered Congress in 2005. And her latest crusade has vaulted her from local to national news.

She said that she did not anticipate that the Dec. 5 hearing would have such an impact. The presidents of Harvard, M.I.T. and Penn were asked, hypothetically, if they would punish students who called for the genocide of Jews. They infamously answered that it would depend on the context.

Widely criticized, and vulnerable for other reasons, Harvard's Claudine Gay and Penn's Elizabeth Magill resigned.

On Wednesday, the committee has scheduled a hearing with the president of Columbia University, Nemat (Minouche) Shafik.

''No one escapes,'' Dr. Foxx said.

Her last district stop is her house on a hill with spectacular views of Grandfather Mountain. She explained her dedication to exposing antisemitism over tea and Pepperidge Farm cookies. She said discrimination of any kind is wrong. And she knows her Old Testament, paraphrasing Genesis 12:3.

''There are verses in the Bible that ministers will quote, that if you bless the Jewish people you will be blessed,'' she said. ''If you curse the Jewish people you will be cursed.''

Many of her constituents feel the same, she said. ''I believe that I'm representing the community.''

Kirsten Noyes, Sheelagh McNeill and Jack Begg contributed research.Kirsten Noyes, Sheelagh McNeill and Jack Begg contributed research.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/16/us/virginia-foxx-harvard-antisemitism.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/16/us/virginia-foxx-harvard-antisemitism.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Representative Virginia Foxx, Republican of North Carolina, at the House committee hearing last year that spurred the resignations of the presidents of the University of Pennsylvania and Harvard. (PHOTOGRAPH BY TOM BRENNER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A14) This article appeared in print on page A1, A14.

**Load-Date:** April 17, 2024

**End of Document**



[***New York City May Pay You to Build a 'Granny Flat' in Your Backyard***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69P8-YCT1-JBG3-601T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 22, 2023 Wednesday

The New York Times on the Web

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**Section:** Section ; Column 0; Metropolitan Desk

**Length:** 576 words

**Byline:** By Mihir Zaveri

**Body**

Fifteen New Yorkers living in single-family homes could get up to nearly $400,000 to build an extra apartment on their properties.

To address the big problem of New York's housing crisis, the city is trying something small: payments to homeowners to build apartments in their garages and attics.

On Tuesday, officials announced a program that would give 15 owners of single-family homes up to $400,000 each for such projects, which could include building detached units or retrofitting basements.

Recipients will be restricted by income -- the ceiling for a family of four will be $232,980, with priority given to lower incomes -- and those interested will be able to apply on the city's website on Tuesday. Rents in the new apartments would also be capped, at around $2,600 for a one-bedroom apartment, for example.

Maria Torres-Springer, the city's deputy mayor for housing, economic development and work force, acknowledged the effort was modest.

''We hope that it's just the type of program that builds momentum, shows what's possible and that demonstrates to New Yorkers how we can build housing in every neighborhood in the city,'' she said in an interview.

Mayor Eric Adams said in a statement that the program was a ''tangible win for families'' and gave ***working class*** New Yorkers the ''tools they need to thrive in this city.''

Making it easier to build basements, cottages and other extra units has become an attractive way to encourage development in states and cities dealing with high housing costs.

Supporters say the model helps homeowners earn money and can be great for older people trying to find affordable places near their families, which is why the units are often called ''granny flats.''

But complicated regulations make them costly to build and maintain in New York City -- at least legally, said Howard Slatkin, executive director of the Citizens Housing and Planning Council, a nonprofit advocacy group.

Plenty of unregulated homes already exist illegally, in basements and cellars that can be so unsafe that they can turn deadly in floods and fires.

Government attempts to change the regulations and encourage the development of such units under rules that make them safer have largely failed. Suburban legislators helped stymie Gov. Kathy Hochul's attempt this year to ease some of the restrictions.

A pilot program in New York City that started under Mayor Bill de Blasio to convert basements into safe and legal apartments failed mainly because of the cost of renovation. Only one basement is being converted through the program so far. In some cases, regulations would have forced homeowners to add sprinklers in every room or protective railings along the roof if they wanted to add a unit in the basement.

The program announced on Tuesday targets areas where current codes already allow homeowners to add another unit. It comes as Mr. Adams's administration is also pushing zoning changes that would allow people in a broader swath of the city to add additional units.

While most people might think of New York City as a dense place with big apartment buildings, lower-density neighborhoods make up more than half of the city's land, Mr. Slatkin said.

That's why the program seems promising, he said. It ''helps ordinary homeowners who don't have the kind of access to capital that a builder on their own might have,'' he said.

''This is the way that you can produce housing at a relatively low cost,'' he said.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/21/nyregion/nyc-accessory-dwelling-units.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/21/nyregion/nyc-accessory-dwelling-units.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: New York City is offering an inducement to owners who might build ''granny flats.'' (PHOTOGRAPH BY Karsten Moran for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** November 22, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Fanfare for the Common Man***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BHJ-GR61-DXY4-X06V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 10, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2024 The New York Times Company

**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 13; NONFICTION

**Length:** 1097 words

**Byline:** By Fintan O'Toole

**Body**

In ''Remembering Peasants,'' the historian Patrick Joyce presents a stirring elegy for a vanishing culture.

REMEMBERING PEASANTS: A Personal History of a Vanished World, by Patrick Joyce

In 1970, when John Lennon wanted to denounce the bourgeoisie in his angry song ''***Working Class*** Hero,'' he delivered the ultimate insult: ''You're still [expletive] peasants as far as I can see.''

In French (paysan, paysanne), the word simply means ''a country person.'' Yet almost all its synonyms are contemptuous: boor, bumpkin, churl, clodhopper, hillbilly, hayseed, hick, oaf, rube, yokel.

Most of the people who have lived on this planet since the invention of agriculture have been peasants. The word ''human'' is related to the Latin ''humus,'' meaning earth or soil. And yet the full humanity of those who survive by working the land has been routinely denied.

The cultivators, it is often assumed, are dreadfully uncultivated. And this alleged lack of sophistication has made them fair game for every kind of depredation. The food they produce has been expropriated by their overlords, by marauding armies and by totalitarian states. They have been conscripted as cannon fodder; entangled in debt and dependency as sharecroppers and serfs; starved, sometimes deliberately, in famines and prisons; forcibly converted to their masters' religions; herded onto collective farms and slaughtered mercilessly when they revolt.

In ''Remembering Peasants: A Personal History of a Vanished World'' his moving and sensitive rumination on the historic fate of these earthbound people, Patrick Joyce quotes Ignazio Silone's summation, in his novel ''Fontamara,'' of the hierarchy of existence as seen by the peasants of his native village in rural Italy. ''At the head of everything is God.'' Then came the landowner, Prince Torlonia, followed by the prince's guards and then by his dogs. Below the dogs was ''nothing at all.'' And under nothing at all were the cafoni, the poor peasants.

If peasants have been at the end of the line for power and respect, for thousands of years, they are now part of a great ending. Joyce's study is an elegy for a way of life, and a way of understanding the world, that is ''part of a past we have now lost, lost in less than a single lifetime, lost with barely a sign of its loss in a present that is obsessed with itself.''

He writes of Europe, but the same processes are at work everywhere. Around the world, a great driver of migration within and between countries is the desire to escape the peasant life.

Joyce, as he acknowledges frequently, is far from the first to note the epoch-making nature of this recent shift. In ''The Age of Extremes,'' published in 1994, the great social historian Eric Hobsbawm wrote that ''the most dramatic and far-reaching social change'' of the second half of the 20th century, ''and the one which cuts us off forever from the world of the past, is the death of the peasantry.''

Joyce is himself a distinguished academic historian and emeritus professor of history at the University of Manchester. But what gives ''Remembering Peasants'' its distinctiveness and its depth is the import of that word ''personal'' in his subtitle. Its poignancy is intimate.

''As the London-born child of Irish rural immigrant parents, now a man of 78 years of age,'' Joyce writes, ''I am a sort of relict of what we have lost. A relict that will in turn pretty soon be gone.''

He examined the world of his father, who was born a poor peasant in County Mayo, in his wonderfully evocative memoir-history ''Going to My Father's House,'' published in 2021, which captures in close-up the mental landscape that ''Remembering Peasants'' frames as a wide shot. In that earlier book, he described his task as ''pleading on behalf of the dead and their unheard stories.'' ''On behalf of'' because very few of the countless millions who have eked a living from the land left enduring accounts of their own lives.

''This,'' Joyce wrote, ''is a world of a very ancient form of silence, peasant silence, something enmeshed in cultures that are largely oral in nature.'' In this sense, Joyce is as much a necromancer, summoning the dead and bidding them speak, as he is a conventional historian.

He is also a kind of pilgrim. In ''Remembering Peasants,'' as in his memoir, he embraces the idea of homage, a word that, as he put it in ''Going to My Father's House,'' ''involves the show of public respect.''

Respect is not romanticization -- Joyce is all too aware that the idealization of the peasantry from the 19th century onward as the embodiment of the nation's ''blood and soil'' is just another form of expropriation. What he seeks to explore is, rather, the cultural richness that these generations harvested, always against the odds, from the barren soil of oppression and contempt.

Drawing on the historical and anthropological records of the rural Ireland of his parents but also those of Poland and Italy, Joyce lures us into the collective mentalities of the European peasantry. He conjures their sense of time as cyclical and reversible. He reveals their very different understanding of nature. ''The wild as our sublime,'' he writes, ''makes no sense to the peasant.'' (Joyce cites a Polish peasant interviewed in the 1960s who said, ''I like it where the plain is; when I was in America I saw a mountain, and this was an awful view.'')

Much of Joyce's method is to meditate on old photographs to draw out the importance of bodies, physical objects, interior spaces, religion and ritual. He cites Susan Sontag: ''Photography is an elegiac art, a twilight art.'' ''Remembering Peasants'' is itself imbued with the diffuse and melancholy glow of a sinking sun.

Joyce shows how the supreme value of the peasant is generational survival: The great task is to hand on to the child the land the peasant has inherited, making one's own existence a kind of interlude between past and future. His beautifully written book is equally in-between, haunted by the ghosts of the dead but also full of the warmth of human sympathy. Returning to the little farm where his father was born, he thinks of ''the throng of the invisible departed that once populated the hillside.'' His achievement is to leave them a little more visible, a little less silent.

REMEMBERING PEASANTS: A Personal History of a Vanished World | By Patrick Joyce | Scribner | 400 pp. | $30Fintan O'Toole needs a bio. tkt kt tkt kt kt ktot ktk tk tkt kt kt kt tk tkt kt kt tk tktkt kt tkt kt tkt kt tkt kt kt tkt kt tkt kt tkt kt tkt kt tkt kt tkt kt kt tkt kt tkt kt kt

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/20/books/review/remembering-peasants-patrick-joyce.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/20/books/review/remembering-peasants-patrick-joyce.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: ''The Gleaners,'' an 1857 oil painting by Jean-François Millet. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MUSEE D'ORSAY, VIA BRIDGEMAN IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page BR13.

**Load-Date:** March 10, 2024

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[***New York City May Pay You to Build a ‘Granny Flat’ in Your Backyard***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69P3-1931-JBG3-60M3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 21, 2023 Tuesday 01:38 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 576 words

**Byline:** Mihir Zaveri

**Highlight:** Fifteen New Yorkers living in single-family homes could get up to nearly $400,000 to build an extra apartment on their properties.

**Body**

Fifteen New Yorkers living in single-family homes could get up to nearly $400,000 to build an extra apartment on their properties.

To address the big problem of New York’s housing crisis, the city is trying something small: payments to homeowners to build apartments in their garages and attics.

On Tuesday, officials [*announced a program that would*](https://www.nyc.gov/site/hpd/news/021-39/garage-studios-basement-apartments-backyard-cottages-hpd-pilot-program-helping#/0) give 15 owners of single-family homes up to $400,000 each for such projects, which could include building detached units or retrofitting basements.

Recipients will be restricted by income — the ceiling for a family of four will be $232,980, with priority given to lower incomes — and those interested will be able to apply [*on the city’s website on Tuesday*](https://www.nyc.gov/site/hpd/services-and-information/plus-one-adu.page). Rents in the new apartments would also be capped, at around $2,600 for a one-bedroom apartment, for example.

Maria Torres-Springer, the city’s deputy mayor for housing, economic development and work force, acknowledged the effort was modest.

“We hope that it’s just the type of program that builds momentum, shows what’s possible and that demonstrates to New Yorkers how we can build housing in every neighborhood in the city,” she said in an interview.

Mayor Eric Adams said in a statement that the program was a “tangible win for families” and gave ***working class*** New Yorkers the “tools they need to thrive in this city.”

Making it easier to build basements, cottages and other extra units has become an attractive way to encourage development in states and cities dealing with high housing costs.

Supporters say the model helps homeowners earn money and can be great for older people trying to find affordable places near their families, which is why the units are often called “granny flats.”

But complicated regulations make them costly to build and maintain in New York City — at least legally, said Howard Slatkin, executive director of the Citizens Housing and Planning Council, a nonprofit advocacy group.

Plenty of unregulated homes already exist illegally, in basements and cellars that can be so [*unsafe that they can turn deadly in floods and fires*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/29/nyregion/nyc-flooding-storm-basement.html#:~:text=Eleven%20people%20died%20in%20their,I%20said%2C%20'Come%20upstairs.).

Government attempts to change the regulations and encourage the development of such units under rules that make them safer have largely failed. Suburban legislators helped stymie Gov. Kathy Hochul’s attempt this year to ease some of the restrictions.

A pilot program in New York City that started under Mayor Bill de Blasio to convert basements into safe and legal apartments failed mainly because of the cost of renovation. Only one basement [*is being converted through the program so far*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/14/nyregion/legalize-basement-apartments-nyc.html). In some cases, regulations would have forced homeowners to add sprinklers in every room or protective railings along the roof if they wanted to add a unit in the basement.

The program announced on Tuesday targets areas where current codes already allow homeowners to add another unit. It comes as Mr. Adams’s administration is also [*pushing zoning change*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/25/nyregion/nyc-housing-crisis-plan.html)s that would allow people in a broader swath of the city to add additional units.

While most people might think of New York City as a dense place with big apartment buildings, lower-density neighborhoods make up more than half of the city’s land, Mr. Slatkin said.

That’s why the program seems promising, he said. It “helps ordinary homeowners who don’t have the kind of access to capital that a builder on their own might have,” he said.

“This is the way that you can produce housing at a relatively low cost,” he said.

This article appeared in print on page A11.

**Load-Date:** November 23, 2023

**End of Document**



[***The House Republican Going After Universities on Antisemitism***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BTD-X031-DXY4-X02W-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 16, 2024 Tuesday 10:38 EST

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 1546 words

**Byline:** Anemona Hartocollis Anemona Hartocollis is a national reporter for The Times, covering higher education.

**Highlight:** Representative Virginia Foxx is a blunt partisan. But her life in rural North Carolina informs her attacks against these schools, starting with whether Harvard is truly “elite.”

**Body**

Virginia Foxx, the Republican congresswoman from North Carolina, has spent the last few months giving elite schools a hard time.

As the chairwoman of the House committee on education, she oversaw a [*tense hearing*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/06/us/harvard-mit-penn-presidents-antisemitism.html) in December that spurred the resignations of the presidents of University of Pennsylvania and Harvard. She has led an investigation of a half-dozen institutions for their handling of antisemitism claims. She has [*subpoenaed*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/06/us/harvard-mit-penn-presidents-antisemitism.html) internal documents, and called Jewish students to testify.

On Wednesday, she will preside over another hearing, this time with officials at Columbia University.

The drubbing is part of a [*campaign*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/06/us/harvard-mit-penn-presidents-antisemitism.html) by Republicans against what they view as double standards within elite education establishments — practices that they say favor some groups over others, and equity over meritocracy. Others see it as partisan attack.

Representative Foxx, 80, does not like the term “elite,” and questions whether these schools even deserve the title.

“I call them the most expensive universities in the country,” she said the other day, while traveling around her district, which winds through small ***working-class*** towns in the Blue Ridge Mountains.

She is known for her conservative views and blunt manner. But her current work, she said, is rooted in personal experience. Over her years in office, she has repeatedly told her life story, of growing up in a sparsely populated rural area, in a house without running water or electricity. She and her brother, Butch, carried drinking water from a spring. There was no outhouse, so “we went to the woods,” she recalled.

She went on to junior college, state college and graduate school, eventually earning a doctorate from the University of North Carolina, leveraging her way into intertwined careers in politics and education, becoming president of a community college.

But it is her religious beliefs and identification with the underdog, she said, that inform how she is dealing with the bitter campus protests over the Israel-Hamas war.

“The people here believe that the Jews are God’s chosen people, and I grew up in the Baptist Church believing that,” she said.

After reading news accounts last fall of rising antisemitism on prominent campuses, she said that she resolved to investigate these institutions that most of her constituents cannot imagine ever attending.

“It was unconscionable what was happening,” she said. “Students were unsafe, and the administration was doing nothing to help them.”

“As chair of the committee,” she said, “How do I ignore that?”

Others see a not-so-hidden agenda.

“Both sides are using higher education as proxies in a culture war,” said Jon Fansmith, head of government relations for the American Council on Education, a trade association. “And to a real degree, we’ve seen that reflected in this Congress in the Education and Workforce Committee, in a way we haven’t before. She sets the agenda.”

Representative Foxx represents a solidly Republican district in a purple state, and her views reflect that.

She is against abortion rights and against allowing trans women to compete on women’s teams in college sports.

She has said she has “[*little tolerance*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/06/us/harvard-mit-penn-presidents-antisemitism.html)” for students who graduate from college with large student loan debt.

Arguing against a hate crimes bill in 2009, she called it a [*“hoax”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/06/us/harvard-mit-penn-presidents-antisemitism.html) to say that Matthew Shepard, a University of Wyoming student, had been killed a decade earlier because he was gay. After an outcry, she apologized to his mother.

She voted against federal aid for New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, and once said there was more to fear from Obamacare than from terrorists.

When a reporter asked about Republican efforts to overturn the 2020 election at a news conference, the congresswoman told her to “shut up.”

In a district tour, along curvy, two-lane mountain roads, she seemed eager to show a softer side, bringing a favorite cousin, Helen Pritchard.

Dr. Foxx was born in New York City, the first of four children to parents who never made it past ninth grade. Her father, Nunzio Palmieri, a construction worker, was a son of Italian immigrants in New York. Her mother, Dollie Garrison, was the daughter of a coal miner.

In 1950, when she was 6, they moved to western North Carolina, living in a house shared with Ms. Pritchard’s family.

To get there, “you had to ford the river and then open two cattle gates,” Dr. Foxx said. “No, seven,” Ms. Pritchard corrected.

Just then, the driver yielded for a barking dog that was blocking the car. “Go forward,” Dr. Foxx urged. “You can’t be cowed by a dog. That dog has got enough sense to get out of your way.”

In high school, a teacher gave her a list of 100 classic books to read, advising her to go to college and marry a man with a degree.

She listened. She married Tom Foxx at 20, and had a daughter. It took her seven circuitous years to earn her bachelor’s degree in English from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, working the whole way.

She went on to earn a master’s in sociology from Chapel Hill, and a doctorate in education from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Her brother had a different trajectory, becoming a carpenter. Because of him, she considers it her mandate to help people who are, as she put it, “un-degreed.”

“There are millions of people in this country who say the same thing my brother would say, ‘I don’t want to be a second-class citizen,’” she said.

In the same vein, she forbids her staff to use “the T-word” — “training” — instead of “education.”

“You train dogs and you educate people,” she said. “Electrician, plumber, I don’t care what the skill is, you need a person who can think.”

Her political career began in the mid-70s, after a friend challenged her to run for school board.

When she said that she was not qualified, he replied, “You mean you’re not as qualified as those turkeys?”

“Like many women I doubted my capabilities,” she says now.

With her husband’s encouragement, she won in 1976, and remained on the board for 12 years.

As an assistant dean at Appalachian State, she campaigned for the Equal Rights Amendment, incensed by a tire salesman who refused to give her a line of credit without her husband’s authorization.

“I thought well, this is wrong,” she says now. “I can understand why there were people who were skeptical of the E.R.A., but at the time, I was a supporter.”

On leave from the relatively liberal outpost at Appalachian State in the mid-’80s, and working for a Republican governor, she won the presidency of Mayland Community College.

She is touchy about anything that implies community colleges are lower status institutions. “Community colleges in particular use the T-word a lot,” she said.

Her loyalty to these institutions is real, said Peter Lake, director of the [*Center for Excellence in Higher Education Law and Policy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/06/us/harvard-mit-penn-presidents-antisemitism.html) at Stetson University College of Law.

“The community college world sometimes have felt like they were the second cousins at the third table,” he said.

Her seven-year tenure at Mayland, however, was dogged by a lawsuit accusing the college of purging Democratic administrators and faculty, using financial pressure as a pretext. She says now that she did not care about their political affiliation, and would have guessed they were Republican, because almost everybody was. A jury found for her and the trustees.

In an interview, John West Gresham, a lawyer for the plaintiffs, said the faculty “were good people.”

She was so partisan, he said, that he thinks her concerns about antisemitism are more about politics. “It casts those liberal universities in a bad light, doesn’t it? he said.

Her political savvy helped lead to a stint in the State Legislature, before she entered Congress in 2005. And her latest crusade has vaulted her from local to national news.

She said that she did not anticipate that the Dec. 5 hearing would have such an impact. The presidents of Harvard, M.I.T. and Penn were asked, hypothetically, if they would punish students who called for the genocide of Jews. They infamously answered that it would depend on the context.

Widely criticized, and vulnerable for other reasons, Harvard’s Claudine Gay and Penn’s Elizabeth Magill resigned.

On Wednesday, the committee has scheduled a hearing with the president of Columbia University, Nemat (Minouche) Shafik.

“No one escapes,” Dr. Foxx said.

Her last district stop is her house on a hill with spectacular views of Grandfather Mountain. She explained her dedication to exposing antisemitism over tea and Pepperidge Farm cookies. She said discrimination of any kind is wrong. And she knows her Old Testament, paraphrasing Genesis 12:3.

“There are verses in the Bible that ministers will quote, that if you bless the Jewish people you will be blessed,” she said. “If you curse the Jewish people you will be cursed.”

Many of her constituents feel the same, she said. “I believe that I’m representing the community.”

Kirsten Noyes, Sheelagh McNeill and Jack Begg contributed research.

Kirsten Noyes, Sheelagh McNeill and Jack Begg contributed research.

PHOTO: Representative Virginia Foxx, Republican of North Carolina, at the House committee hearing last year that spurred the resignations of the presidents of the University of Pennsylvania and Harvard. (PHOTOGRAPH BY TOM BRENNER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A14) This article appeared in print on page A1, A14.

**Load-Date:** April 17, 2024

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[***Looking Ahead to 5 Things That Will Shape the 2024 Election***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B0V-5221-JBG3-62T0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 1, 2024 Monday 05:02 EST

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**Section:** UPSHOT

**Length:** 1676 words

**Highlight:** Trials, a Kennedy and the economy are among the variables to consider.

**Body**

Trials, a Kennedy and the economy are among the variables to consider.

It’s divisible by four. It’s a leap year. It’s a Summer Olympics year.

It’s a presidential election year.

Happy New Year?

Whether the 2024 presidential election cycle brings you dread or excitement, there’s no doubt that the table is set for an extraordinary year.

The potential for political turmoil has rarely seemed more obvious. Voters are deeply dissatisfied with the direction of the country and their options for president. President Biden’s approval rating is lower at this stage than for any president in the era of modern polling, dating to the 1940s. His likely opponent faces several criminal trials. Waiting in the wings, there’s an independent candidate with the last name Kennedy. The Democratic [*convention is even in Chicago*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/28/us/politics/chicago-1968-democratic-convention-.html).

Here are just a few of the big topics that will shape the 2024 election.

Can Nikki Haley win a state?

Of all the items on this list, this is probably the least consequential. But it is first up on the calendar, with the early primary contests just a few weeks away, and a Haley win in New Hampshire or South Carolina is neither impossible nor irrelevant.

Heading into the holidays, surveys showed Ms. Haley approaching or exceeding 30 percent in New Hampshire — putting her closer to an upset than it might look, given the volatile nature of early primaries.

Her path to victory in New Hampshire is still fairly narrow. Her recent [*stumble*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/27/us/haley-civil-war-slavery.html) in answering a question about the cause of the Civil War may halt her momentum. And even if she does defeat Donald J. Trump in the state, it’s hard to see her posing a serious threat to win the nomination, given the relatively narrow, [*factional character*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/04/upshot/nikki-haley-republicans-primary.html) of her appeal.

But if she regained her footing and did manage to pull off an upset in New Hampshire or South Carolina, it would still carry symbolic significance. It would be a reminder that the not-Trump wing of the Republican Party, while diminished and weakened, was still around. It would be a visible crack in Republican support for Mr. Trump, and it would happen just weeks before his scheduled trial in March.

There’s a possible chain of events in which the combination of a trial and a Haley win winds up mattering more than we might guess today.

The trial of Donald J. Trump

Maybe the criminal trial of Mr. Trump will not go down as “the greatest political spectacle of our lives” or something similarly grandiose, but it’s hard to think of anything like it that’s ever been scheduled on the political calendar.

The trial promises to be the political center of gravity for the first half of the year, with the [*federal election subversion trial*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/28/us/politics/trump-trial-date-jan-6.html) scheduled to begin on March 4 — the day before Super Tuesday in the G.O.P. primary — and then possibly lasting through the heart of the primary season, although delays are possible.

It is hard to believe that a trial, in itself, will do grave political damage to Mr. Trump. After all, he endured the indictments unscathed. And he would probably amass enough delegates to win the Republican nomination even before the jury issued a verdict. The preponderance of Republican delegates will be awarded within a month of the start of the trial if it begins as scheduled.

But there is a way a trial could matter: It might lead to a realization by Republican primary voters and elites that Mr. Trump is likely to be convicted. And whether they see it coming or not, a conviction isn’t the same as a trial or an indictment. It might be far more consequential.

Recent polls — including New York Times/Siena College battleground polling in October — show Mr. Biden opening up a lead if Mr. Trump is convicted, let alone imprisoned. These polls should be taken with a grain of salt — they pose hypotheticals to voters, who mostly aren’t paying attention to Mr. Trump’s legal woes. But they’re a reminder that there are risks to his candidacy. In a close race, it might be decisive even if only a sliver of voters refuse to vote for a felon.

At the same time, a conviction would offer a new path for those seeking to remove Mr. Trump from the ballot, whether by disqualifying him in the courts or by denying him the nomination at the Republican convention.

Mr. Trump also faces a trial in Florida over his handling of classified material and in Georgia in an election case, although appeals and delays may carry them beyond the election. There’s also the coming Stormy Daniels case on the possible falsification of business records in New York, which is generally not seen as rising to the same level as the other cases.

And let’s not forget the [*likely Supreme Court case*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/29/us/supreme-court-trump-election.html) about whether he’s disqualified to be president under the 14th Amendment.

All of this is extraordinary to contemplate. Calling this simply “something to watch” is gross understatement. But that’s our politics nowadays.

The new swing vote

If you’ve been following elections long enough, the term “swing voter” might conjure up images of soccer moms, security moms, Reagan Democrats, the white ***working class*** and countless other archetypes of the mostly white suburban voters who analysts said decided American elections over the last half century.

But as 2024 begins, the voters poised to decide the election look very, very different from the swing voters of lore. They’re disproportionately young, Black and Hispanic.

Whether these voters return to Mr. Biden is one of the biggest questions of the cycle, not only because it might decide the election but also because there’s a chance it could shape the trajectory of American politics for decades.

As we’ve [*written*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/05/upshot/polls-biden-trump-2024.html) countless times, there will be many opportunities over the next year for Mr. Biden to lure back these traditionally Democratic but disaffected voters. In the end, he might well approach or match his support from last time. If he does, perhaps all the debate over it will seem misplaced.

But whatever the outcome, the reality of so many young, Black and Hispanic persuadable voters might powerfully shape the incentives facing the candidates and perhaps even the overall course of the race. For the first time, there’s a straightforward case that Democrats and Republicans alike have an incentive to focus more on Black, Hispanic and young voters than on white ***working-class*** voters. This might not yield any drastic changes in strategy, policy or messaging. But it would be surprising if it yielded no change at all.

Eight years ago, Mr. Trump was [*kicking*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tQzSUx-eLDc) Univision out of news conferences. Now, he’s giving Univision [*exclusive interviews*](https://www.univision.com/univision-news/politics/donald-trump-exclusive-univision-interview). This is just one small, early anecdote well before the campaign gets underway. The examples may be much more striking by Election Day.

The third party?

There’s another place that disaffected young, Black and Hispanic voters might go: a third-party candidate, like Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

Mr. Kennedy doesn’t loom over the 2024 race quite the way Mr. Trump’s trials do. We don’t even know if Mr. Kennedy will successfully gain access to the ballot. But it’s another obvious X-factor that we can see coming, even if we don’t know how it might affect the race.

The early polling — which shows Mr. Kennedy in the teens — seems plausible at this early stage. Around 20 percent of voters nationwide have unfavorable views of both Mr. Trump and Mr. Biden, and Mr. Kennedy has a brand name that past minor candidates like Gary Johnson, a libertarian in 2016, could never have dreamed of.

Historically, most independent candidates fizzle. Mr. Johnson saw his support peak near 10 percent in July 2016, only to [*win 3.3 percent*](https://uselectionatlas.org/RESULTS/national.php?year=2016&amp;off=0&amp;f=0) in November. Mr. Kennedy might fade for similar reasons, especially with the stakes of a Biden-Trump matchup seeming so large. On the other hand, Mr. Johnson was no Kennedy.

Does another year help or hurt Biden?

In many ways, the outlook for Mr. Biden in 2024 ought to be bright. The economy seems as if it’s finally [*about to land softly*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/14/business/economy/jerome-powell-soft-landing.html). His opponent is set to go on trial. And the voters he needs — young, Black and Hispanic — are the kinds of voters who Democrats would usually think are easiest to win back to their side.

All this might ultimately propel Mr. Biden to re-election. Many incumbent presidents have gone on to win under fairly similar circumstances, with the help of a polarizing campaign and a growing economy.

But there’s a catch: Some of these favorable winds have been at Mr. Biden’s back for most of the last year, and he appears weaker than ever.

Despite an improving economy, Mr. Biden’s approval rating stands at [*just 39 percent*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/biden-approval-rating/), according to FiveThirtyEight. That’s a net eight points lower than it was a year ago. It’s also worse than any previous president on the last New Year’s Day before re-election. Satisfaction with the country is about [*as low*](https://news.gallup.com/poll/1669/general-mood-country.aspx) as it was in 1980, 1992, 2008 and 2020 — years when the president’s party was defeated.

One possibility, of course, is that it’s just a matter of time. The economic news has only turned unequivocally positive over the last few weeks or months. Consumer confidence is still below average, but [*it appears to be improving*](https://www.conference-board.org/topics/consumer-confidence/press/CCI-Dec-2023). That might start to help Mr. Biden’s ratings. If you squint at the numbers, you could argue it has already begun to do so: His approval rating is up about 1.5 points over the last three weeks.

Unlike most presidents seeking re-election, Mr. Biden has also been hobbled by persistent questions about whether he should be the party nominee. Democrats have spent more time ruminating about his age than defending his record. His party will presumably put its doubts to the side and rally behind him once he secures the nomination over the summer. Maybe that’s when he’ll finally rejuvenate his support.

But the other possibility is that time is not on his side. It might even be part of the problem.

The president gets older every day. To the extent his age, stumbles and stutters explain why voters lack confidence in his leadership and the direction of the country, there’s not much reason to expect it to get better. It might get worse.

PHOTO: A recent Trump caucus event in Waterloo, Iowa. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Charlie Neibergall/Associated Press FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** January 1, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Reader Comments***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69Y4-X7F1-DXY4-X3Y1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 24, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section MB; Column 0; Metropolitan Desk; Pg. 3

**Length:** 683 words

**Body**

The Locals Can Only Look At the Peak, and Weep

Readers responded at nytimes.com to Claire Fahy's article last Sunday about the Windham Mountain Club, a ski resort in the Catskills that is rebranding and limiting public access. Comments have been edited. These owners will need to charge far more if they plan to continually replace melting snow with man-made throughout the increasingly rainy winters. Due to climate change, Windham is too far south and too close to the Atlantic Ocean. How many ski days will even be available in a warm winter? None of this makes sense.

Geo, USA

As I sit here not far south or at much lower elevation than this resort, watching rain sheeting down, changes at a ski area in the Catskills strike me as rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic. Even if I were inclined to drop $200,000 to join a ski club, climate change has made this a pretty ill-suited place to do so.

Whoops, Earth

Responding to Whoops: I bristle at the idea that it's somehow ''unwise'' to buy a ski club membership because of climate change. Maybe people just want to live their dream for a few years and see what happens. I can understand that, even as a nonskier who aspires to less fossil fuel use.

Northern Dweller, WA

As someone who graduated from Windham's high school in the last 10 years, it's terrible how much gentrification is wreaking havoc in small upstate towns like Windham, Hunter, Hudson, Catskill, etc. Gone are the days of community and feeling like everyone in these towns knows one another. Restaurants now are charging New York City-level prices in areas that, generally speaking, are very ***working class***.

T, New York

My family really loves how nice and new and clean everything looks right now. We go up to the Catskills almost every weekend. For us, gentrification is a good thing. Limiting membership is a good thing. Encouraging buying season tickets is a good thing. This is a win-win and it's something the town should have done a long time ago.

Roman B, New Jersey

The ski industry is unstable and unreliable at best. Kudos to them for trying to stay relevant and grow.

ENuff, Vermont/New Hampshire

I actually really enjoy a bunch of grubbier mountains in New York, Connecticut and Massachusetts where you can bring your own chili and zap it in a gross communal microwave and the hot chocolate is water plus a packet of Swiss Miss. Somehow mediocre skiing on icy small hills combined with mediocre food and basic accommodations equals a fun day for my family. Adding all kinds of elite amenities seems incongruous.

Amy, Connecticut

Skiing in the Catskills isn't exactly brag-worthy for anyone who would purchase this membership. So it's likely to fail, but in failure will destroy a common resource. More and more understand that the rest of us will have nothing nice left if the wealthy continue to sequester themselves.

baltcate, Florida

The true ''ballers'' aren't skiing down a short run in marginal snow conditions. They're going out west or, at a minimum, Vermont. I like capitalism as much as anyone, but this profit-at-all-costs mentality and widening income inequality, where the wealthy have the skids greased for them in all ways, will be the downfall of us.

Rick, SC

Responding to Rick: The appeal is not about any world-class skiing that ever existed on Windham Mountain. Rather, it'll be about networking among the well-to-do, and seeing and being seen by the same.

Angela, Sausalito, Calif.

I used this as an example of what not to do in my college-level marketing class. These investors are so far removed from reality that they probably aren't even aware of what a big fail this was.

F, Massachusetts

Windham is a beautiful spot for families and anyone who appreciates skiing or snowboarding. Skiing has always been an expensive sport for a family. Buying lunch at a ski resort has always been expensive too, but the new food at Windham is really good, or bring your own. The changes I see so far are fantastic. Resorts need to evolve, and I am really encouraged to see the new investment in Windham.

The Sniveler, New York

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/15/nyregion/24MetComments.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/15/nyregion/24MetComments.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: On the chairlift this month at Windham Mountain Club in the Catskills. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CINDY SCHULTZ FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page MB3.

**Load-Date:** December 24, 2023

**End of Document**



[***How College-Educated Republicans Learned to Love Trump Again***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B3K-SCM1-JBG3-6266-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 14, 2024 Sunday 08:21 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1722 words

**Highlight:** Blue-collar white voters make up Donald Trump’s base. But his political resurgence has been fueled largely by Republicans from the other end of the socioeconomic scale.

**Body**

Blue-collar white voters make up Donald Trump’s base. But his political resurgence has been fueled largely by Republicans from the other end of the socioeconomic scale.

***Working-class*** voters delivered the Republican Party to Donald J. Trump. College-educated conservatives may ensure that he keeps it.

Often overlooked in an increasingly blue-collar party, voters with a college degree remain at the heart of the lingering Republican cold war over abortion, foreign policy and cultural issues.

These voters, who have long been more skeptical of Mr. Trump, have quietly powered his remarkable political recovery inside the party — a turnaround over the past year that has [*notably coincided*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/20/us/politics/trump-cases-poll-2024.html) with a cascade of 91 felony charges in four criminal cases.

Even as Mr. Trump dominates Republican primary polls ahead of the Iowa caucuses on Monday, it was only a year ago that he trailed Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida in some surveys — a deficit due largely to the former president’s weakness among college-educated voters. Mr. DeSantis’s advisers viewed the party’s educational divide as a potential launching point to overtake Mr. Trump for the nomination.

Then came Mr. Trump’s resurgence, in which he rallied every corner of the party, including the white ***working class***. But few cross-sections of Republicans rebounded as much as college-educated conservatives, a review of state and national polls during the past 14 months shows.

This phenomenon cuts against years of wariness toward Mr. Trump by college-educated Republicans, unnerved by his 2020 election lies and his seemingly endless craving for controversy.

Their surge toward the former president appears to stem largely from a reaction to the current political climate rather than a sudden clamoring to join the red-capped citizenry of MAGA nation, according to interviews with nearly two dozen college-educated Republican voters.

Many were incredulous over what they described as excessive and unfair legal investigations targeting the former president. Others said they were underwhelmed by Mr. DeSantis and viewed Mr. Trump as more likely to win than former Gov. Nikki Haley of South Carolina. Several saw Mr. Trump as a more palatable option because they wanted to prioritize domestic problems over foreign relations and were frustrated with high interest rates.

“These are Fox News viewers who are coming back around to him,” said David Kochel, a Republican operative in Iowa with three decades of experience in campaign politics. “These voters are smart enough to see the writing on the wall that Trump is going to win, and essentially want to get this over with and send him off to battle Biden.”

As the presidential nominating season commences, college-educated Republicans face a profound decision. Whether they stick with Mr. Trump, swing back to Mr. DeSantis or align behind Ms. Haley will help set the party’s course heading into November and for years to come.

‘Now I prefer Trump’

Mr. Trump is the odds-on favorite to become his party’s nominee, which would make him the first Republican to win three consecutive presidential nominations. But there was little sense of inevitability a year ago.

He had failed to help deliver the red wave of victories he promised supporters in the 2022 midterm elections. In the weeks that followed, he suggested [*terminating*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/04/us/politics/trump-constitution-republicans.html) the Constitution and faced sharp [*criticism*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/28/us/politics/trump-kanye-west-nick-fuentes-antisemitism.html) for hosting a dinner with Nick Fuentes, a notorious white supremacist and Holocaust denier, and the rapper Kanye West, who had been widely denounced for making antisemitic comments.

The backlash from Republican voters was immediate.

In [*a Suffolk University/USA Today poll*](https://www.suffolk.edu/-/media/suffolk/documents/academics/research-at-suffolk/suprc/polls/national/2022/12_27_2022_final_tables.pdf?la=en&amp;hash=7039E6CC467C62FF5D7C108EAD41D4E7A3BD0902https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2022/12/13/trump-support-gop-2024-presidential-race-poll/10882346002/) at the time, 61 percent of the party’s voters said they still supported Mr. Trump’s policies but wanted “a different Republican nominee for president.” A stunning [*76 percent*](https://www.suffolk.edu/-/media/suffolk/documents/academics/research-at-suffolk/suprc/polls/national/2022/12_27_2022_final_tables.pdf?la=en&amp;hash=7039E6CC467C62FF5D7C108EAD41D4E7A3BD0902) of college-educated Republicans agreed.

This month, the same pollster showed Mr. Trump with support from 62 percent of Republican voters, including [*60 percent of those with a college degree*](https://www.suffolk.edu/academics/research-at-suffolk/political-research-center/polls/national).

Other surveys have revealed similar trends.

Mr. Trump’s backing from white, college-educated Republicans doubled to [*60 percent*](https://static.foxnews.com/foxnews.com/content/uploads/2023/12/Fox_December-10-13-2023_Cross-Tabs_December-17-Release.pdf) over [*the course of last year*](https://static.foxnews.com/foxnews.com/content/uploads/2023/02/February-19-22-2023_Complete_Cross-Tabs_February-26-Release.pdf), according to Fox News polling.

Mr. Trump’s ability to maintain support from both sides of the party’s educational gap could be crucial to his political future beyond the Republican primary race.

In the 2020 presidential election, he bled support from 9 percent of Republicans who voted for a different candidate, according to [*an AP VoteCast survey*](https://www.foxnews.com/elections/2022/midterm-results/voter-analysis) of more than 110,000 voters. Some campaign advisers have said those defections cost him a second term, particularly given that Joseph R. Biden Jr. lost just 4 percent of Democrats.

College-educated voters accounted for 56 percent of Mr. Trump’s defections, according to a New York Times analysis of the data.

Ruth Ann Cherny, 65, a retired nurse from Urbandale, Iowa, said she was turning back to Mr. Trump after considering whether the party had “a younger, dynamic guy.”

She considered Mr. DeSantis, but decided she couldn’t support him because “dang, his campaign is such a mess.” She wanted to support Vivek Ramaswamy, the entrepreneur and political newcomer, but concluded he was too inexperienced and could not win.

“Trump has been in the White House once, and maybe he has a better lay of the land this time and will know who’s who and what’s what,” Ms. Cherny said.

Yolanda Gutierrez, 94, a retired real estate agent from Lakewood, Calif., whose state votes in the Super Tuesday primaries on March 5, expressed similar views.

“I know Trump’s got a lot of baggage,” she said. “But so much of it is make-believe.”

Ms. Gutierrez, who studied education in college, said she had voted twice for Mr. Trump but had been leaning toward Mr. DeSantis because she liked his record as governor of Florida and thought the party needed a younger leader.

“But now I prefer Trump because Democrats are trying to find any way they can to jail him,” she said.

‘Like a teenager who’s rebelling’

The shift in Republican support for Mr. Trump can be pinpointed almost to the moment last year when, on March 30, 2023, [*a Manhattan grand jury indicted him*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/30/nyregion/trump-indictment-hush-money-charges.html) for his role in paying hush money to a porn star, making him the nation’s first former president to face criminal charges.

At the time, Mr. Trump’s primary bid had support from less than half of voters in most polls, an ominous position where he had been hovering for months.

But just four days after the Manhattan indictment, Mr. Trump eclipsed the 50 percent mark, and he has trended upward ever since, according to [*a national average of polls*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/polls/president-primary-r/2024/national/) maintained by FiveThirtyEight. As of Saturday, Mr. Trump had support from about 60 percent of the party.

Lisa Keathly, 54, who owns two flooring businesses near Dallas, said she still wanted to support Mr. DeSantis, whom she views as more polished and less rude. But she added that she was increasingly likely to back Mr. Trump in her state’s Super Tuesday primary.

She pointed to a ruling last month from Colorado’s top court to [*block the former president from the primary ballot*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/19/us/politics/trump-colorado-ballot-14th-amendment.html), which the U.S. Supreme Court [*is now considering*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/05/us/trump-supreme-court-colorado-ballot.html), as a moment that may have sealed her support for Mr. Trump.

“It’s a little bit like a teenager who’s rebelling — a part of me is like, Maybe I should go for Trump because everyone is telling me not to,” Ms. Keathly said. “Part of my thing is: Why are they so scared?”

She added, “Because they can’t control him.”

Worries about ‘a wasted vote’

Some college-educated Republicans said they had circled back to Mr. Trump as they grew increasingly anxious about foreign conflicts.

Unlike Ms. Haley, who now appears to be Mr. Trump’s toughest challenger, they were opposed to sending more aid to help Ukraine against Russia’s invasion. And they liked Mr. Trump’s tough talk on China.

“I like Nikki Haley, and I’d probably vote for her if I thought she could beat him,” said Linda Farrar, a 72-year-old Republican from Missouri, which holds its presidential caucuses on March 2. “But right now, national security is the most important thing.”

Ms. Farrar said she wanted to send a message to the world by nominating a presidential candidate who would project strength abroad.

“I’m just afraid of China and what’s happening at the border and who’s coming in,” she said. “It scares me a great deal. China is really taking over — they’re infiltrating from the inside.”

Others cited increasing concern about the economy, and a longing for the kinds of market gains that colored Mr. Trump’s first three years in office.

Many, like Chip Shaw, a 46-year-old information technology specialist in Rome, Ga., said they had been underwhelmed by Mr. DeSantis’s campaign, and viewed support for any candidate other than Mr. Trump as “a wasted vote.”

“If we’re going off the way polls are right now, that’s the way I feel. My vote would be going into thin air,” Mr. Shaw said. “The country was really running smooth under him. I think that the economy was a crap ton better — we weren’t paying $6 a carton for eggs.”

Still, support for Mr. Trump has become something of a self-fulfilling prophecy. The urgency among Republicans to unseat Mr. Biden has been a key factor in determining which candidate to support, a finding that Trump aides said had revealed itself in their internal research of primary voters.

The Trump campaign has focused much of its ad budget on attacking Mr. Biden, which appears to be an early pivot to the likely matchup in the general election — and addresses one of Republican voters’ top concerns.

“Trump is good,” said Hari Goyal, 73, a physician in Sacramento, who supported Mr. DeSantis last year but has since changed his mind. “Look at Biden and what he has done to this country. Trump can beat him, and he can fix this country.”

Ruth Igielnik and Alyce McFadden contributed reporting.

Ruth Igielnik and Alyce McFadden contributed reporting.

PHOTOS: Former President Donald J. Trump is dominating polls in the Republican presidential primary race, but a year ago, he was trailing.; A Trump supporter during the national anthem in Clinton, Iowa, this month. Mr. Trump has rallied every corner of his party. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES); Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida this month in Iowa. He has been seen as a strong contender. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JORDAN GALE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A11) This article appeared in print on page A1, A11.

**Load-Date:** January 16, 2024

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[***Bank of Dave***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6919-CNX1-JBG3-645T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 25, 2023 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; Movies, Performing Arts/Weekend Desk; Pg. 5

**Length:** 330 words

**Byline:** By Brandon Yu

**Body**

This sometimes sleepy feel-good drama follows the story of a ***working-class*** man's battle against London's financial elite.

Not only are major global banks as we know them too big to fail, but local, community-oriented ones are sometimes too small and well-intentioned to even exist. It's the reality of a system that left Dave Fishwick dismayed, and what serves as the premise for ''Bank of Dave,'' a film loosely based on the true story of Fishwick's battle with Britain's financial system to create a community bank meant to help the little guys.

[Video: Watch on YouTube.]

A man of the people who has made a modest fortune selling vans, Dave (Rory Kinnear) is a Ted Lasso of sorts within his small English town of Burnley, where he makes a habit of loaning money to local businesses and friends in need. After Dave gets the idea to institutionalize his generous streak with the Bank of Dave, where all profits will go to charities, Hugh (Joel Fry), the stiff London lawyer Dave has hired to help, comes into town expecting to disabuse Dave of his idealism. A new bank has not been approved in 150 years, and the powers that be were set up solely to protect the elite.

Yet, after following Dave around for a couple days and catching feelings for his niece, Alexandra (Phoebe Dynevor), Hugh quickly becomes a convert to Dave's mission.

It all makes for an inoffensively pleasant David (or, rather, Dave) and Goliath story. The conflicts involving complex, powerful interests are set up and solved with simplified, clean emotional beats -- helped along in particular by Fry and Kinnear, who do the legwork to support a sometimes sleepy feel-good drama from the director Chris Foggin. Even if the movie is about one small win, there's a sedate pleasure in seeing it play out, especially knowing a version of it happened in real life.

Bank of DaveRated PG-13 some strong language. Running time: 1 hour 47 minutes. In theaters and available to rent or buy on most major platforms.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/24/movies/bank-of-dave-review.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/24/movies/bank-of-dave-review.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page C5.

**Load-Date:** August 25, 2023

**End of Document**



[***The Isolationism Antidote***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B9K-G6S1-JBG3-604H-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 11, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2024 The New York Times Company

**Section:** Section SR; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 2; NICHOLAS KRISTOF

**Length:** 982 words

**Byline:** By Nicholas Kristof

**Body**

Why has the isolationist wing of Congress been blocking aid to Ukraine and become, in effect, a tool for President Vladimir Putin of Russia?

Republican politics explain some of this folly, but I think another reason is pure cluelessness. Congress has a thread of insularity, reflecting an American population that is, by the standards of the rich world, poorly traveled -- only 48 percent of Americans have a passport -- and notoriously bad at languages:

Question: If someone who speaks two languages is bilingual, and someone who speaks three languages is trilingual, then what do you call a person who speaks just one language?

Answer: an American.

Lack of familiarity with the world is, I think, one reason the United States periodically pursues self-destructive policies around the world. Perhaps the worst foreign policy mistake in this century was the George W. Bush administration's expectation that Iraqis would welcome American troops with flowers in 2003; that's the kind of delusion found among people who have never actually had a conversation with an Arab person. A second Trump presidency might entail even more consequential mistakes: pulling out of NATO, abandoning Ukraine, upending the post-World War II international system.

Time spent abroad corrodes stereotypes (of the kind one hears these days about Israelis and Palestinians alike) and shores up our empathy by reminding us of our common humanity. It also makes our country more competitive: I would argue that Utah has benefited economically because it is unusually cosmopolitan, a consequence of having a large number of residents who have lived abroad as Mormon missionaries.

So my message to young people: Go west! Go east! Go north! And above all, go to the global south! Universities should likewise push students harder to study abroad for at least a semester (or to take a gap year before college to work or study in another country).

We wouldn't consider university graduates fully educated if they had never read Shakespeare, didn't know the cube root of 27 and thought Plato's ''Republic'' was a small Central American country. And as the world becomes increasingly interconnected, another component of a complete education is some international experience.

I spent a summer before college earning money working on a farm in France, and it helped change my life trajectory. But don't think that the way to study abroad is necessarily to join a herd touring Rome or London. Instead, try teaching English in a small town in South Korea, Taiwan or Japan. Or volunteer in Nepal or Sierra Leone. (You can explore options at idealist.org and omprakash.org.)

The United States is increasingly integrating with Latin America, so learn Spanish! But don't learn it in a college classroom. For a tiny fraction of the cost of college tuition, you can have a blast studying or working on your own in Chile, Argentina or a safe part of Mexico. Or in Bolivia -- is any country more magical? And not to suggest anything untoward, but note that the best language teachers are, of course, girlfriends and boyfriends.

Cost is already an obstacle for young people seeking college degrees, of course, and studying abroad can make educational debts even more onerous. Colleges should do a better job of offering programs in inexpensive countries like India, Morocco and Mexico.

I'd love to see a cultural shift that put more emphasis on young people traveling the world on a shoestring. Perhaps the best example is the way young Australians -- including ***working-class*** men and women -- sometimes save for a few years, quit their jobs and fly one-way to Europe, and then gradually travel home overland over the course of many months. They periodically run out of money and then look for jobs to finance the next leg. Many have told me it was a defining experience of their lives.

Because financial challenges are real, let me add that what's most important for personal growth is that the experience be ''foreign'' to you, without necessarily unfolding in a foreign country. You build new muscles when you get out of your comfort zone, and that can be in your hometown, volunteering in a homeless shelter or teaching at a prison -- or busing tables can be its own education. An American who grew up in the city might apply for a job on a Texas ranch; a farm girl from Kansas could get a job at a McDonald's in El Paso.

Parents invariably worry about risks, and these can be real: The biggest peril may be road accidents, especially with motorcycles. Be prudent, maybe travel with a friend, don't accept drinks that might be drugged and put everything in perspective by remembering that people abroad often think of the United States as a dangerous place.

In my own small effort to promote global issues, since 2006 I've picked an American university student to travel with me each year on my ''win a trip'' reporting trip somewhere in the world. I'm thrilled to announce that the winner this year is Trisha Mukherjee of New Jersey, a student at the Columbia University School of Journalism. The runner-up, if Mukherjee can't make it, is Audrey Thibert of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Stay tuned.

Thanks to all who applied. To those who weren't chosen, and to other university students, my counsel is simple: Take a leap and land in a place -- abroad or at home -- where you're out of your depth and have no idea what's going on. You'll learn about yourself, your horizons will be extended, and you may return able to offer sound counsel about Ukraine and the entire world to some parochial members of our Congress.

The Times is committed to publishing a diversity of letters to the editor. We'd like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some tips. And here's our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](mailto:letters@nytimes.com)

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/10/opinion/isolationist-ukraine-trump-travel.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/10/opinion/isolationist-ukraine-trump-travel.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page SR2.

**Load-Date:** February 11, 2024

**End of Document**



[***'25 Trump Plan For U.S. Trade Aims at China***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69YR-XST1-JBG3-63JT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 27, 2023 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2023 The New York Times Company

**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 2682 words

**Byline:** By Charlie Savage, Jonathan Swan and Maggie Haberman

**Body**

Former President Donald J. Trump is planning an aggressive expansion of his first-term efforts to upend America's trade policies if he returns to power in 2025 -- including imposing a new tax on ''most imported goods'' that would risk alienating allies and igniting a global trade war.

While the Biden administration has kept tariffs that Mr. Trump imposed on China, Mr. Trump would go far beyond that and try to wrench apart the world's two largest economies, which exchanged some $758 billion in goods and services last year. Mr. Trump has said he would ''enact aggressive new restrictions on Chinese ownership'' of a broad range of assets in the United States, bar Americans from investing in China and phase in a complete ban on imports of key categories of Chinese-made goods like electronics, steel and pharmaceuticals.

''We will impose stiff penalties on China and all other nations as they abuse us,'' Mr. Trump declared at a recent rally in Durham, N.H.

In an interview, Robert Lighthizer, who was the Trump administration's top trade negotiator and would most likely play a key role in a second term, gave the most expansive and detailed explanation yet of Mr. Trump's trade agenda. Mr. Trump's campaign referred questions for this article to Mr. Lighthizer, and campaign officials were on the phone for the discussion.

Essentially, Mr. Trump's trade agenda aims at backing the United States away from integration with the global economy and steering the country toward becoming more self-contained: producing a larger share of what it consumes and wielding its might through one-on-one dealings with other countries.

Mr. Trump, who calls himself a ''tariff man,'' took steps in that direction as president, including placing tariffs on various imports, hamstringing the World Trade Organization and starting a trade war with China. If he is elected, he plans a more audacious intervention in hopes of eliminating the trade deficit and bolstering manufacturing -- with potentially seismic consequences for jobs, prices, diplomatic relations and the global trading system.

His plans -- which he has described as ''a sweeping pro-American overhaul of our tax and trade policy'' -- would amount to a high-stakes gamble with the economy's health, given that unemployment has dropped to 3.7 percent, inflation has substantially cooled from its post-pandemic spike, about 200,000 jobs are being created each month and the stock market is near a record high.

Mr. Trump's plans have drawn warnings from trade experts with more traditional economic views. Daniel M. Price, a top international economics adviser in the George W. Bush White House, called the plans ''erratic and irrational.'' He said that the costs would be borne by U.S. consumers and producers, and that the plans would risk alienating allies.

''The last time Trump abusively imposed tariffs on our allies -- then for concocted national security reasons -- a number of key trading partners, like Japan and South Korea, refrained from retaliating against U.S. exports thinking he would soon come to his senses,'' Mr. Price said. ''This time they will not indulge that fantasy.''

Evaluating the merits of Mr. Trump's trade vision is complex because there could be multiple ripple effects, and he is seeking long-term changes. But many economic studies concluded that the tariffs he imposed as president cost American society more than the benefits they produced.

Research from economists at the Federal Reserve and the University of Chicago found that tariffs Mr. Trump imposed on washing machines in 2018 created about 1,800 jobs while raising the median prices consumers paid for new washers and dryers by $86 and $92 per unit. That spending added up to about $817,000 per job.

But Mr. Lighthizer dismissed studies critical of Mr. Trump's tariffs, describing them as biased in favor of free trade and arguing that inflation had held steady during the administration. He also said that while efficiency, profits and low prices were important, the priority should be encouraging more manufacturing jobs for Americans without college degrees.

''If all you chase is efficiency -- if you think the person is better off on the unemployment line with a third 40-inch television than he is working with only two -- then you're not going to agree with me,'' Mr. Lighthizer said. ''There's a group of people who think that consumption is the end. And my view is production is the end, and safe and happy communities are the end. You should be willing to pay a price for that.''

Mr. Trump began his presidency in 2017 by hiring economic advisers with diverse views -- including advocates of protectionist policies, like Mr. Lighthizer and Peter Navarro, as well as Wall Street veterans oriented toward free trade and skeptical of tariffs, like the former Goldman Sachs president Gary D. Cohn.

But the economic advisers he remains close with are overwhelmingly in the pro-tariff ideological mold, like Mr. Lighthizer. His more aggressive plans for a second term would most likely face far less internal opposition than they did in his first term.

Universal Tariffs

The most globally far-reaching of Mr. Trump's 2025 trade policy plans is to impose a so-called universal baseline tariff, meaning a new tax on most imported goods.

The Trump campaign has not specified how high this tariff would be. In an August interview on Fox Business, Mr. Trump threw out a figure of 10 percent, saying ''I think we should have a ring around the collar'' of the U.S. economy.

Mr. Trump has been vague about other details. Among them, he has not explained whether he envisions the universal tariff as a new floor or an add-on to existing ones. For example, if an imported product was now taxed at 5 percent, would that rate rise to 10 percent or to 15 percent? The latter, Mr. Lighthizer said.

Nor has Mr. Trump said whether the new tariff would apply to imports from the nearly two dozen countries with which the United States has free trade deals. They include Canada and Mexico, which together account for nearly a fifth of the overall U.S. trade deficit in goods, and with which Mr. Trump's administration renegotiated the nearly tariff-free trade deal that replaced NAFTA.

The Trump campaign noted that Mr. Trump has not announced any decision on that question. But Canada's ambassador to the United States, Kirsten Hillman, said in an interview that her country believes its exports should be exempted from any new universal tariffs.

''We just concluded this deal with 99 percent of tariffs at zero under the previous Trump administration, so it's our expectation these proposed policies would not apply to Canada,'' she said.

Mr. Trump has also not said whether he thinks he could unilaterally impose the sweeping new tariff under existing law or would need Congress to authorize it.

Clete Willems, who served as deputy assistant to the president for international economics in the Trump administration, said in an interview that he sympathized with Mr. Trump's desire for reciprocity, but added: ''The president's authority to enact across-the-board tariff hikes is unclear, and I'm skeptical Congress is going to endorse it.''

But Mr. Lighthizer said that given the size of the U.S. trade deficit and its impact on the American economy, a president would have ''clear authority'' under two laws -- the International Emergency Economic Powers Act and Section 338 of the Tariff Act of 1930 -- to impose tariffs unilaterally.

Still, he said, depending on political conditions, Mr. Trump might instead choose to ask Congress to enact new legislation so that a successor would not be able to easily revoke it. ''He has the legal authority to do it and he's got two routes,'' Mr. Lighthizer said. ''He hasn't made that choice as far as I know.''

Regardless of the legal authority, a swirl of dislocating losses and gains would ripple out from such a policy of universal tariffs. On the one hand, some domestic manufacturing would rise since domestic makers of rival goods could raise their prices and expand production. That is Mr. Trump's focus: ''We will quickly become a manufacturing powerhouse like the world has never seen before,'' he promised in a campaign video.

As a matter of textbook economics, there would also be downsides. It would amount to a tax increase passed onto consumers in the form of higher prices -- one that would fall more heavily on poorer people since they spend a higher portion of their incomes on goods.

The policy could also lead to downward pressure on other domestic manufacturing. Producers who buy inputs from abroad would pay higher costs, making their products less competitive in the global market. Retaliatory tariffs would reduce demand for U.S. exports.

Decoupling From China

Mr. Trump has also said he would go much further in imposing ''a bold series of reforms to completely eliminate dependence on China in all critical areas.'' In 2022, the United States imported $536.3 billion in goods from China and exported $154 billion in goods to it.

Among other things, Mr. Trump has said he would impose ''a four-year plan to phase out all Chinese imports of essential goods -- everything from electronics to steel to pharmaceuticals,'' along with new rules to stop American companies from making investments in China and to inhibit Chinese purchases of U.S. assets.

Still, Mr. Trump also hedged, saying without detail that he would allow ''all of those investments that clearly serve American interests.''

The Biden administration has also moved to impose greater restrictions on economic exchanges with China, but in a more narrowly tailored way. The government bars the export of certain technology with military applications to China, and in August, President Biden signed an order banning new American investment in Chinese companies that are trying to develop things like semiconductors and quantum computers.

Mr. Trump is now proposing going even further, calling for revoking China's ''most favored nation'' trade status, meaning repealing the permanent normal trade relations and lower tariffs the United States granted to China after it joined the World Trade Organization in 2001. Notably, a House committee this month unveiled a bipartisan report calling for taking that step, too.

Doing so would significantly disrupt the U.S. economy, according to a study published last month by Oxford Economics, which was commissioned by the U.S.-China Business Council. It estimated that the resulting increase in tariffs would lead to a $1.6 trillion loss for the U.S. economy and 744,000 fewer jobs over five years.

In his 2023 memoir, ''No Trade Is Free,'' Mr. Lighthizer acknowledged that U.S. businesses that operate in China and those that rely on Chinese imports would object to that idea, but asserted that more manufacturing of products like computers and cellphones would ''eventually'' return to the United States or its allies, benefiting American workers and the country.

He also wrote that inevitable Chinese retaliation to harm U.S. exports would further ''contribute to the strategic decoupling'' of the two economies. ''Anyone who concedes that China is a problem but insists that there is some magical, disruption-free solution to the problem China presents is quite likely a liar, a fool, a knave, an irredeemable globalist, or some combination thereof,'' he wrote.

Decades of Railing Against Deficits

Mr. Trump's economic nationalism has helped him change the Republican Party. He has assembled a more ***working-class*** coalition than the G.O.P. used to attract before he was the party's standard-bearer.

His views are a throwback to a mercantilist approach to trade, in which countries used high tariffs to protect and develop their domestic manufacturing capabilities. The Trump campaign website states that his trade policy ''is firmly rooted in American history'' because America ''used to impose tariffs on over 95 percent of all imports.'' That statistic is from before the Civil War, when tariffs made up the vast majority of the federal government's revenues.

Throughout the 20th century, many economists came to see this approach as myopic. By the 1990s -- despite opposition from labor unions -- a bipartisan consensus formed in favor of freer trade. The idea was that lowering tariffs and increasing trade would raise the overall material prosperity of society by improving efficiency and lowering prices.

But those gains have not been evenly distributed, and over time, various forms of disillusionment with lower trade barriers have arisen.

Inside the United States, critics on both the left and the right have increasingly pointed to the downsides of trade for ***working-class*** communities. Social decay spread as corporations closed factories where they could shift to cheaper overseas production, contributing -- along with other factors, like rising automation -- to the stagnation of ***working-class*** wages. Supply-chain disruptions during the pandemic focused attention on another risk of globalization.

And there is growing anxiety about the security implications of America's reliance on China for certain critical goods and resources, and anger at China's practices of forcing companies to share technology and its outright theft of trade secrets.

Politically, Mr. Trump was ahead of the pack in focusing on the downsides of free trade. For more than 30 years, he has railed against trade deficits, which he views like company balance sheets as a simple matter of profits and losses. He complains that foreign countries that export more to the United States than they import from it are ripping America off.

In 2017, Mr. Trump would consistently ask his briefers a simple question before his calls with foreign leaders, according to a person with direct knowledge: ''What is the trade deficit?'' The answer would often set Mr. Trump's mood for the call and how friendly he would be to the head of state.

Mr. Trump withdrew the United States from the Trans-Pacific Partnership, President Barack Obama's signature trade deal. His administration crippled the W.T.O.'s ability to resolve trade disputes between countries by blocking its ability to replace members of an appellate body.

Mr. Trump imposed tariffs on certain imports, raising prices on washing machines, solar panels as well as steel and aluminum. And he started a trade war with China, ultimately imposing tariffs on more than $360 billion of Chinese products.

Despite Mr. Trump's aggressive tariffs, Census Bureau data show that the annual trade deficit in goods grew from $735 billion in 2016 to $901 billion in 2020. But Mr. Lighthizer pointed to a slight dip in the trade deficit in 2019 compared with 2018, arguing that the tariffs were starting to have their intended effect before the upheaval of the pandemic year.

Mr. Trump's trade wars were costly. After China -- which has become the largest export market for American farmers -- retaliated by raising tariffs on U.S. agricultural products like soybeans, the Trump administration began a $28 billion government bailout to keep farmers afloat. A February 2020 study calculated that the higher cost of metal for American manufacturers owing to the steel tariffs had caused a loss of about 75,000 jobs.

As aggressive as Mr. Trump's first-term trade policies were, he did not always go as far as he wanted. Despite threatening to withdraw from the World Trade Organization, for example, he never did. While he loathed NAFTA, his administration negotiated a replacement that, while modernizing various terms, kept in place a nearly tariff-free market with Mexico and Canada.

Mr. Lighthizer, who led those negotiations, wrote in his memoir that whether or not Congress should have passed NAFTA in 1993, abruptly withdrawing from it after decades of economic integration would have caused ''an economic and political catastrophe,'' sending ''shock waves through the economy'' and hurting ''Trump voters in Texas and throughout the farm belt.''

Ana Swanson contributed reporting.Ana Swanson contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/26/us/politics/trump-2025-trade-china.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/26/us/politics/trump-2025-trade-china.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Former President Donald J. Trump at a campaign event in Iowa this month. ''We will impose stiff penalties on China and all other nations as they abuse us,'' he said at a recent rally. Below, shipping containers at the Port of Seattle. Mr. Trump's plans have drawn warnings from trade experts and government advisers. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JORDAN GALE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

RUTH FREMSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A11) This article appeared in print on page A1, A11.

**Load-Date:** December 27, 2023

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[***Lower Black and Latino Pass Rates Don’t Make a Test Racist; John McWhorter***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:667Y-9MD1-JBG3-61SH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 27, 2022 Saturday 14:32 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1663 words

**Byline:** John McWhorter

**Highlight:** One sociolinguistic study helps show why the issue is more complicated.

**Body**

The Association of Social Work Boards administers tests typically required for the licensure of social workers. Apparently, this amounts to a kind of racism that must be reckoned with.

There is a Change.org [*petition*](https://www.change.org/p/aswb-end-discriminatory-social-work-licensing-exams?recruiter=843352574&amp;recruited_by_id=b02cded0-e293-11e7-b60c-2724e5c712f2&amp;utm_source=share_petition&amp;utm_medium=copylink&amp;utm_campaign=petition_dashboard) circulating saying just that, based on the claim that the association’s clinical exam is biased because [*from 2018 to 2021*](https://www.aswb.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/2022-ASWB-Exam-Pass-Rate-Analysis.pdf) 84 percent of white test-takers passed it the first time while only 45 percent of Black test-takers and 65 percent of Latino test-takers did. “These numbers are grossly disproportionate and demonstrate a failure in the exam’s design,” the petition states, adding that an “assertion that the problem lies with test-takers only reinforces the racism inherent to the test.” The petitioners add that the exam is administered only in English and its questions are based on survey responses from a disproportionately white pool of social workers.

But the petition doesn’t sufficiently explain why that makes the test racist. We’re just supposed to accept that it is. The petitioners want states to eliminate requirements that social workers pass the association’s tests, leaving competence for licensure to be demonstrated through degree completion and a period of supervised work.

So: It’s wrong to use a test to evaluate someone’s qualifications to be a social worker? This begins to sound plausible only if you buy into the fashionable ideology of our moment, in which we’re encouraged to think it’s somehow antiracist to excuse Black and brown people from being measured by standardized testing. There have been comparable claims these days with regard to tests for [*math teachers in Ontario*](https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2022/01/14/ontario-tries-to-fight-court-ruling-striking-down-new-teachers-mandatory-math-test.html) and [*state bar exams*](https://aninjusticemag.com/when-are-black-lawyers-going-to-matter-to-the-bar-exam-ece690d09a7d), and, in the past, on behalf of applicants to the New York City [*Fire Department*](https://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/24/nyregion/24firefighters.html).

One of the weirdest assertions in the petition is that the social work association “is suggesting that Black, Latine/Hispanic and Indigenous social workers, by virtue of their race, are less capable of passing standardized tests.” (The first-time pass rate for Indigenous test-takers was 63 percent; for those of Asian descent it was 72 percent.) But based on the numbers, it would appear some are, absent details of just how the test is racist.

If there were clear evidence of this, presumably the petitioners would have outlined it in order to make their case. But the petition doesn’t prove the exam’s design is fatally flawed and doesn’t show which test components are out of bounds. We must address this problem more constructively.

This will mean taking a deep breath and asking why it is that in various instances, Black and Latino test-takers disproportionately have trouble with standardized tests. The reason for the deep breath is the implication ever in the air on this subject: that if the test isn’t racist, then the results might suggest that they aren’t as smart as their white peers. That’s an artificially narrowed realm of choices, however. There is more to what shapes how people handle things like standardized tests.

Broadly speaking, standardized testing has been criticized in a variety of ways. A 2021 [*article*](https://www.nea.org/advocating-for-change/new-from-nea/racist-beginnings-standardized-testing) in NEA Today, a publication of the National Education Association, claims, “Since their inception a century ago, standardized tests have been instruments of racism and a biased system,” an observation channeling an opinion common in education circles that standardized tests measure test-taking ability rather than proficiency. But these claims miss a dynamic that sheds light on this issue.

One source I’ve always valued is [*a book*](https://books.google.com/books/about/Ways_with_Words.html?id=ZvwEDOhLbpEC) published in 1983, “Ways With Words: Language, Life and Work in Communities and Classrooms,” by the linguistic anthropologist Shirley Brice Heath, who compared how language was used with children in a middle-class white community, a ***working-class*** white one and a ***working-class*** Black one. She found that in conversation, questions were wielded differently depending on the community. A key difference was that in middle-class white ones, children were often asked disembodied, information-seeking questions as a kind of exercise amid general social interaction. Heath wrote:

Mothers continue their question-answer routines when the children begin to talk and add to them running narratives on items and events in the environment. Children are trained to act as conversation partners and information-givers.

In the middle-class subculture Heath describes, children unconsciously incorporate into their mental tool kit a comfort with retaining and discussing facts for their own sake, as opposed to processing facts mainly as they relate to the practicalities of daily existence. The same kind of skill development that’s fostered by reading for pleasure or personal interest — as opposed to reading for school lessons — a ritual which preserves and displays information beyond the everyday.

Heath found that while the printed page is hardly alien to the ***working-class*** Black community (which she gives the pseudonym “Trackton”; her pseudonymous white ***working-class*** community is “Roadville” and her pseudonymous white middle-class community is “Maintown”), and questions themselves are certainly part of how language is used within it, particular kinds of questions about matters unconnected to daily living were relatively rare. A [*paper*](https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED387696.pdf) published in 1995 by the National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia cited Heath and notes that “the Trackton world is warm, buzzing with emotion and adult communication, an environment to which the child gradually adapts by a process of imitation and repetition.” However, it adds, “the language socialization of the Trackton child is,” in contrast to Maintown, “almost book-free.” One Trackton grandmother described part of the dynamic to Heath in this way: “We don’t talk to our chil’rn like you folks do. We don’t ask ’em ’bout colors, names ’n things.”

Yes, Heath’s book was written some time ago. Certainly, Black kids don’t grow up not knowing their colors or that things have names. But that quote does get at something in a general sense. Importantly, Heath’s study was objective and respectful. She isn’t a culture-wars partisan. Her point wasn’t that Black culture, or ***working-class*** culture, is unenlightened or that Black people or ***working-class*** white people are in any sense inarticulate. Neither she then, nor I now, say there is some flaw in Black or ***working-class*** white culture.

The issue is, rather, how we square what worked for the past with what will work for today. No culture can be faulted for lagging a bit on that. ***Working-class*** Black culture was born amid hard-working people in segregated America for whom higher education was, in many, if not most cases, a distant prospect, and language was used to operate in the here and now. Think of August Wilson’s plays.

That makes perfect sense in a ***working-class*** setting and is the way most people in the world proceed linguistically. Heath noted, though, about both the white and Black ***working-class*** communities she studied that “neither community’s ways with the written word prepares it for the school’s ways.” In that context, it’s easier to understand stubbing a proverbial toe on standardized tests at first.

I experienced this as a 1970s middle-class Black kid, coming of age just a decade or so after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., growing up in neighborhoods with lots of “post-civil rights” Black kids of various backgrounds. Middle- and upper-middle class Black families, while taking advantage of widened opportunities, could still dialogue in the way Trackton families did, and many still do. This is hardly limited to Black people. However, to the extent that we still have a wealth gap and an education gap, and that the [*poverty rate*](https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/poverty-rate-by-raceethnicity/?currentTimeframe=0&amp;sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D) is disproportionately high for Black, Latino and Indigenous people, we might expect these groups, in the aggregate, to be affected by this aspect of language and its legacies.

Let’s recognize, then, that calling something like a credentialing exam racist is crude — it flies past issues more nuanced and complex. Heath’s study doesn’t have all the answers, and there are many ***working-class*** homes in which children are prepared with the conversational and analytical skills required to excel on standardized tests. But we might absorb the reality that circumstances will leave some people better poised to take tests than others, and that will mean pass rates on such tests will differ according to race at least for a while.

And let’s recognize that the pass rate on the social work association’s clinical exam goes up after successive attempts: According to the association, the eventual pass rate is 57 percent for Black test-takers, 77 percent for Latinos and 74 percent for Native Americans. Also, among social workers, Black people are overrepresented — [*over 20 percent as of 2017*](https://datausa.io/profile/soc/social-workers) — in relation to our proportion of the population, which hardly suggests an obstacle to Black participation in the profession.

Might there be a reason to adjust the exams? Perhaps, if, as the petition states, among the social workers surveyed in order to compose the questions, 80 percent are white people, even though Black and Latino people combined constitute 36 percent of new social workers. If nothing else, to eliminate the appearance of bias, the association ought to survey a representative group to generate test questions.

But insisting simply that it is racist, and therefore, constructively, immoral, to subject Black and Latino social workers to standardized test questions is itself a kind of immorality. It’s a squeak away from arguing that Black and Latino people just aren’t very quick on the uptake or can’t think outside of the box. What kind of antiracism is that?

Have feedback? Send a note to [*McWhorter-newsletter@nytimes.com*](mailto:McWhorter-newsletter@nytimes.com).

John McWhorter ([*@JohnHMcWhorter*](https://twitter.com/JohnHMcWhorter)) is an associate professor of linguistics at Columbia University. He hosts the podcast “[*Lexicon Valley*](https://www.booksmartstudios.org/s/lexicon-valley)” and is the author, most recently, of “[*Woke Racism*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/696856/woke-racism-by-john-mcwhorter/): How a New Religion Has Betrayed Black America.”

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Delcan and Co. FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** August 28, 2022

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[***A New Tax on Imports and a Split From China: Trump’s 2025 Trade Agenda***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69YJ-9Y71-DXY4-X1DM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 26, 2023 Tuesday 08:54 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 2728 words

**Highlight:** Donald J. Trump plans to sharply expand his use of tariffs if he returns to power, risking disruption to the economy in an attempt to transform it.

**Body**

Former President Donald J. Trump is planning an aggressive expansion of his first-term efforts to upend America’s trade policies if he returns to power in 2025 — including imposing [*a new tax on “most imported goods”*](https://www.donaldjtrump.com/agenda47/agenda47-president-trumps-new-trade-plan-to-protect-american-workers) that would risk alienating allies and igniting a global trade war.

While the Biden administration has [*kept tariffs that Mr. Trump imposed on China*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/22/business/biden-china-tariffs.html), Mr. Trump would go far beyond that and try to wrench apart the world’s two largest economies, which exchanged [*some $758 billion in goods and services last year*](https://ustr.gov/countries-regions/china-mongolia-taiwan/peoples-republic-china). Mr. Trump has said he would “enact aggressive new restrictions on Chinese ownership” of a broad range of assets in the United States, bar Americans from investing in China and phase in a complete ban on imports of key categories of Chinese-made goods like electronics, steel and pharmaceuticals.

“We will impose stiff penalties on China and all other nations as they abuse us,” Mr. Trump declared at a recent rally in Durham, N.H.

In an interview, Robert Lighthizer, who was the Trump administration’s top trade negotiator and would most likely play a key role in a second term, gave the most expansive and detailed explanation yet of Mr. Trump’s trade agenda. Mr. Trump’s campaign referred questions for this article to Mr. Lighthizer, and campaign officials were on the phone for the discussion.

Essentially, Mr. Trump’s trade agenda aims at backing the United States away from integration with the global economy and steering the country toward becoming more self-contained: producing a larger share of what it consumes and wielding its might through one-on-one dealings with other countries.

Mr. Trump, [*who calls himself a “tariff man,”*](https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1069970500535902208) took steps in that direction as president, including placing tariffs on various imports, hamstringing the World Trade Organization and starting a trade war with China. If he is elected, he plans a more audacious intervention in hopes of eliminating the trade deficit and bolstering manufacturing — with potentially seismic consequences for jobs, prices, diplomatic relations and the global trading system.

His plans — which he has described as “a sweeping pro-American overhaul of our tax and trade policy” — would amount to a high-stakes gamble with the economy’s health, given that [*unemployment has dropped to 3.7 percent,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/08/business/economy/jobs-report-november-2023.html) inflation has [*substantially cooled*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/12/11/business/cpi-inflation-fed) from its post-pandemic spike, about 200,000 jobs are being created each month and the stock market is near a record high.

Mr. Trump’s plans have drawn warnings from trade experts with more traditional economic views. Daniel M. Price, a top international economics adviser in the George W. Bush White House, called the plans “erratic and irrational.” He said that the costs would be borne by U.S. consumers and producers, and that the plans would risk alienating allies.

“The last time Trump abusively imposed tariffs on our allies — then for concocted national security reasons — a number of key trading partners, like Japan and South Korea, refrained from retaliating against U.S. exports thinking he would soon come to his senses,” Mr. Price said. “This time they will not indulge that fantasy.”

Evaluating the merits of Mr. Trump’s trade vision is complex because there could be multiple ripple effects, and he is seeking long-term changes. But many economic studies concluded that the tariffs he imposed as president cost American society more than the benefits they produced.

Research from economists at the Federal Reserve and the University of Chicago [*found*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/21/business/trump-tariffs-washing-machines.html) that tariffs Mr. Trump imposed on washing machines in 2018 created about 1,800 jobs while raising the median prices consumers paid for new washers and dryers by $86 and $92 per unit. That spending added up to about $817,000 per job.

But Mr. Lighthizer dismissed studies critical of Mr. Trump’s tariffs, describing them as biased in favor of free trade and arguing that inflation had held steady during the administration. He also said that while efficiency, profits and low prices were important, the priority should be encouraging more manufacturing jobs for Americans without college degrees.

“If all you chase is efficiency — if you think the person is better off on the unemployment line with a third 40-inch television than he is working with only two — then you’re not going to agree with me,” Mr. Lighthizer said. “There’s a group of people who think that consumption is the end. And my view is production is the end, and safe and happy communities are the end. You should be willing to pay a price for that.”

Mr. Trump began his presidency in 2017 by hiring economic advisers [*with diverse views*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/20/us/politics/trumps-america-first-trade-agenda-roiled-by-internal-divisions.html) — including advocates of protectionist policies, like Mr. Lighthizer and Peter Navarro, as well as Wall Street veterans oriented toward free trade and skeptical of tariffs, like the former Goldman Sachs president Gary D. Cohn.

But the economic advisers he remains close with are overwhelmingly in the pro-tariff ideological mold, like Mr. Lighthizer. His more aggressive plans for a second term would most likely face far less internal opposition than they did in his first term.

Universal Tariffs

The most globally far-reaching of Mr. Trump’s 2025 trade policy plans is to impose a so-called [*universal baseline tariff*](https://www.donaldjtrump.com/agenda47/agenda47-president-trumps-new-trade-plan-to-protect-american-workers), meaning a new tax on most imported goods.

The Trump campaign has not specified how high this tariff would be. In an August interview [*on Fox Business*](https://www.foxbusiness.com/video/6334380407112), Mr. Trump threw out a figure of 10 percent, saying “I think we should have a ring around the collar” of the U.S. economy.

Mr. Trump has been vague about other details. Among them, he has not explained whether he envisions the universal tariff as a new floor or an add-on to existing ones. For example, if an imported product was now taxed at 5 percent, would that rate rise to 10 percent or to 15 percent? The latter, Mr. Lighthizer said.

Nor has Mr. Trump said whether the new tariff would apply to [*imports from the nearly two dozen countries with which the United States has free trade deals*](https://ustr.gov/trade-agreements/free-trade-agreements). They include Canada and Mexico, which together account for nearly a fifth of the overall U.S. trade deficit in goods, and with which Mr. Trump’s administration renegotiated the nearly tariff-free trade deal that replaced NAFTA.

The Trump campaign noted that Mr. Trump has not announced any decision on that question. But Canada’s ambassador to the United States, Kirsten Hillman, said in an interview that her country believes its exports should be exempted from any new universal tariffs.

“We just concluded this deal with 99 percent of tariffs at zero under the previous Trump administration, so it’s our expectation these proposed policies would not apply to Canada,” she said.

Mr. Trump has also not said whether he thinks he could unilaterally impose the sweeping new tariff under existing law or would need Congress to authorize it.

Clete Willems, who served as deputy assistant to the president for international economics in the Trump administration, said in an interview that he sympathized with Mr. Trump’s desire for reciprocity, but added: “The president’s authority to enact across-the-board tariff hikes is unclear, and I’m skeptical Congress is going to endorse it.”

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Still, he said, depending on political conditions, Mr. Trump might instead choose to ask Congress to enact new legislation so that a successor would not be able to easily revoke it. “He has the legal authority to do it and he’s got two routes,” Mr. Lighthizer said. “He hasn’t made that choice as far as I know.”

Regardless of the legal authority, a swirl of dislocating losses and gains would ripple out from such a policy of universal tariffs. On the one hand, some domestic manufacturing would rise since domestic makers of rival goods could raise their prices and expand production. That is Mr. Trump’s focus: “We will quickly become a manufacturing powerhouse like the world has never seen before,” he promised in a [*campaign video*](https://www.donaldjtrump.com/videos/agenda47-president-trumps-new-trade-plan-to-protect-american-workers).

As a matter of textbook economics, there would also be downsides. It would amount to a tax increase passed onto consumers in the form of higher prices — one that would [*fall more heavily on poorer people*](https://www.heritage.org/trade/commentary/how-tariffs-and-regressive-trade-policies-hurt-the-poor) since they spend a higher portion of their incomes on goods.

The policy could also lead to downward pressure on other domestic manufacturing. Producers who buy inputs from abroad would pay higher costs, making their products less competitive in the global market. Retaliatory tariffs would reduce demand for U.S. exports.

Decoupling From China

Mr. Trump has also said he would go much further in imposing “a bold series of reforms to completely eliminate dependence on China in all critical areas.” In 2022, the United States [*imported $536.3 billion in goods from China and exported $154 billion in goods to it*](https://ustr.gov/countries-regions/china-mongolia-taiwan/peoples-republic-china).

Among other things, Mr. Trump has said he would impose “a four-year plan to phase out all Chinese imports of essential goods — everything from electronics to steel to pharmaceuticals,” along with new rules to stop American companies from making investments in China and to inhibit Chinese purchases of U.S. assets.

Still, Mr. Trump also hedged, saying without detail that he would allow “all of those investments that clearly serve American interests.”

The Biden administration has also moved to impose greater restrictions on economic exchanges with China, but in a more narrowly tailored way. The government bars the export of certain technology with military applications to China, and in August, President Biden signed [*an order banning new American investment*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/09/us/politics/biden-ban-china-investment.html) in Chinese companies that are trying to develop things like semiconductors and quantum computers.

Mr. Trump is now proposing going even further, calling for revoking China’s “most favored nation” trade status, meaning repealing the permanent normal trade relations and lower tariffs the United States granted to China after it joined the World Trade Organization in 2001. Notably, a House committee this month [*unveiled a bipartisan report*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/12/business/economy/us-china.html) calling for taking that step, too.

Doing so would significantly disrupt the U.S. economy, according to a [*study published last month by Oxford Economics*](https://www.uschina.org/sites/default/files/the_economic_impact_of_china_pntr_repeal.pdf), which was commissioned by the U.S.-China Business Council. It estimated that the resulting increase in tariffs would lead to a $1.6 trillion loss for the U.S. economy and 744,000 fewer jobs over five years.

In his 2023 memoir, “No Trade Is Free,” Mr. Lighthizer acknowledged that U.S. businesses that operate in China and those that rely on Chinese imports would object to that idea, but asserted that more manufacturing of products like computers and cellphones would “eventually” return to the United States or its allies, benefiting American workers and the country.

He also wrote that inevitable Chinese retaliation to harm U.S. exports would further “contribute to the strategic decoupling” of the two economies. “Anyone who concedes that China is a problem but insists that there is some magical, disruption-free solution to the problem China presents is quite likely a liar, a fool, a knave, an irredeemable globalist, or some combination thereof,” he wrote.

Decades of Railing Against Deficits

Mr. Trump’s economic nationalism has helped him change the Republican Party. He has assembled a more ***working-class*** coalition than the G.O.P. used to attract before he was the party’s standard-bearer.

His views are a throwback to a mercantilist approach to trade, in which countries used high tariffs to protect and develop their domestic manufacturing capabilities. The Trump campaign website [*states*](https://www.donaldjtrump.com/agenda47/agenda47-president-trumps-new-trade-plan-to-protect-american-workers) that his trade policy “is firmly rooted in American history” because America “used to [*impose*](https://email.press.donaldjtrump.com/c/eJxdUU1v2zAM_TXOTYYtf-bgQ9sgA1pk6HHYRaAl2tYiS64kz8h-_eg03WGAQJHvkRTFh11eN03FszxvD6qrVKUkHnTHM15knDd5U7Z5lR5L5FUDvB6qoahUm5TZ4jGEVDkLRv2Kfp2XVLr5MHVwzKRqjrKuZdGWXNX9Ma8yADkMWOeSH0w3xbiEpHhK-JnOtm3pghv1Q_BySp0fCR1ARhbBXsmn8Vq6smL3OZmVBeK8HobAwCOD2dmRxQmZcRuGyLS9R5vzRjGw6guwELWzgU06ROdv-wDFeY2zmFHpdU6KE86gTcLrHQxu9RIJtNIImBejh9uDkhSCHi2Rn5tiMKJVUDZi34xWaKO4r0WAtW61EgO1QK8liEH7sLOgUCwG4uD8LMiIgNJZJSJSHCegHLhSXTCoRpxgpnoRnRiN68HoMH8N42yk9z4HZdfy-PvpxbevG9HCGq2I-A-ctCIBTpfLx7luyoPvvOvRx3SE3ms0pC-JOiy8vIv6-HqXNM8J5_dakmHXj_947y9_vuGtf2fIPxj-_P62c_yFbLwt-C_x0SN97Jcnzekvg2TUSg) tariffs on over 95 percent of all imports.” That statistic is from before the Civil War, when tariffs made up the vast majority of the federal government’s revenues.

Throughout the 20th century, many economists came to see this approach as myopic. By the 1990s — despite opposition from labor unions — a bipartisan consensus formed in favor of freer trade. The idea was that lowering tariffs and increasing trade would raise the overall material prosperity of society by improving efficiency and lowering prices.

But those gains have not been evenly distributed, and over time, various forms of disillusionment with lower trade barriers have arisen.

Inside the United States, critics on both the left and the right have increasingly pointed to the downsides of trade for ***working-class*** communities. Social decay spread as corporations closed factories where they could shift to cheaper overseas production, contributing — along with other factors, like rising automation — to the stagnation of ***working-class*** wages. Supply-chain disruptions during the pandemic focused attention on another risk of globalization.

And there is growing anxiety about the security implications of America’s reliance on China for certain critical goods and resources, and anger at China’s practices of forcing companies to share technology and its outright theft of trade secrets.

Politically, Mr. Trump was ahead of the pack in focusing on the downsides of free trade. For more than 30 years, he has railed against trade deficits, which he views like company balance sheets as a simple matter of profits and losses. He complains that foreign countries that export more to the United States than they import from it are ripping America off.

In 2017, Mr. Trump would consistently ask his briefers a simple question before his calls with foreign leaders, according to a person with direct knowledge: “What is the trade deficit?” The answer would often set Mr. Trump’s mood for the call and how friendly he would be to the head of state.

Mr. Trump withdrew the United States from the [*Trans-Pacific Partnership*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/23/us/politics/tpp-trump-trade-nafta.html), President Barack Obama’s signature trade deal. His administration [*crippled the W.T.O.’s ability to resolve trade disputes*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/08/business/trump-trade-war-wto.html) between countries by blocking its ability to replace members of an appellate body.

Mr. Trump imposed tariffs on certain imports, raising prices on washing machines, solar panels as well as [*steel and aluminum*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/31/us/politics/trump-aluminum-steel-tariffs.html). And he started a trade war with China, ultimately [*imposing tariffs on more than $360 billion of Chinese products*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/17/business/trump-trade-deals-free-markets.html).

Despite Mr. Trump’s aggressive tariffs, Census Bureau data [*show*](https://www.politico.com/news/2021/02/05/2020-trade-figures-trump-failure-deficit-466116) that the annual trade deficit in goods grew from $735 billion in 2016 to $901 billion in 2020. But Mr. Lighthizer pointed to a slight dip in the trade deficit in 2019 compared with 2018, arguing that the tariffs were starting to have their intended effect before the upheaval of the pandemic year.

Mr. Trump’s trade wars were costly. After China — which has become [*the largest export market for American farmers*](https://fas.usda.gov/data/record-us-fy-2022-agricultural-exports-china) — retaliated by raising tariffs on U.S. agricultural products like soybeans, the Trump administration began [*a $28 billion government bailout to keep farmers afloat*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/14/us/politics/trump-farm-bailout-investigation.html). A [*February 2020 study*](https://econofact.org/steel-tariffs-and-u-s-jobs-revisited) calculated that the higher cost of metal for American manufacturers owing to the steel tariffs had caused a loss of about 75,000 jobs.

As aggressive as Mr. Trump’s first-term trade policies were, he did not always go as far as he wanted. Despite threatening to withdraw from the World Trade Organization, for example, he never did. While he loathed NAFTA, his administration negotiated a replacement that, while modernizing various terms, kept in place a nearly tariff-free market with Mexico and Canada.

Mr. Lighthizer, who led those negotiations, wrote in his memoir that whether or not Congress should have passed NAFTA in 1993, abruptly withdrawing from it after decades of economic integration would have caused “an economic and political catastrophe,” sending “shock waves through the economy” and hurting “Trump voters in Texas and throughout the farm belt.”

Ana Swanson contributed reporting.

Ana Swanson contributed reporting.

PHOTOS: Former President Donald J. Trump at a campaign event in Iowa this month. “We will impose stiff penalties on China and all other nations as they abuse us,” he said at a recent rally. Below, shipping containers at the Port of Seattle. Mr. Trump’s plans have drawn warnings from trade experts and government advisers. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JORDAN GALE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; RUTH FREMSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A11) This article appeared in print on page A1, A11.

**Load-Date:** December 29, 2023

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[***Stark Choice Likely in Race To Govern North Carolina***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BGF-XN71-DXY4-X0TN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 5, 2024 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 15

**Length:** 1244 words

**Byline:** By Eduardo Medina

**Body**

The leading candidates -- Josh Stein, the Democratic attorney general, and Mark Robinson, the Republican lieutenant governor -- could not be more different.

One of the country's most closely watched elections this year will be in North Carolina, where the race for governor will be a test of Democratic strength in a state whose narrowly divided electorate includes a crush of newcomers.

After the primaries on Tuesday, North Carolinians will likely have two sharply contrasting candidates to choose from: the mild-mannered state attorney general, Josh Stein, a Democrat whose political rise has followed a traditional path, and Lt. Gov. Mark Robinson, a firebrand Republican who catapulted into politics after comments he made defending gun rights in 2018 went viral.

''If you went to a candidate factory and said, 'Create me the two most different candidates possible,' I don't think you could do any better,'' said Christopher A. Cooper, a political science professor at Western Carolina University. ''They're just radically different in demeanor, in ideology.''

Both men would break ground if elected: Mr. Robinson, 55, would be the first Black governor of North Carolina if elected, while Mr. Stein, 57, would be the state's first Jewish governor.

The race will be closely watched in part because of the potential national implications: Both candidates are planning to portray each other in politically extreme terms, which could boost turnout not only for their elections, but also for the presidential race in the hotly contested state.

Mr. Stein, like the current term-limited Democratic governor, Roy Cooper, has tried to avoid culture war issues. Mr. Robinson appears eager to dive into many of them, disparaging L.G.B.T.Q. people, posting comments that were widely perceived as antisemitic and calling Michelle Obama a man. He has also quoted Adolf Hitler on Facebook and embraced former President Donald J. Trump's false claims about election fraud in 2020.

Mr. Stein supports access to abortion and has been endorsed by abortion rights groups, which are mobilized after the Republicans used their new supermajority in the legislature last year to ban most abortions after 12 weeks of pregnancy. Mr. Robinson supports a so-called heartbeat law, which would ban the procedure after about six weeks of pregnancy, when many women have yet to realize they are pregnant.

His campaign spokesman said that Mr. Robinson supports exceptions for rape, incest or when the life of the mother is in danger, but he did not specify at how many weeks those protections would apply.

Mr. Robinson has dismissed the criticisms, casting them as smear jobs orchestrated by liberals and the news media. He has also insisted to reporters that he has never been antisemitic, pointing to a trip he took last fall to Israel and outreach he has made to Jewish organizations as evidence.

Even as Democrats have won seven of the last eight elections for governor in North Carolina, they have consistently lost federal races: The only Democrat that the state has picked for president in almost 50 years was Barack Obama in 2008.

At a rally in Greensboro on Saturday, Mr. Trump said that Mr. Robinson -- who worked in furniture manufacturing before turning to politics -- had his ''complete and total endorsement.'' Polls have consistently shown Mr. Robinson far ahead of his Republican primary rivals, Dale Folwell, the state treasurer, and Bill Graham, a personal injury and wrongful death lawyer.

Mr. Stein is leading four other Democratic primary candidates in polling, including Michael Morgan, a former North Carolina Supreme Court justice.

Mr. Robinson has painted Mr. Stein as a boring, Biden-aligned political insider who is out of touch with the general public.

Mr. Stein has pointed to Mr. Robinson's numerous statements around culture war topics as evidence that the lieutenant governor is focused on polarizing social issues instead of challenges that most voters care about, like improving education.

With North Carolina being a key swing state this year, the race will likely draw millions of dollars in fund-raising, especially if polls continue to show the candidates neck and neck.

Michael Bitzer, a political science professor at Catawba College in Salisbury, N.C., said that outside the presidential election, the North Carolina governor's race will probably be the most expensive and most divisive in the country. And Mr. Robinson, he added, could drive much of that attention.

''Robinson is very much willing to say what he thinks, and at times he kind of tries to tiptoe around his past comments,'' Mr. Bitzer said. ''But he is very much in the vein of Trump-style politics and the fact of resentment -- an 'us versus them' mentality.''

Mr. Trump won the state in 2020 by 1.3 percentage points, while Mr. Cooper beat his Republican opponent that year by more than 4 percentage points. Mr. Stein's victory for attorney general in 2020 was more tenuous, with 50.1 percent of the vote, a margin of 13,000 votes.

Still, Democrats are counting on Mr. Robinson's past comments and polarizing approach to motivate voters who want to defeat him.

The question that some Republicans have is whether Mr. Robinson's style will be too extreme for swing voters, who make up between 3 and 5 percent of the electorate. They could include many of the several hundred thousand people who have moved to North Carolina since 2020, many of whom settled in the suburbs and exurbs of Charlotte and Raleigh, the state's largest cities. President Biden won the counties that contain those cities but lost many of the surrounding areas.

Jonathan Felts, a Republican strategist running a super PAC supporting Mr. Robinson's campaign, said that the candidate's image as a ''conservative fighter'' and political outsider would appeal to the ***working-class*** Trump base that dominates conservative North Carolina, much of which is rural.

Morgan Jackson, a Democratic strategist who advises both Mr. Stein and Mr. Cooper, said that residents have historically shown they like a balance in their government, with a Democratic governor who will keep the Republican legislature in check.

Mr. Jackson said that Mr. Stein will let his experience speak for itself and will talk on the campaign trail about his work fighting the fentanyl crisis, putting child predators in jail and keeping communities safer.

Both Mr. Stein and Mr. Robinson have prioritized education issues in their campaigns.

Some Republicans, like Mr. Robinson's rivals in the party's primary, have worried that Mr. Robinson's rhetoric could cost conservatives the executive mansion.

Paul Shumaker, a Republican consultant in the state and chief strategist for Mr. Graham, said that he believes Mr. Robinson ''will become a liability'' for Mr. Trump. In a memo that Mr. Shumaker sent to other consultants this year, he wrote that Mr. Robinson would ''create a toxic red tide for Republicans'' that could have repercussions down the ballot.

At the 2024 Conservative Political Action Conference, Mr. Robinson spoke about how his name was always mentioned ''in conjunction with social issues.''

''According to them, I hate everybody,'' he said, before adding that what he was doing was not about hate. ''We should be operating because of what we love.''

Mr. Stein recently told The News & Observer that Mr. Robinson's beliefs were not those that ''a leader of a thriving, growing, diverse state can hold.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/04/us/north-carolina-race-governor.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/04/us/north-carolina-race-governor.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: From far left, North Carolina's governor race is likely to narrow to Josh Stein, the Democratic state attorney general, and Lt. Gov. Mark Robinson, a firebrand Republican. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY VEASEY CONWAY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

KARL B DEBLAKER/ASSOCIATED PRESS) This article appeared in print on page A15.

**Load-Date:** March 5, 2024

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[***The Influence of R.F.K. Jr.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C1D-8X91-DXY4-X002-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 14, 2024 Tuesday 11:17 EST

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1936 words

**Byline:** David Leonhardt and Ian Prasad Philbrick David Leonhardt runs The Morning, The Times&amp;#8217;s flagship daily newsletter. Since joining The Times in 1999, he has been an economics columnist, opinion columnist, head of the Washington bureau and founding editor of the Upshot section, among other roles. Ian Prasad Philbrick is a writer for The Morning newsletter.

**Highlight:** What the independent candidate is emphasizing in his speeches — and which voters support him.

**Body**

What the independent candidate is emphasizing in his speeches — and which voters support him.

George Wallace, Ross Perot, Ralph Nader and now perhaps Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

With the support of about 10 percent of likely voters, Kennedy has a chance to join the list of third-party candidates who have influenced modern presidential elections. Consider the latest Times poll:

In today’s newsletter, we’ll offer a primer on Kennedy’s candidacy — who he is, which voters support him, how his level of support is likely to change and what he’s emphasizing in his speeches and ads.

Who is he?

He is the third of 11 children of Robert F. Kennedy — the former attorney general, senator and presidential candidate — and Ethel Kennedy. He was 6 years old when his uncle was elected president and 14 years old when Sirhan Sirhan [*assassinated his father*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) because of his father’s support for Israel during its 1967 war.

R.F.K. Jr., who’s now 70, has never run for office before. He spent his early career as an environmental advocate and lawyer. He fought for clean water and renewable energy and opposed coal, factory farms and pollution in heavily Black and Native American communities.

In recent decades, he has focused much of his attention on spreading false, conspiratorial ideas. After the 2004 election, he suggested that George W. Bush had stolen victory from John Kerry. Kennedy has claimed that vaccines cause autism, that H.I.V. may not cause AIDS and that Covid vaccines are a dangerous corporate plot.

What is he saying now?

His anti-vaccine views are his best-known position, but our colleague Jess Bidgood points out that Kennedy’s overall campaign is more traditionally populist. Ben Tulchin, a former pollster for Bernie Sanders, [*has noted*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) the similarity between Kennedy’s and Sanders’s messages.

“We are no longer living in a democracy,” Kennedy has said. “We’re living in a corporate kleptocracy.” He has criticized wealth inequality, praised labor unions and called for a higher minimum wage, free day care, stronger border security, tougher corporate regulation and tax increases on the rich.

His foreign policy views lean toward isolationism. He describes Democrats and Republicans as warmongers and promises to keep the country “out of foreign conflicts.” He says President Biden has been too aggressive in confronting Russia and calls for a diplomatic solution to the war in Ukraine. He supports Israel’s right to defend itself after the Oct. 7 attacks and has said Hamas “must be destroyed.”

His views on other issues are a mix of liberal and conservative, and he says those labels aren’t useful anymore. He says abortion should be legal early in pregnancy and restricted later. He favors marijuana legalization. He has promised not to take away people’s guns. He questions medical treatments for trans children.

Regular readers of this newsletter know that the American public leans to the left on many economic issues and to the right on many social issues. We’ve called it [*the Scaffle vote*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) (for socially conservative and fiscally liberal). R.F.K. Jr.’s platform may not be wholly consistent, but he is mostly a Scaffle.

Who supports him?

The people who say they plan to vote for R.F.K. Jr. are not vastly different from Americans as a whole. But there are some differences, says Ruth Igielnik, a polling expert at The Times.

His fans skew young: About 17 percent of likely voters younger than 30 backed him in our recent poll of swing states. His supporters are less likely to have a college degree than the electorate as a whole and are more likely to make less than $50,000 a year. They are more likely to be Latino. None of this should be surprising: ***Working-class*** and Latino Americans are often Scaffles.

“I’m just not seeing much change,” Chantel Turk, 33, a dance studio owner in Marietta, Ga., and a Kennedy supporter, [*told The Times*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). “I haven’t seen change since I started voting, so I’m losing faith in the system.”

For now, R.F.K. Jr. seems to be hurting Biden more than he’s hurting Donald Trump — but only modestly more. About 32 percent of R.F.K. Jr.’s supporters said they had voted for Biden in 2020, while 24 percent voted for Trump. Most of his remaining supporters didn’t vote four years ago.

What now?

Support for third-party candidates usually declines during a campaign. It happened to Wallace in 1968, Perot in 1992 and Nader in 2000.

Why? Some voters signal their unhappiness with the major-party candidates by telling pollsters they plan to vote for a third party, Ruth explains, but ultimately choose the Democrat or Republican they prefer. If this year’s campaign follows historical patterns, R.F.K. Jr.’s level of support is likely to decline by at least half (and he may not get onto the ballot in every state).

“But we should also take the lesson that less is not none,” Ruth says. In 2000, Nader, who received less than 3 percent of the popular vote, likely cost Al Gore the election. In 2016, the combined support for third-party candidates was larger than Trump’s margin over Hillary Clinton in six swing states.

For more

* Kennedy is faring well with voters who get their news from social media, our colleagues Shane Goldmacher and Neil Vigdor write. Here are [*more interviews with his supporters*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

1. Kennedy polls especially well with voters who usually back Democrats but are now sympathetic to Trump. [*Read Nate Cohn’s analysis*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).
2. [*Dig into the results of the poll*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing)— done jointly by The Times, Siena College and The Philadelphia Inquirer.
3. Nicole Shanahan, the Silicon Valley millionaire who is Kennedy’s running mate, has started giving stump speeches. [*Her first quoted Carl Jung*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

THE LATEST NEWS

Trump on Trial

* The lawyer Michael Cohen testified at Trump’s Manhattan criminal trial that Trump [*directed him to pay Stormy Daniels hush money*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) before the 2016 election and approved the plan to reimburse Cohen for it.

1. Trump believed that Daniels’s story of a tryst would be “[*a disaster for the campaign*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing)” and wanted it buried, Cohen testified. “Women are going to hate me,” Cohen recalled Trump saying. “Just take care of it.”
2. Cohen’s testimony is crucial to the prosecution’s case that Trump ordered the payment to win the election, not for personal reasons. Trump, Cohen said, “[*wasn’t thinking about Melania*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).”
3. Cohen looked gaunt but seemed calm, speaking smoothly and carefully. Trump sat with his eyes closed for much of the testimony but at times smirked, scoffed or shook his head.
4. Senator J.D. Vance, an Ohio Republican and potential Trump running mate, [*was in the courtroom yesterday*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). Eric Trump, sitting behind his father, glared at Cohen as he testified.

China Policy

* Biden will announce [*higher tariffs on Chinese imports*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), including electric vehicles and computer chips.

1. As a presidential candidate, Biden criticized Trump’s trade war with China. In office, he has escalated it, but with a different focus: [*high-tech industries*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).
2. The Biden administration will [*expand a chip factory in Minnesota*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

2024 Elections

* Harry Dunn, a former Capitol Police officer who was on duty during the Jan. 6 riot, is [*running for a U.S. House seat*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) in today’s Maryland Democratic primary.

1. Voters in Nebraska and West Virginia will also cast primary ballots today. [*Read what to watch for*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Israel-Hamas War

* The U.N. said that [*a staff member was killed*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) when one of its convoys came under fire in Rafah.

1. “Our hearts are broken”: On Israel’s Memorial Day, people visited to [*the site of a music festival*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) where hundreds were killed during the Hamas-led attacks on Oct. 7.

War in Ukraine

* Ukraine is short on troops and weapons as it tries to [*repel a new Russian offensive*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) in the northeast.

1. As Russia advances, Secretary of State [*Antony Blinken arrived in Kyiv*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) to reaffirm U.S. support for Ukraine.
2. Russia’s gains in the east show the [*danger of even a small crack*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) in Ukraine’s front lines.

Climate Change

* Home insurers are losing money as climate change produces more extreme weather, like wildfires and hurricanes. They are [*raising premiums and cutting back on coverage*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

1. The government approved sweeping changes to electric grids. This could lead to many [*new high-voltage power lines*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) as well as more wind and solar power.

Business and Economy

* “How am I supposed to retire?” [*Millions of low- and moderate- income Americans*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) are struggling with high borrowing costs.

1. OpenAI unveiled a new version of ChatGPT that can [*respond to voice commands*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), images and videos.

Other Big Stories

* A pediatrician who led a British review of youth gender treatments said that U.S. doctors were [*out of step with scientific evidence*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) and too encouraging of the treatments — based on a fear of upsetting political progressives.

1. Melinda French Gates will resign from the foundation she started with her ex-husband, Bill Gates, but said she would [*continue her philanthropic work*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Opinions

Biden alienates swing voters when he panders to the left on [*Israel, immigration and electric vehicles*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), Mark Penn writes.

Here are columns by Michelle Goldberg on [*“vice signaling”*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) and Paul Krugman on [*Biden’s unpopularity*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

MORNING READS

Good dogs: See [*behind-the-scenes photos*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) from this year’s Westminster dog show.

Your Money: This week, our personal finance columnist is [*helping 20-somethings sort out their finances*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Lives Lived: The civil rights expert Christopher Edley Jr. advised three Democratic presidents and six presidential campaigns. He [*died at 71*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

SPORTS

N.B.A.: The Oklahoma City Thunder [*beat the Dallas Mavericks*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) in Game 4 to tie their series at 2-2. And the Boston Celtics won their game against the Cleveland Cavaliers to take a 3-1 series lead.

N.H.L.: The Carolina Hurricanes defeated the New York Rangers to [*force a Game 6*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). And the Vancouver Canucks [*beat the Edmonton Oilers*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

W.N.B.A.: The season starts tonight. People are watching [*Caitlin Clark and the Indiana Fever*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

ARTS AND IDEAS

Britain’s butlers are changing. These days, buttling (yes, that’s a verb) is less about looking after a mansion and polishing silver and more about lifestyle management — akin to a private maître d’, one expert explained. If a client wants to eat dinner on a mountaintop, it’s the butler’s job to arrange the meal and the helicopter to get it there. And if a client wants donkeys for a Christmas Nativity scene, the butler will wrangle them. (Both are real examples from [*a new story by Plum Sykes in The Times*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).)

More on culture

* There’s a [*battle over New York City’s streets*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing): Cars, pedestrians, e-bikes and dining sheds are competing for space on a grid designed over two centuries ago.

1. George Clooney will [*make his Broadway debut*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) in a stage adaptation of his 2005 film “Good Night, and Good Luck,” about the pioneering newscaster Edward R. Murrow.
2. Four subway stations will sell a limited-edition MetroCard featuring the New York [*rapper Ice Spice*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), Time Out reports.
3. Trump mentioned “Silence of the Lambs” character Hannibal Lecter at a rally. “Please tell me this is not your V.P. announcement,” [*Seth Meyers said on his late night show*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

THE MORNING RECOMMENDS …

Turn a modest can of beans into [*a creamy, spicy tomato dish*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Relieve discomfort [*from muscle knots*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Game with [*a better keyboard.*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing)

GAMES

Here is [*today’s Spelling Bee*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). Yesterday’s pangram was cornily.

And here are [*today’s Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), [*Wordle*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), [*Sudoku*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), [*Connections*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) and [*Strands*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

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

P.S. Around the world and inside The Times: Nicholas Kristof, the longtime columnist and correspondent, has published a memoir today. It’s called [*“Chasing Hope.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing)

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

PHOTO: Robert F. Kennedy Jr. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Jordan Vonderhaar for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** May 22, 2024

**End of Document**



[***The Line Between Good and Evil Cuts Through Evangelical America; David French***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BVH-DBK1-DXY4-X29M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 21, 2024 Sunday 23:42 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1669 words

**Byline:** David French David French is an Opinion columnist, writing about law, culture, religion and armed conflict. He is a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom and a former constitutional litigator. His most recent book is &amp;#8220;Divided We Fall: America&amp;#8217;s Secession Threat and How to Restore Our Nation.&amp;#8221; You can follow him on Threads (@davidfrenchjag).

**Highlight:** Evangelicals, fundamentalists and Pentecostals are taking the church in very different directions.

**Body**

I’m afraid that an exit poll question has confused America.

Every four years, voters are asked, “Are you a white evangelical or born-again Christian?” And every time, voters from a broad range of Protestant Christian traditions say yes, compressing a diverse religious community into a single, unified mass.

It’s not that the question is misleading. People who answer yes do represent a coherent political movement. Not only do they vote overwhelmingly for Republicans; they’re also quite distinct from other American political groups in their views on a host of issues, including on disputes regarding race, immigration and the Covid vaccines.

But in other ways, this exit poll identity misleads us about the nature and character of American evangelicalism as a whole. It’s far more diverse and divided than the exit poll results imply. There are the rather crucial facts that not all evangelicals are white and evangelicals of color vote [*substantially differently*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) from their white brothers and sisters. Evangelicals of color are far more likely to vote Democratic, and their positions on many issues are [*more closely aligned*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) with the American political mainstream. But the differences go well beyond race.

In reality, American evangelicalism is best understood as a combination of three religious traditions: fundamentalism, evangelicalism and Pentecostalism. These different traditions have different beliefs, different cultures and different effects on our nation.

The distinction between fundamentalism and evangelicalism can be the hardest to parse, especially since we now use the term “evangelical” to describe both branches of the movement. The conflict between evangelicalism and fundamentalism emerged most sharply in the years following World War II, when so-called [*neo-evangelicals*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) arose as a biblically conservative response to traditional fundamentalism’s separatism and fighting spirit. I say “biblically conservative” because neo-evangelicals had the same high view of Scripture as the inerrant word of God that fundamentalists did, but their temperament and approach were quite different.

The difference between fundamentalism and neo-evangelicalism can be summed up in two men, Bob Jones and Billy Graham. In a 2011 piece about the relationship between Jones and Graham, the Gospel Coalition’s Justin Taylor [*called them*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) the “exemplars of fundamentalism and neo-evangelicalism.” Jones was the founder of the university that bears his name in Greenville, S.C., one of the most influential fundamentalist colleges in America.

Bob Jones University [*barred Black students from attending*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) until 1971, then banned interracial dating [*until 2000*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html). The racism that plagued Southern American fundamentalism is a key reason for the segregation of American religious life. It’s also one reason the historically Black Protestant church is distinct from the evangelical tradition, despite its similar views of the authority of Scripture.

Graham attended Bob Jones University for a semester, but soon left and took a different path. He went on to become known as “America’s pastor,” the man who ministered to [*presidents of both parties*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) and led gigantic evangelistic crusades in stadiums across the nation and the world. While Jones segregated his school, Graham [*removed the red segregation rope*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) dividing white and Black attendees at his crusades in the South — before Brown v. Board of Education — and shared a stage with Martin Luther King Jr. at Madison Square Garden in 1957.

But since that keen Jones/Graham divide, the lines between evangelicalism and fundamentalism have blurred. Now the two camps often go to the same churches, attend the same colleges, listen to the same Christian musicians and read the same books. To compound the confusion, they’re both quite likely to call themselves evangelical. While the theological differences between fundamentalists and evangelicals can be difficult to describe, the temperamental differences are not.

“Fundamentalism,” Richard Land, the former head of the Southern Baptist Convention’s Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, once told me, “is far more a psychology than a theology.” That psychology is defined by an extreme sense of certainty, along with extreme ferocity.

Roughly speaking, fundamentalists are intolerant of dissent. Evangelicals are much more accepting of theological differences. Fundamentalists place a greater emphasis on confrontation and domination. Evangelicals are more interested in pluralism and persuasion. Fundamentalists focus more on God’s law. Evangelicals tend to emphasize God’s grace. While many evangelicals are certainly enthusiastic Trump supporters, they are more likely to be reluctant (and even embarrassed) Trump voters, or Never Trumpers, or Democrats. Fundamentalists tend to [*march much more in*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) lock step with the MAGA movement. Donald Trump’s combative psychology in many ways merges with their own.

A Christian politics dominated by fundamentalism is going to look very different from a Christian politics dominated by evangelicalism. Think of the difference between Trump and George W. Bush. Bush is conservative. He’s anti-abortion. He’s committed to religious liberty. These are all values that millions of MAGA Republicans would claim to uphold, but there’s a yawning character gap between the two presidents, and their cultural influence is profoundly different.

While the difference between evangelicalism and fundamentalism can be difficult to discern, Pentecostalism is something else entirely. American evangelicals can trace their roots to the Reformation; the Pentecostal movement began a little over 100 years ago, during the [*Azusa Street revival*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) in Los Angeles in 1906. The movement was started by a Black pastor named William Seymour, and it is far more supernatural in its focus than, say, the Southern Baptist or Presbyterian church down the street.

At its heart, Pentecostalism believes that all of the gifts and miracles you read about in the Bible can and do happen today. That means prophecy, speaking in tongues and gifts of healing. Pentecostalism is more [***working class***](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) than the rest of the evangelical world, and Pentecostal churches are often more diverse — far more diverse — than older American denominations. Hispanics in particular have embraced the Pentecostal faith, both in the United States and in Latin America, and Pentecostalism has exploded [*in the global south*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html).

When I lived in Manhattan, my wife and I attended Times Square Church, a Pentecostal congregation in the heart of the city, and every Sunday felt like a scene from [*the book of Revelation*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html), with people “from every nation, tribe, people and language” gathered together to worship with great joy.

Pentecostalism is arguably the most promising and the most perilous religious movement in America. At its best, the sheer exuberance and radical love of a good Pentecostal church is transformative. At its worst, the quest for miraculous experience can lead to a kind of frenzied superstition, where carnival barker pastors and faux apostles con their congregations with false prophecies and fake miracles, milking them for donations and then wielding their abundant wealth as proof of God’s favor.

The Pentecostal church, for example, is the primary home of one of the most toxic and dangerous Christian nationalist ideas in America — the [*Seven Mountain Mandate*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html), which holds that God has ordained Christians to dominate the seven “mountains” of cultural influence: the family, the church, education, media, arts, the economy and government. This is an extreme form of Christian supremacy, one that would relegate all other Americans to second-class status.

Pentecostalism is also the primary source for the surge in prophecies about Trump [*that I’ve described before*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html). It’s mostly Pentecostal pastors and leaders who have told their flocks that God has ordained Trump to rule — and to rule again. Combine the Seven Mountain Mandate with Trump prophecies, and you can see the potential for a kind of fervent radicalism that is immune to rational argument. After all, how can you argue a person out of the idea that God told him to vote for Trump? Or that God told him that Christians are destined to reign over the United States?

When I look at the divisions in American evangelicalism, I’m reminded of the [*Homer Simpson toast*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html): “To alcohol! The cause of, and solution to, all of life’s problems.” The American church has been the cause of much heartache and division. It is also the source of tremendous healing and love. We saw both the love and the division most vividly in the civil rights movement, when Black Christians and their allies faced the dogs and hoses all too often unleashed by members of the white Southern church. We saw this on Jan. 6, when violent Christians attacked the Capitol, only to see their plans foiled by an evangelical vice president who broke with Trump at long last to uphold his constitutional oath and spare the nation a far worse catastrophe.

I’ve lived and worshiped in every major branch of American evangelicalism. I was raised in a more fundamentalist church, left it for evangelicalism and spent a decade of my life worshiping in Pentecostal churches. Now I attend a multiethnic church that is rooted in both evangelicalism and the Black church tradition. I’ve seen [*great good*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html), and I’ve seen [*terrible evil*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html).

That long experience has taught me that the future of our nation isn’t just decided in the halls of secular power; it’s also decided in the pulpits and sanctuaries of American churches. [*Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) wrote that the line between good and evil “cuts through the heart of every human being.” That same line also cuts through the heart of the church.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html).

Follow the New York Times Opinion section on [*Facebook*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html), [*Instagram*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html), [*TikTok*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html), [*WhatsApp*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html), [*X*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) and [*Threads*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html).

This article appeared in print on page A22.

**Load-Date:** April 21, 2024

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[***Up Close / L.E.S. Artist***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68JB-25N1-JBG3-637G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 25, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 27

**Length:** 245 words

**Byline:** By Lauren Christensen

**Body**

Upon moving into a tenement building on the Lower East Side of Manhattan in 1984, the 23-year-old photographer Tria Giovan spent her days observing her new neighborhood and its increasingly Puerto Rican and Chinese community for ''fleeting moments, gestures, color and light.'' The resulting body of work, recently rediscovered and published in LOISAIDA (Damiani, $55), looks like stills from a documentary's B-roll, the tones soft and dim, slants of sunlight bathing street corners in a sense of calm, and stasis.

But of course the world around her was anything but still: ''So much has changed since the genesis of 'Loisaida,''' she writes, as the ensuing decades' rising costs of living displaced ***working-class*** residents from the area. But in Giovan's images of a Lower East Side ''synonymous,'' as the curator Sean Corcoran writes in the book, ''with crime, rampant drug abuse, urban decay and homelessness,'' we also witness the ways in which ''life not only carried on; it thrived'': families gathering on fire escapes and around folding tables on the sidewalk, a woman standing in the Church of St. Mary next to a plaque that calls it the ''oldest Catholic Church structure in New York,'' community members playing baseball and wrestling and eating and window-shopping. Beneath the layers of today's gentrification, this book recalls the universality of a time and place: its ''vibrancy, diversity, coexistence.'' Lauren Christensen is an editor at the Book Review.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/09/books/review/25BackPage\_Loisaida.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/09/books/review/25BackPage_Loisaida.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Above: ''Balloons on Delancey Street,'' 1986.

Below: ''Open Car Door on Eldridge Street,'' 1987

Top: ''Schapiro's Entrance on Rivington Street,'' 1984. Above: ''View From 29 Clinton Street,'' 1989. This article appeared in print on page BR27.

**Load-Date:** June 25, 2023

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[***Solidarity Forever***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BP1-WMC1-JBG3-601N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 31, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 17; NONFICTION

**Length:** 1372 words

**Byline:** By Willa Glickman

**Body**

''The Hammer'' offers portraits of organizing efforts from around the country at a time when the future of union power has reached an inflection point.

THE HAMMER: Power, Inequality, and the Struggle for the Soul of Labor, by Hamilton Nolan

In 2022, after being elected president of the A.F.L.-C.I.O., the biggest federation of unions in the United States, Liz Shuler stood before a crowd of union officials gathered in a large ballroom in Philadelphia and announced a new goal: ''In the next 10 years, we will organize and grow our movement by more than one million people!''

The longtime labor reporter and former Gawker journalist Hamilton Nolan was in the audience and he was not impressed; given projected job growth, sticking to this aim would actually cause the percentage of workers in the country who are unionized to drop. As Nolan writes in ''The Hammer,'' his lively account of the current landscape of American labor organizing, ''It was reminiscent of Dr. Evil in 'Austin Powers' demanding as his ransom request for the entire world, 'One million dollars!'''

Nolan's book joins the ranks of Steven Greenhouse's ''Beaten Down, Worked Up'' and Jane McAlevey's ''A Collective Bargain'' in making a rousing case for a robust labor movement. ''The Hammer'' aims to show that unions are the best way to combat economic inequality, give disenfranchised people genuine political power and counter the allure of the far right among the ***working class***.

At the same time, Nolan is critical of the labor establishment, writing that many large unions have embraced what the labor strategist Rich Yeselson calls ''Fortress Unionism,'' an argument that it's better to avoid difficult, new campaigns in states and counties hostile to organizing or in industries with few existing unions in favor of waiting for a mass worker uprising to announce itself. What would such an announcement look like? ''Perhaps every worker will emerge from the office and fire guns in the air,'' Nolan muses, ''until the smoke wafts over A.F.L.-C.I.O. headquarters.''

Nolan has felt the mess of organizing from the inside -- ''The labor movement can make you feel crazy,'' he writes -- and his depiction of his own vexations is one of the book's charms. At Gawker, where he worked for the first decade of his career, antagonism was the house style. The union effort that began there in 2015 ''was the first thing in my life that forced me to spend an extended period of time genuinely listening to the positions of people who disagreed with me and pissed me off.'' A balm in its own right and an exercise, he says, that allowed him ''to become a better person.'' (The union also ensured that he and his colleagues weren't laid off when the company was sold in the wake of Hulk Hogan's Peter Thiel-backed lawsuit.)

''The Hammer'' offers an impressive array of scenes from the front lines of the 21st-century economy: Child care workers run a decades-long campaign to bargain collectively with the state of California; a prep cook launches a unionization effort at a biscuit restaurant in West Virginia. Even in the most traditional fight that Nolan describes, at a good old-fashioned factory, the antagonist is a giant conglomerate that describes itself in very modern terms as a ''global snacking powerhouse.''

A recent wave of spontaneous labor agitation, in addition to more favorable political conditions under the Biden administration, has suggested to some observers that a reverse in the persistent backslide of union power that has been underway since the 1970s might be possible. ''For people who had toiled in the union world for the first two decades of the 20th century,'' Nolan writes, ''the post-pandemic labor boom was like emerging from a dark cave into a daytime fireworks show.''

But the small, grass-roots unions that took on behemoth companies like Starbucks and Amazon have faded from headlines -- in part because those companies have used illegal tactics to deny their unionized employees contracts thus far. (Both companies are appealing the judgments against them in such cases.) It infuriates Nolan that labor leaders did not more aggressively seize the day: The percentage of unionized workers fell between 2020 and 2022.

To illustrate why this happened (and fume about the missed opportunities), he tells the story of Felix Allen, a young man with no organizing experience who, inspired by union drives at Amazon and Starbucks, tried to unionize the Lowe's store he worked at in New Orleans. He had reached out to a Teamsters local and found them to be friendly but not able to offer much material support, so he decided to organize independently. Anti-union lawyers and consultants descended on the store, and it was found that a minor paperwork error -- Allen was taking this on without legal help -- meant he would have to redo his petition for an election. While he was regrouping from this setback, he was fired.

Nolan argues that big unions leaving workers like Allen on their own is an act of ''callous abdication.'' Organizing new employees is usually a resource-intensive endeavor with uncertain results, but ignoring them, he writes, has left ''a black hole'' in the middle of the labor movement.

Nolan's search for a leader to step into this void brings him to Sara Nelson, the charismatic president of the Association of Flight Attendants. Raised by Christian Scientists in a small city in Oregon, she first got involved with the A.F.A. after a fellow flight attendant and union member lent her $800 in her first month working for United: Her paychecks were delayed and she was going hungry.

Progressive, media-savvy and unafraid of a hectic travel schedule, Nelson zoomed around the country supporting workers of all kinds -- baggage handlers in Chicago, miners in Alabama, Starbucks baristas in Richmond. She soon became one of the most prominent faces of the movement. Nolan fantasizes about a refreshed A.F.L.-C.I.O. under a Nelson presidency, but his hero was sidelined by a serious hip condition before she could even launch her candidacy.

Given the book's passionate, muckraking spirit, it is a bit surprising that Nolan suggests the famously stodgy A.F.L.-C.I.O. as the answer to labor's ills, even as he critiques its lumbering ineffectuality. He notes that a previous reformist president, John J. Sweeney, failed to make headway with top-down measures, but doesn't explain how a Nelson-led coalition would be any different.

The argument that the labor movement needs a powerful center, or that the right leader might have been able to ''turn it all around,'' sits uneasily alongside Nolan's observations about ''the natural conservatism'' of large institutions. On the other hand, grass-roots energy alone hasn't been enough to expand union membership, especially in the face of coordinated and lawyered-up corporate pressure. As ''The Hammer'' shows, the kind of solidarity that might naturally arise from shared frustrations on the conveyor belt doesn't necessarily translate to the broader movement all on its own.

In 2021, one of Nolan's subjects, Donna Jo Marks, helped lead a strike at a Nabisco factory in Portland, Ore. Then the Democratic Socialists of America came knocking. Would Marks speak at a rally to bolster community support for the strike? She initially declined, because she didn't see the point of leaving the picket line for a bigger platform. ''I still didn't understand the gravity because I lived in Nabisco world,'' she says. ''All I could see was Nabisco problems.''

Eventually, after weeks of little progress in the strike, Marks decided to attend a rally. She was frustrated with her fellow union members, who didn't seem as committed to picketing day after day as she was, and she wanted to give them ''a piece of her mind,'' Nolan writes. But when she saw the crowd of local supporters, many of them from other unions, she choked up. A co-worker put an arm around her. Suddenly, her focus shifted. ''They're trying to show us our place,'' she said, gesturing behind her to the factory. ''It's not about money. It's about where we are in society.''

THE HAMMER: Power, Inequality, and the Struggle for the Soul of Labor | By Hamilton Nolan | Hachette | 260 pp. | $30

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/13/books/review/the-hammer-hamilton-nolan.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/13/books/review/the-hammer-hamilton-nolan.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Sara Nelson, the president of the Association of Flight Attendants, speaks at a rally in 2022. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KENA BETANCUR/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page BR17.

**Load-Date:** March 31, 2024

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[***The Cure for What Ails Our Democracy***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BBM-F5M1-JBG3-60D6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 16, 2024 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 21; DAVID BROOKS

**Length:** 1088 words

**Byline:** By David Brooks

**Body**

America is economically thriving but politically dysfunctional. We have the material, technological and military resources to remain the world's leading superpower, but the current Congress is unable to make decisions about basic issues, like how to fix the immigration system or what role we should play in the world.

What do we have to do to rectify this situation? Well, a lot of things, but one of them is this: More of us have to embrace an idea, a way of thinking that is fundamental to being a citizen in a democracy.

That idea is known as value pluralism. It's most associated with the British philosopher Isaiah Berlin and is based on the premise that the world doesn't fit neatly together. We all want to pursue a variety of goods, but unfortunately, these goods can be in tension with one another. For example, we may want to use government to make society more equal, but if we do, we'll have to expand state power so much that it will impinge on some people's freedom, which is a good we also believe in.

As Damon Linker, who teaches a course on Berlin and others at the University of Pennsylvania, noted recently, these kinds of tensions are common in our political lives: loyalty to a particular community versus universal solidarity with all humankind; respect for authority versus individual autonomy; social progress versus social stability. I'd add that these kinds of tensions are rife within individuals as well: the desire to be enmeshed in community versus the desire to have the personal space to do what you want; the desire to stand out versus the desire to fit in; the cry for justice versus the cry for mercy.

If we choose one good, we are sacrificing a piece of another. The tragic fact about the human condition is that many choices involve loss. Day after day, the trick is figuring out what you are willing to sacrifice for the more important good.

Sure, there are some occasions when the struggle really is good versus evil: World War II, the civil rights movement, the Civil War. As Lincoln argued, if slavery is not wrong then nothing is wrong. But these occasions are rarer than we might think.

I think I detest Donald Trump as much as the next guy, but Trumpian populism does represent some very legitimate values: the fear of imperial overreach; the need to preserve social cohesion amid mass migration; the need to protect ***working-class*** wages from the pressures of globalization.

The struggle against Trump the man is a good-versus-bad struggle between democracy and narcissistic authoritarianism, but the struggle between liberalism and Trumpian populism is a wrestling match over how to balance legitimate concerns.

Berlin had a word for people who think there is one right solution to our problems and that therefore we must do whatever is necessary in order to impose it: monists. Berlin was born in pre-revolutionary Russia and came of age in the 1930s, when two monist philosophies were on the march, Marxism and fascism. They claimed to be all-explaining ideologies that promised an ultimate end to political problems.

Today, monism takes the form of those on the left or right who see all political conflicts as good and evil fights between the oppressors and the oppressed. The left describes these conflicts as the colonizer versus the colonized. The Trumpian right describes these conflicts as the coastal elites, globalists or cultural Marxists. But both sides hold up the illusion that we can solve our problems if we just crush the bad people.

We pluralists resist that kind of Manichaean moralism. We begin with the premise that most political factions in a democratic society are trying to pursue some good end. The right question is not who is good or evil. The right question is what balance do we need to strike in these circumstances?

In the 1980s, I thought the chief worry was economic sclerosis and that Reagan/Thatcher policies, including tax cuts, were the right response. Now I think the chief worry is inequality and social fragmentation, and I think the Biden policies, including tax increases, are the right response.

We pluralists believe that conflict is an eternal part of public life -- we're always going to be struggling over how to balance competing goods -- but it is conflict of a limited sort, a debate among patriots, not a death match between the children of light and the children of darkness. In our view, Congress is supposed to be the place where these kinds of balances are struck, the place where different sorts of representatives meet to weigh interests and strike compromises. It's not supposed to be a place where representatives destroy compromises so they can go on TV taking some ideologically pure stance.

Pluralism is a creed that induces humility (even among us pundits, who are resistant to the virtue). A pluralist never believes that he is in possession of the truth, and that all others live in error. The pluralist is slow to assert certainty, knowing that even those people who strenuously denounce him are probably partially right. ''I am bored by reading people who are allies,'' Berlin once confessed.

Berlin went to strenuous lengths to argue that pluralism is not relativism. It's not the belief that we all get to have our own truth. It's the belief that objective truths exist, but unfortunately, in political life, they don't fit into one frictionless whole.

He was more interesting when writing about specific people -- like Machiavelli or Churchill -- than when writing about abstract ideas. That captures something deeply humanistic about his worldview: that at the center there is always the searcher, struggling with ironies and incongruities, always trying empathetically to understand other minds, always trying to keep his head while others are losing theirs.

Berlin argued that if there were a final set of solutions, ''a final pattern in which society could be arranged,'' then ''liberty would become a sin.'' But there are no final right answers to political questions, so history remains a conversation that has no end.

Many American voters reward politicians who offer them a holy war. If there were more pluralists, we'd elect more people interested in gradually and steadily making life better.

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**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A21.

**Load-Date:** February 16, 2024

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[***Is America Getting Interest Rates Wrong?; Paul Krugman and Peter Coy***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C7C-88G1-JBG3-60N0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 11, 2024 Tuesday 14:41 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 2772 words

**Byline:** Paul Krugman and Peter Coy Paul Krugman has been an Opinion columnist since 2000 and is also a distinguished professor at the City University of New York Graduate Center. He won the 2008 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences for his work on international trade and economic geography. Peter Coy is a writer for the Opinion section of The Times, covering economics and business. Email him at , [*coy-newsletter@nytimes.com*](mailto:coy-newsletter@nytimes.com)

**Highlight:** Why higher rates are replacing inflation as the thing to hate.

**Body**

Update: In a unanimous vote on Wednesday, the Federal Reserve left interest rates unchanged.

Peter Coy: Hi, Paul. The Fed meets Tuesday and Wednesday to talk about interest rates, which many voters are really frustrated about. In the past few Times Opinion focus groups, we’ve had voters across the ideological spectrum express high [*concern about rates*](mailto:coy-newsletter@nytimes.com). You can also see it in the latest University of Michigan [*surveys of consumers*](mailto:coy-newsletter@nytimes.com). Inflation haunted many Americans, and now interest rates bedevil them in a different way. People are saying high rates make it hard to buy a home or car or deal with debts. They’re worried about how high rates may affect their children. Some say they were promised [*that rates would go down*](mailto:coy-newsletter@nytimes.com), and they’re losing patience. Some are blaming President Biden and saying things were better under Donald Trump. Polls show voters trust Trump over Biden on the economy.

I get some of this but not all of it. What do you think?

Paul Krugman: Hi, Peter. We eventually need to get into the underlying economics — why are interest rates high, and will they stay there? But first, on how interest rates influence people’s views, we need to deal with an odd aspect of the situation.

High interest rates are, indeed, a burden on some Americans, especially first-time home buyers. And that could explain why some people feel bad about their financial situation, despite low unemployment and rising real wages.

But here’s the odd problem: Generally speaking, people don’t feel bad about their financial situation. Survey after survey, including the just-released annual Federal Reserve [*survey*](mailto:coy-newsletter@nytimes.com) of economic well-being, finds most Americans say that they are doing OK. Many are positive about their local economies — that is, what they can see personally. Yet they insist that the national economy is a disaster.

There are various stories we can tell about this disconnect, none of them completely satisfying. But let me at least advance one story about interest rates: Given that many Americans, for some reason, are determined to be negative about the economy and inflation has subsided, interest rates give them an alternative peg for their discontent.

In other words, interest rates are a real issue, but what people say about them may be rationalization rather than reality.

Coy: I think you’re right about interest rates being an alternative peg for people’s discontent. I just shy away from calling it a rationalization. That makes it sound willfully incorrect. That may be the case for some partisans, but I think a lot of nonpolitical people really do feel something’s wrong, even if they can’t pinpoint what the problem is.

Krugman: What I mean by “rationalization” is exactly that: Americans are feeling uneasy for reasons that are hard to pin down, and interest rates give one reason for their unease, even if it’s not really the main driver.

Coy: Paul, I want to stay with your point about voters’ sense of well-being. The peak year for economic well-being in that Fed survey was 2021, when the pandemic financial assistance was still flowing. As you say, well-being was still pretty good in the latest survey, which was fielded last October, but not as good as in 2021. Maybe that decline is where some of the free-floating anxiety is coming from.

As for high interest rates, a lot of Americans don’t buy the logic that rates need to be high to bring down inflation. I’m getting that from a new study by Stefanie Stantcheva of Harvard and two co-authors. According to [*their paper*](mailto:coy-newsletter@nytimes.com), people often think higher interest rates cause inflation, which is the opposite of textbook economics. The textbooks say that raising interest rates depresses the demand for loans by businesses and consumers, which cools off the economy, so there’s less pressure on prices. But a lot of voters say, “Heck, I’m paying more to borrow. Looks like inflation to me.”

You can see why so many people are upset about high interest rates if they think they’re unnecessary to fight inflation and actually make inflation worse. (I don’t buy that entirely, but if you think of interest payments as part of the cost of living, there’s something to the idea.)

Krugman: Several points about interest rates and inflation. The first is that the view that raising rates makes inflation worse is less obviously misguided than usual, even putting aside whether you count interest as part of the cost of living. Recent excess inflation — inflation above the Fed’s target — is [*largely about housing*](mailto:coy-newsletter@nytimes.com), and high rates discourage construction, hence reducing housing supply. I don’t think this means lower rates would reduce inflation, because there are lags: Cutting rates would probably pump up other prices faster than it would cut housing costs. But it’s not as open-and-shut as usual.

Second, public views about inflation are, in general, very different from standard economics. A majority of Americans blame [*corporate greed*](mailto:coy-newsletter@nytimes.com) — which, again, isn’t necessarily off base, except that corporations were always greedy and it’s not clear why they should have become much worse.

Coy: Housing is a fascinating case. People who have cheap mortgages don’t want to sell because they’d have to pay a higher rate on a new place. So there aren’t many existing homes for sale. People are turning to newly built homes, but there aren’t enough of them, especially starter homes. No wonder [*affordability is so poor*](mailto:coy-newsletter@nytimes.com).

On your point about greed: Exactly — nothing new about companies wanting to make as much money as possible.

Krugman: What’s funny is that if Biden were to base economic policy on public perceptions but couldn’t do anything about interest rates, he’d basically do a Richard Nixon: pressure the Fed to print money while imposing price controls to rein in those greedy corporations. Nixonomics ended up working out badly in the long run, but only after he won the 1972 election in a landslide.

Biden won’t do that, but it’s quite possible that if he wins, Trump — [*who doesn’t worry about*](mailto:coy-newsletter@nytimes.com) things like central bank independence — will do just that.

Coy: Except, of course, that successfully pressuring the Fed would backfire on Trump and the whole economy. Investors would send long-term interest rates to the moon — by demanding higher yields on bonds — if they thought that the Fed had become politicized and could no longer be counted on to fight inflation.

Krugman: Inflationary policies might well backfire on Trump, but good luck convincing him or his advisers of that. What’s a bit more puzzling is why billionaires who have been [*moving into the Trump camp*](mailto:coy-newsletter@nytimes.com) aren’t paying more attention to his monetary irresponsibility. Maybe they think they can control him — which would make them some of the most naïve people in America.

But, of course, there aren’t many billionaires. What’s more important is how interest rates affect ordinary families.

Coy: I’d like to get into how high interest rates hurt the poor more than the rich. Most upper-income people own houses. Either they own them free and clear or they refinanced their mortgages at 4 percent or less. Lower-income people who are trying to buy for the first time are looking at 7 percent loans. Credit card rates were up to [*over 21 percent*](mailto:coy-newsletter@nytimes.com) as of February. That hits people who can’t afford to pay off their cards every month. Four-year [*auto loans*](mailto:coy-newsletter@nytimes.com) were up to 8.5 percent from under 5 percent two years ago. Etc.

Theory says higher interest rates should hurt stock prices, but that clearly hasn’t been happening. Stocks are ripping. So the people who own stocks are feeling rich and spending freely. That’s keeping the economy strong and keeping inflation above the Fed’s 2 percent target.

The Fed says: Well, inflation is too high, so we’d better keep rates high. But then that hurts borrowers. The blunt tool of high rates is coming down on the heads of the ***working class***.

Krugman: I see your point about high interest rates hurting lower-income Americans especially hard, which is almost surely true. The question is one of magnitudes.

This is actually part of a broader discussion about the distributional effects of recent inflation. Many people, including many of my readers, are sure that recent economic growth has benefited only the affluent, without trickling down to lower-paid workers. But the data says just the opposite: much [*bigger wage gains*](mailto:coy-newsletter@nytimes.com) for low-wage workers than those farther up the scale.

The counter, when I point this out, is that inflation has been higher at the bottom, where people spend a higher percentage of their income on food and energy, which is surely true. But we have some careful estimates of that effect, both from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and [*from the Congressional Budget Office*](mailto:coy-newsletter@nytimes.com) — and what they say is that prices have, indeed, gone up more at the bottom but not by nearly enough to offset low-end wage gains.

My guess is that high interest rates will tilt this a bit further but still not enough to reverse the result that inequality has been falling, not rising.

All that said, many people will feel better if interest rates come down. So maybe we should talk about whether the Fed can and should be cutting rates. I can see strong arguments in both directions. Inflation looks pretty tame at this point, although still somewhat above the Fed’s target, but the economy also continues to chug along.

Coy: I’m in the yes camp on cuts. I don’t deny that inflation is higher than the Fed wants, but I think the economy is weaker than a lot of people perceive. Lower rates would help with that.

I have to say the May [*increase in payrolls*](mailto:coy-newsletter@nytimes.com) from the establishment survey, 272,000, was surprisingly strong. A few other statistics, though: Employment as measured by the [*household survey*](mailto:coy-newsletter@nytimes.com) fell in May from April. First-quarter growth in [*gross domestic product*](mailto:coy-newsletter@nytimes.com) was just 1.3 percent annualized. Business bankruptcy [*filings*](mailto:coy-newsletter@nytimes.com) are the highest since the third quarter of 2020. Sales of new homes are down almost 8 percent from a year ago. The Conference Board’s leading index of the economy [*fell again*](mailto:coy-newsletter@nytimes.com) in April, indicating softer economic conditions ahead.

Paul, I take your point about low-end wage gains, but we also have a lot of evidence that low-to-middle-income people are feeling pinched. Businesses that cater to them are feeling it. The chief executive of McDonald’s [*talked*](mailto:coy-newsletter@nytimes.com) about consumers being “even more discriminating with every dollar that they spend.” For a while, people were coasting on the money they saved from pandemic stimulus. But the San Francisco Fed recently [*said*](mailto:coy-newsletter@nytimes.com) it appears that “American households fully spent their pandemic-era savings as of March 2024.”

I’m worried that the Fed is behind the curve, because there’s a lag between when it cuts rates and when the economy perks up. Could it already be too late to prevent the damage?

Krugman: Even though recent inflation data has diminished my worries on that front and I would support rate cuts, I’m kind of surprised to be not all that dovish. If you had argued against cuts, though, I probably would have pressed the case for them, just to keep things interesting.

But let me talk about the short run, then the long run.

In the short run, that G.D.P. slowdown in the first quarter appears to have been just a temporary inventory effect; final demand was still growing fast, and many trackers are projecting second-quarter growth nearing 3 percent, which is still quite hot. Right now we seem to be in a place where you can choose numbers to rationalize whatever you want to believe: The economy may still be chugging along or at the start of a slowdown, and people I normally trust are on all sides of the issue.

One thing I’m fairly sure about is that the acceleration in inflation we’ve all been talking about was mainly statistical noise. So that’s a case for cuts.

In the longer run, our current era of low unemployment, relatively high mortgage interest rates and high stock prices reminds me of the late 1990s. And you can make a case that the current economy bears some resemblance to that era. We have a big tech boom and a lot of investment in green energy. Productivity may — may — be picking up. I used to believe that interest rates would stay low because of a stagnant working-age population, but a sudden jump in immigration has changed that picture, at least for a little while.

All that said, my guess is that interest rates will come down substantially once everyone is convinced that the inflation episode is over. But maybe not back to where they were prepandemic.

Coy: Right now, investors, on average, are [*expecting*](mailto:coy-newsletter@nytimes.com) the Fed to wait until September, at the earliest, to start lowering its target for the federal funds rate, which is the overnight lending rate it controls. That would be its last meeting before the election in November. A quarter-point cut in September would do basically nothing to stimulate the economy before voters go to the polls.

Investors expect the funds rate a year from now to be only half a percentage point to one percentage point lower than today. I happen to think the Fed may cut more and faster than that. But if it does, that won’t be cause for celebration. It’ll probably be because the economy needed emergency assistance.

Jerome Powell, the chair of the Fed, is in a tricky place. I think he and a lot of other Fed voters realize that the economy is softening and rate cuts may be needed sooner than investors are expecting. But they can’t say that because as soon as they sound the least bit dovish, investors will react as if a starting gun had gone off. They’ll overreact and bid up stock and bond prices. That will make financial conditions too easy, and it’ll bring back the inflation that the Fed has tried so hard to expunge. And as we’ve found out, people really, really hate inflation.

Krugman: So I’m weighing in just after the employment report for May, which has left the situation clear as mud. There are many data points out there suggesting that the Fed should cut rates: The inflation scare from early 2024 looks like a false alarm, cracks are appearing in commercial real estate, and there are hints of an employment slowdown in multiple surveys. But the single most prominent number — growth in payrolls — just came in hot.

So much for any chance of a rate cut in June, and it would take some really soft numbers to get any rate cuts this summer.

I still think it’s likely that we’ll get enough bad news on jobs and good news on inflation for the Fed to cut at least once before the election. But to be honest, I’ve spent around a year expecting a compelling case for rate cuts any day now.

Suppose the data finally breaks in a way that lets the Fed cut in July or, more likely, September. How will that matter?

In terms of effects on the real economy, zilch in the short run. Think about what it takes for a rate cut to filter through to gross domestic product. Interest rates mostly work through capital formation — construction, purchases of equipment and so on. This stuff takes time — time to decide on an investment project, time to line up contractors and workers, etc. So rate cuts wouldn’t show up in the real economy until some time next year.

But they may show up in financial markets right away: If the Fed starts cutting, that could be viewed as sounding the all-clear, so bond and stock prices may well surge.

What about the political implications? Well, what do I know? But if I had to make a guess, if the Fed finally starts cutting rates before the election, it will help Biden. This won’t mostly be because it will immediately reduce the burden of high rates on consumers, because that effect will be small. But stock prices would probably jump, which would feed optimism.

And a Fed rate cut would, in effect, put an official imprimatur on the notion that we’ve achieved a soft landing (which I believe we have). It would, in particular, be a statement that inflation is yesterday’s problem. This would, I believe, change the narrative in Biden’s favor. Even though most voters have very little idea what the Fed is or what it does, I believe that a Fed rate cut would spread via a kind of osmosis into how the media and influential figures, in general, talk about the economy.

But that’s all for the possible future. I’ll be shocked if we get any movement in interest rates before September.

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**Load-Date:** June 12, 2024

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[***In ‘Loisaida,’ Photos of a Bygone New York; Up Close***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68HW-K6B1-DXY4-X22W-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 23, 2023 Friday 10:47 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS

**Length:** 261 words

**Byline:** Lauren Christensen

**Highlight:** Between 1984 and 1990, Tria Giovan captured everyday life on the Lower East Side.

**Body**

Upon moving into a tenement building on the Lower East Side of Manhattan in 1984, the 23-year-old photographer Tria Giovan spent her days observing her new neighborhood and its increasingly Puerto Rican and Chinese community for “fleeting moments, gestures, color and light.”

The resulting body of work, recently rediscovered and published in LOISAIDA (Damiani, $55), looks like stills from a documentary’s B-roll, the tones soft and dim, slants of sunlight bathing street corners in a sense of calm, and stasis.

But of course the world around her was anything but still: “So much has changed since the genesis of ‘Loisaida,’” she writes, as the ensuing decades’ rising costs of living displaced ***working-class*** residents from the area.

But in Giovan’s images of a Lower East Side “synonymous,” as the curator Sean Corcoran writes in the book, “with crime, rampant drug abuse, urban decay and homelessness,” we also witness the ways in which “life not only carried on; it thrived”: families gathering on fire escapes and around folding tables on the sidewalk, a woman standing in the Church of St. Mary next to a plaque that calls it the “oldest Catholic Church structure in New York,” community members playing baseball and wrestling and eating and window-shopping.

Beneath the layers of today’s gentrification, this book recalls the universality of a time and place: its “vibrancy, diversity, coexistence.”

Lauren Christensen is an editor at the Book Review.

PHOTO: Neighbors gather on a fire escape on Stanton Street, 1990. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Tria Giovan FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** June 23, 2023

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[***Cause and Effect***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BG2-W1Y1-DXY4-X4B1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 3, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 17; NONFICTION

**Length:** 1213 words

**Byline:** By Matthieu Aikins

**Body**

In ''Everyone Who Is Gone Is Here,'' Jonathan Blitzer connects the dots between U.S. foreign policy in Central America and the migrant crisis.

EVERYONE WHO IS GONE IS HERE: The United States, Central America, and the Making of a Crisis, by Jonathan Blitzer

The immigration crisis at the southern border has become a defining issue of this year's presidential election.

With polls showing Americans' rising alarm at a surge in migration, President Biden has tacked right, pleading with Republicans to sign a bipartisan deal that grants them much of their immigration wish list, including curtailing asylum. Given his druthers, he'd ''shut down the border right now and fix it quickly,'' he has said. Donald Trump, who wrested anti-immigrant politics into the mainstream in his first campaign, has promised to take control by carrying out ''the largest deportation in history'' if re-elected.

As Jonathan Blitzer shows in ''Everyone Who Is Gone Is Here,'' his timely and instructive history of the immigration crisis, the trouble at the border isn't likely to be solved soon, since it is the outcome of a long and vexed entanglement between the United States and its southern neighbors. In the past decade, those crossing have shifted from Mexicans looking for work to Central Americans and others seeking asylum. The deplorable results include unaccompanied children, family separations and refugee encampments.

Drawing on his reporting as a staff writer for The New Yorker, Blitzer profiles a cast that includes migrants, activists and politicians, unspooling their stories across a half-century in three acts: the Cold War counterinsurgencies in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, which displaced millions and helped remake U.S. immigration policy; the growth of gangs in Central America, bolstered by deportation; and the rise in asylum seekers as a mass movement of the dispossessed.

Juan Romagaoza, a leftist medical student and the moral center of the book, is witness to the horrors of the Salvadoran military's repression, backed by the United States, in the 1980s. After being maimed by soldiers during torture, he escapes to Mexico and eventually to the United States, where he participates in the struggles of Central Americans seeking protection against deportation. Early waves of activists and deserters are followed by migrants fleeing poverty and violence as the ''dividing line between the U.S. and Central America only grew blurrier.'' At one point almost a quarter of El Salvador's population would be living in this country.

Among them is Eddie Anzora, a ***working-class*** kid growing up ''half anthropologist, half wannabe hood'' in South Los Angeles, where a metastasizing gang culture reflects the American dialectic between prison and street life. As the war on gang crime accelerates through the late 1980s, his city becomes a focus of a domestic counterinsurgency, the ''national vanguard of anti-gang policing.'' California cops pioneer collaborations with immigration authorities to ''clean out'' city and state jails, a practice later replicated on a nationwide scale: ''It was much easier to deport someone than it was to convict him of a crime.''

In a post-conflict Central America suffering under the corrupt rule of ex-combatants, the criminal gangs take root. The U.S. deportation machine eventually catches up with Anzora after he's arrested for drug possession, and he ends up back in El Salvador, where he has to dodge gang members deported from the streets of L.A. Fleeing poverty and criminal violence, Central Americans begin to claim asylum in ever greater numbers at the southern border, leading to the humanitarian crises we see there today -- starting with a wave of unaccompanied children in 2014.

The last major immigration reform passed by Congress was in 1990; since then, the border has been mostly managed by ad hoc executive action and the federal courts. As Blitzer illustrates, the American immigration system is a victim of its own dysfunction. The growing backlog in asylum applications encourages more people to use it to stay in the country; draconian laws and border controls increase the population of ''trapped'' undocumented immigrants; rules meant to protect children at the border incentivize parents to send them on their own.

In at times exhaustive detail, Blitzer chronicles the policy sausage factory in Washington, D.C., contrasting figures like Cecilia Muñoz, a former activist who reluctantly joins the Obama administration, with Trump's most influential adviser on immigration, Stephen Miller, who ''embraced the role of archvillain.''

Yet even as Blitzer dramatizes these partisan battles and the consequences they have for people's lives -- such as when, in 1998, Muñoz and other organizers lobbied for ''175,000 immigrant children'' to have their food stamps restored -- he exposes the deep continuities between Democratic and Republican administrations. The most ironclad is the fixation on the ''deterrence'' of unauthorized immigrants with increasingly harsh consequences, expressed by strategies with names like Consequence Delivery System, ''prevention through deterrence'' and the Criminal Consequence Initiative.

It stands to reason that the more desperate the people migrating, the harsher the deterrence that must be inflicted. In practice, this boils down to increasing the danger they face crossing the border illegally, the likelihood of detention if caught, and the difficulty of living their lives afterward without being deported. Some administer these policies reluctantly, others with zeal.

Whereas under President Barack Obama, a proposal by immigration officials to separate parents from children -- a ''painful'' but ''not fatal'' deterrent -- was dismissed as ''inhumane,'' the Trump administration, in its eagerness, fumbled the chaotic separation of thousands before a nationwide outcry forced a retreat. Blitzer quotes a post-mortem convened by Miller: ''We need to be smarter if we want to implement something on this scale again.''

American policy debates are often notable for their parochialism, and so it is perhaps unsurprising that Blitzer makes only passing mention of the experiences of the European Union, where debates over asylum seekers, experiments with ''humane'' deterrence and eruptions of anti-immigrant populism predate the United States'. Australia's island prisons for refugees, or South America's relatively tolerant and generous systems, go unmentioned.

Yet despite the incantations of politicians who promise to restore the integrity of borders and the nation-state, migration is an increasingly global phenomenon, and migrants from Asia and Africa make up a growing share of those apprehended at the border. Like climate change, the rich world's migration crisis cannot be properly understood at the national scale. Instead, it raises fundamental questions about what it means to be an ethical citizen.

Conflicts over immigration often arise from similarity rather than difference, and the strangers at our border have a familiar history that Blitzer tells in meticulous and vivid detail. It is our own.

EVERYONE WHO IS GONE IS HERE: The United States, Central America, and the Making of a Crisis | By Jonathan Blitzer | Penguin | 523 pp. | $32

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/05/books/review/jonathan-blitzer-everyone-who-is-gone-is-here.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/05/books/review/jonathan-blitzer-everyone-who-is-gone-is-here.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: A group of migrants wait to be taken away and processed at a detention center by U.S. Customs and Border Patrol officials. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK ABRAMSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page BR17.

**Load-Date:** March 3, 2024

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[***Leah Remini Lists Her House in Los Angeles Once Again***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69M6-4J21-DXY4-X04V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 12, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section RE; Column 0; Real Estate Desk; Pg. 6; EXCLUSIVE

**Length:** 519 words

**Byline:** By Debra Kamin

**Body**

Ms. Remini, the actress now known as an outspoken critic against the Church of Scientology, is asking for $12.5 million for the six-bedroom house she bought 20 years ago.

The actress Leah Remini has listed her home in the picturesque Studio City neighborhood of Los Angeles -- and is doing so at a price cut.

Ms. Remini bought the six-bedroom, nine-bath property in 2003 for $3.75 million and first listed it on the market in September 2022 for $12,995,000. She received an offer just 10 days later, but ended up not selling. Now, she's slashed half a million dollars off the price for the property, which stretches more than 10,000 square feet on a manicured and gated 1.58-acre lot, asking $12,499,000.

The home is in the neighborhood of Fryman Canyon, one of Los Angeles's most prestigious and star-studded corners. Neighbors in this pocket of Hollywood, where idyllic residential blocks are lined with sycamore trees and graceful Tudor Revival style houses, include George and Amal Clooney, Lucy Liu and Bruno Mars.

The home was built in 2001 and is an amalgam of architectural styles with Mediterranean and English influences, plus a vine-covered lower level and a Spanish tile roof. Its grounds include a dance studio and a swimming pool flanked by mature trees and a stone hardscape for lounging; inside, the primary bedroom has a fireplace and views of the San Gabriel mountains while the entranceway opens into a handsome quarter-turn staircase that opens into a mezzanine. Much of the décor is stark monochrome; in the kitchen, white ceiling-height cabinets wrap around a gray center island topped by black pendant lights. The room is anchored by a bay window.

Ms. Remini, 53, bought the home at the height of her stardom as Carrie Heffernan, the lovable ***working-class*** antihero of CBS's hit sitcom ''The King of Queens,'' which ran for nine seasons. A decade after moving in, in 2013, she famously quit the Church of Scientology, and two years later released a memoir on the exit, ''Troublemaker: Surviving Hollywood and Scientology,'' which was a New York Times best seller. She followed up the book with a documentary on A&E, ''Leah Remini: Scientology and the Aftermath,'' for which she won two prime-time Emmys.

She has since become one of the most outspoken critics in the entertainment industry against the organization, whose members in Hollywood include John Travolta, Tom Cruise, Elisabeth Moss and the now convicted rapist Danny Masterson. In August, Ms. Remini filed a lawsuit against the Church of Scientology, in which she said that in the decade since breaking from the church, she had faced a ''mob-style assault'' of harassment and intimidation. The church released a public statement that described Ms. Remini as ''a horrible person,'' referred to her lawsuit as ''frivolous'' and said she has spread ''hate and falsehoods for a decade.''

This is the third time Ms. Remini has listed the home this year; she previously decided to sell in January and then again in February, but later removed the listing both times. Representatives for Ms. Remini declined to speculate on the reason.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/30/realestate/leah-remini-house-los-angeles.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/30/realestate/leah-remini-house-los-angeles.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Top left, Leah Remini, who has put her house in the Studio City section of Los Angeles, top center, back on the market. Top right, ceiling-height cabinets in the kitchen wrapping around a gray center island topped by black pendant lights. Left, the house's entranceway. Above, a swimming pool flanked by mature trees. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY RICHARD SHOTWELL/INVISION, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

SHADE DEGGES/THE FRIDMAN GROUP) This article appeared in print on page RE6.

**Load-Date:** November 12, 2023

**End of Document**



[***More Renters Than Ever Before Are Burdened by the Rent They Pay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B5X-MGH1-JBG3-60C8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 25, 2024 Thursday 14:58 EST

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**Section:** REALESTATE

**Length:** 838 words

**Byline:** Ronda Kaysen Ronda Kaysen is a real estate reporter for The Times, covering the housing market and home design trends.

**Highlight:** A new Harvard report says 22.4 million households in the United States now spend more than 30 percent of their income in rent, with 12.1 million spending more than 50 percent.

**Body**

A new Harvard report says 22.4 million households in the United States now spend more than 30 percent of their income in rent, with 12.1 million spending more than 50 percent.

Half of all renters in the United States spend more than 30 percent of their income on rent and utilities, more than at any other time in history, according to a new report by [*Harvard’s Joint Center for Housing Studies*](https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/reports/files/Harvard_JCHS_Americas_Rental_Housing_2024.pdf).

The center’s analysis of 2022 census data found that 22.4 million renter households are burdened, with a record 12.1 million spending more than half their income on housing. The surge in housing costs affects a wide swath of renters, from low-income households to higher earners. Middle-income renters earning from $30,000 to $74,999 saw the sharpest rise in cost burden since 2019. And a record number of Americans — 653,100 — were homeless on a given night in January 2023, the report found.

“It was astounding to see,” said Whitney Airgood-Obrycki, a senior research associate at Harvard’s Joint Center for Housing Studies. “Really broadly, across the income spectrum, it was getting worse for everyone.”

Renters are still paying the financial consequences of the pandemic, when rents in cities across the country rose by double-digit percent increases as Americans moved during a period of remote work. Even as the rental market cools — asking rents fell by almost 1 percent in 2023 — they are still up 19 percent from the start of the pandemic, according to Apartment List. “It’s definitely worse than it’s ever been,” said Cea Weaver, a campaign coordinator at Housing Justice for All in New York. “Middle class people, lower middle class people, ***working class*** people, they cannot afford their rent.”

[*There is reason for optimism*](https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/reports/files/Harvard_JCHS_Americas_Rental_Housing_2024.pdf), at least in the short-term. Vacancies are up. And 1 million new multifamily units are under construction, almost entirely rentals, the most the country has seen in decades, according to the National Association of Home Builders. Dr. Airgood-Obrycki described the change as “a glimmer of hope.”

Interviews and correspondence with scores of renters around the country revealed deep financial insecurity, as their rents grew far faster than their incomes. Struggling with rising food costs, renters skipped meals, drove less to save gas money or eliminated social activities. While some renters put basic expenses on their credit cards, others borrowed money from friends and family or tapped their retirement funds. While some renters were unemployed or relied on public assistance, most interviewed for this article held full-time jobs and held college or postgraduate degrees.

For many, making ends meet feels like an impossible puzzle to solve.

“Will this ever end? Will it ever get better? Can I get out of this?” said Alex Larraza, 29, who said he pays 49 percent of his $55,000 annual salary toward rent and utilities for a duplex in North Kingstown, R.I. “It’s gotten so bad. Should I eat or should I worry about the heat getting turned off?”

He said he is behind in his utility bills and has abandoned any hobbies that cost money. Sometimes, he skips meals. “I’ll make my daughter lunch, feed her dinner and then I’ll just not eat,” said Mr. Larraza, who works for a defense contractor. With a college degree and 11 years of military service, he finds his current situation baffling. “I never thought that someone who took all these steps would be struggling so much,” he said. Next month his rent, now $1,950 a month, is going up another $150.

In Manhattan, Margaret Tomasiewicz, 27, a project associate at a health care technology company, said she spends 44 percent of her $64,350 annual salary on rent and utilities in a two-bedroom apartment she shares with a roommate on the Upper East Side. Once, she didn’t have money for a subway ride home from work, and slipped onto the bus without paying instead. The stress takes an emotional toll. “There are days when I can’t get out of bed,” she said.

Ms. Tomasiewicz moved to New York from Wisconsin in 2022, and said she underestimated how expensive it would be to live in the city, wrongly assuming that she would have enough disposable income left over after paying her $2,350 monthly rent. “My roommate will go and hang out with our friends or see a show, do New York things,” she said. “And I can’t do my laundry because I don’t have any cash.”

Even renters who spend less of their income on rent, like Wendy Ross, 55, a nurse in Flagstaff, Ariz., feel the squeeze. “In my mid-50s I’m teaching myself how to camp so that I can take vacations,” she said. A single mother with two sons, Ms. Ross earns about $86,000 a year and pays $2,250 a month for a three-bedroom townhouse. She is counting down the months until her younger son, a sophomore in high school, graduates, and she can leave Flagstaff. She is considering buying an R.V. and working as a traveling nurse. But for now, she said, “We do without.”

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MAANSI SRIVASTAVA/THE NEW YORK TIMES; JOHN BURCHAM FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page RE6.

**Load-Date:** May 22, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Top Donor Provided Ron DeSantis, an Avid Golfer, With a Costly Simulator***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68HM-8381-JBG3-64HM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 21, 2023 Wednesday 09:22 EST

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 719 words

**Byline:** Alexandra Berzon and Maggie Haberman

**Highlight:** The golf simulator, from a Florida businessman who has lent his plane to the governor, was given as an indefinite loan to the governor’s mansion.

**Body**

The News

A top political donor and close ally to Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida who has frequently lent him his plane also gave him an expensive golf simulator, as an indefinite loan to the governor’s mansion, Mr. DeSantis’s office acknowledged on Wednesday.

The simulator was given by Morteza Hosseini, according to a letter released by the governor’s office. Mr. Hosseini is a giant in Florida’s influential home-building industry who serves as the chairman of the University of Florida board of trustees.

[*The Washington Post*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2023/06/21/desantis-donors-golf-simulator-flights/?itid=hp-more-top-stories_p003_f001) and [*Reuters*](https://www.reuters.com/world/us/donor-bought-pricey-golf-simulator-desantis-documents-show-raising-ethics-2023-06-21/) reported on Wednesday on the golf simulator, which sells for tens of thousands of dollars, and noted that it was structured as a loan to a state agency called the Mansion Commission, which is controlled by Florida’s Department of Management Services.

Why It Matters: Mr. DeSantis has previously faced scrutiny over donations.

Mr. DeSantis, a Republican, is running for the party’s presidential nomination in 2024 and is a chief rival to former President Donald J. Trump. Mr. DeSantis has previously faced scrutiny over potential conflicts in accepting generous in-kind donations from Florida business owners.

Some of those donations have avoided being reported under Florida campaign and ethics regulations, slipping through loopholes in state disclosure rules meant to prevent any undue influence.

The New York Times [*reported*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/20/us/politics/desantis-private-jets-donors.html) last month that such loopholes might have allowed Mr. DeSantis to accept private plane donations from Mr. Hosseini and others, sometimes without disclosure, as he traveled the country before he made his candidacy official.

Jeremy Redfern, the governor’s press secretary, said on Wednesday that the golf simulator loan was “coordinated by staff and approved by legal counsel.” Mr. Redfern added that previous administrations had accepted donations to the governor’s mansion. A list of the mansion’s acquisitions that was provided by the governor’s office included rugs and a Peloton bike donated to a previous administration.

Background: The donor of the golf simulator is a heavyweight in Florida politics.

On the campaign trail, Mr. DeSantis, an avid golfer, has been playing up his ***working-class*** roots in an effort to connect with voters in early voting states.

Yet he has relied on a cadre of rich Florida businesspeople, including Mr. Hosseini, for perks like private planes since he first ran for governor in 2018.

Mr. Hosseini, the chairman of ICI Homes, has long been a major player in Florida business and politics. He has donated his plane repeatedly to Mr. DeSantis’s political committee, dating to his early days in office, and has been a frequent presence in the governor’s office, according to two people familiar with the inner workings of the office who requested anonymity to speak freely.

He serves as chairman of the University of Florida board of trustees, often regarded as a highly coveted appointment. His appointment predated Mr. DeSantis’s first term in office, but he was reappointed by Mr. DeSantis in 2021.

In a statement, Mr. Hosseini said he had provided the golf simulator for use by the DeSantis family, guests and staff and understood it to be permissible under Florida law. He also said the state could keep it for as long as it wanted.

In a 2019 letter to Mr. Hosseini released by the governor’s office, James Uthmeier, who was then a lawyer for the governor and is now his chief of staff, said he had personally cleared the loan with the Mansion Commission and verified it as permissible under state ethics codes.

What’s Next: Mr. DeSantis will be back on the campaign trail.

Mr. DeSantis’s opponents in the presidential nomination contest could seize on such donations and gifts as a contrast with his attempts to relate to ***working-class*** voters. This month he has campaign events in South Carolina and New Hampshire. The first debate of the Republican race is scheduled for Aug. 23 in Milwaukee.

The front-runner, Mr. Trump, has repeatedly sought to draw attention to Mr. DeSantis’s use of private donor planes. Jason Miller, a Trump aide, reacted to the news reports on Wednesday on Twitter, saying it was “Ron DeSantis’ Florida Swamp in Action!”

PHOTO: Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida campaigning this year in Illinois. He has previously faced scrutiny over gifts. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Haiyun Jiang/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** June 22, 2023

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[***Read Your Way Through Lima***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69HT-S791-DXY4-X126-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 1, 2023 Wednesday 22:44 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS

**Length:** 1334 words

**Byline:** Augusto Higa Oshiro and translated by Jennifer Shyue

**Highlight:** Lima is a city of contrasts and contradictions — gray and tropical, dense and isolated. Augusto Higa Oshiro, one of its writers, recommended books and authors that have captured its complexity.

**Body**

Lima is a city of contrasts and contradictions — gray and tropical, dense and isolated. Augusto Higa Oshiro, one of its writers, recommended books and authors that have captured its complexity.

[*Read Your Way Around the World*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/literary-guides) is a series exploring the globe through books.

When I was born, in 1946, Lima was home to 640,000 people. Now, as I’m about to turn 77 in the year 2023, Lima is a city of 10 million. The population has grown more than 15-fold. In some ways, you could say that I’ve survived alongside the city. I’ve gotten to know all 43 of its districts and municipalities, and I can say with true pride that I’ve suffered but also delighted in this gray, sleepy city. As Herman Melville describes it, in “Moby Dick”:

Nor is it, altogether, the remembrance of her cathedral-toppling earthquakes; nor the stampedoes of her frantic seas; nor the tearlessness of arid skies that never rain; nor the sight of her wide field of leaning spires, wrenched cope-stones, and crosses all adroop (like canted yards of anchored fleets); and her suburban avenues of house-walls lying over upon each other, as a tossed pack of cards; it is not these things alone which make tearless Lima, the strangest, saddest city thou can’st see. For Lima has taken the white veil; and there is a higher horror in this whiteness of her woe.

Picture a sandy desert that stretches along the Pacific Ocean. This squalid coastline is bisected by a river, the Rimac. In the middle of the oasis created there is a metropolis — uncertain, cheerful, oh so civilized, somewhat isolated from the world. The luscious tropical flora belies the fact that it doesn’t rain here: The proximity to the sea means that the humid air brings forth new buds and shoots all year round.

Despite, or perhaps because of, their many facets and complexities, Lima and Peru have been depicted and imagined in myriad ways since the city’s official founding by Francisco Pizarro in 1535, and the ensuing five centuries has seen numerous visions, histories and interpretations. I myself have approached Lima from different points of view: I’ve written stories about young people in the margins, in the ***working-class*** neighborhoods of Lima, and also, as the son of Japanese parents who settled in Peru, I’ve set Limeñan nikkeis to fiction.

What should I read before I pack my bags?

A number of authors offer valuable insights into Peru’s, and Lima’s, complex past. Let’s start with Inca Garcilaso de la Vega (1539—1616). He was the son of a Spanish captain and a palla — a member of Incan royalty — making him mestizo. He’s considered the first Peruvian, spiritually speaking. His “[*Royal Commentaries of the Incas and General History of Peru*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/literary-guides),” about the origins of the Incas, the kings of Peru, and their ways of worship, laws and governance in times of peace and war, was first published in Lisbon in 1609. It was very successful — and is still available now. Today, we know that de la Vega’s vision of the Incas was idealized.

Another essential author in Peruvian letters is Ricardo Palma (1833—1919). His “Peruvian Traditions” consists of four volumes of crónicas, or accounts, of the Incas, the Conquista, the period of the viceroyalty, the struggle for independence and the republican era, all told from his vantage point in Lima. Palma is lighthearted, ironic, amusing and anticlerical by nature, and in his writing he makes fun of the sumptuous interiorities of viceroys and courtesans.

To complement Palma, perhaps we could take a look at the watercolors of Pancho Fierro (ca. 1810—1879). He painted hundreds of images that show the customs and characters of 19th century Lima, including artisans, merchants, soldiers and water vendors with their donkeys. Palma owned many of his works, which are now at the [*Pinacoteca Municipal Ignacio Merino*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/literary-guides).

Moving now into the 20th century, César Vallejo (1892—1938) and his poetry are essential. The founder of modernist poetry in Peru, Vallejo made Indigenous displacement and sorrow universal with his peculiar, eternal language in “[*Human Poems*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/literary-guides).”

Which stories provide a glimpse into modern Lima’s complexity?

The rural [*Indigenista wave*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/literary-guides) led by Ciro Alegría and José María Arguedas between the 1930s and 1950s was followed by the rise of an urban, fundamentally Limeñan narrative that has made its way into the city’s many corners. It has branched into many works and lineages — not just in literature but also in sociological and historical writing, painting, architecture and culture in general.

From this contradictory world, our 2010 Nobel laureate [*Mario Vargas Llosa*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/literary-guides) (1936—) is a standout. I will limit myself to discussing his novel “[*Conversation in the Cathedral*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/literary-guides),” because it centers on a serious problem of governance: the Latin American dictatorship. Through two volumes and more than 100 characters, Vargas Llosa contemplates the sinister military men who have held power in this country.

I would be remiss not to mention the great Julio Ramón Ribeyro (1929—1994). His stories — many of which were translated into English by Katherine Silver for the 2019 collection “[*The Word of the Speechless*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/literary-guides)” — focus on the Limeñan middle class and their particular notes of mediocrity, neglect and loneliness. Ribeyro is synonymous with individual and family frustration in the era of the urban oligarchy, which he commits to the page with undeniable objectivity.

Other great Peruvian novels include “[*A World for Julius*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/literary-guides),” in which Alfredo Bryce Echenique (1939—) depicts the Limeñan oligarchy with his distinctive sense of humor and irony. Julius is a child of the aristocracy who prefers the company of servants, lackeys and the ***working-class*** members of his neighborhood in Miraflores.

I will also add a novel by Santiago Roncagliolo (1975—), “[*Red April*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/literary-guides),” which explores the final years of a bloody period in Peruvian history, when the Shining Path guerrillas and a government characterized by hunger and corruption clashed in a terrible war, during which [*murders and disappearances*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/literary-guides) were our daily bread.

Finally, we have [*Daniel Alarcón*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/literary-guides) (1977—), whose books “[*Lost City Radio*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/literary-guides)” and “[*War by Candlelight*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/literary-guides)” also take on a country convulsed by the war against the Shining Path.

What literary landmarks and bookstores should I visit?

The literary icons perhaps most easily found in Lima’s cultural orbit are Ricardo Palma, César Vallejo, Julio Ramón Ribeyro, Mario Vargas Llosa, José María Arguedas and Alfredo Bryce Echenique. They are everywhere: These authors’ complete works circulate in the big bookstores in the Miraflores neighborhood and in central Lima. Plazas and streets carry their names; in some cases, busts and monuments have been erected in their honor. Even the currency bears images of Palma, Vallejo and Arguedas.

There’s also a permanent [*used (and pirated) books market*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/literary-guides) on Jirón Amazonas, and a plethora of museums dedicated to pre-Incan cultures as well as the colonial and republican eras.

Augusto Higa Oshiro’s Lima Reading List

* “Royal Commentaries of the Incas and General History of Peru,” Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, translated by Harold V. Livermore

1. “Peruvian Traditions,” Ricardo Palma, translated by Helen Lane
2. “Human Poems,” César Vallejo, translated by Clayton Eshleman
3. “Conversation in the Cathedral,” Mario Vargas Llosa, translated by Gregory Rabassa
4. “The Word of the Speechless,” Julio Ramón Ribeyro, translated by Katherine Silver
5. “A World for Julius,” Alfredo Bryce Echenique, translated by Dick Gerdes
6. “Red April,” Santiago Roncagliolo, translated by Edith Grossman
7. “Lost City Radio” and “War by Candlelight,” Daniel Alarcón

Augusto Higa Oshiro’s “[*The Enlightenment of Katzuo Nakamatsu*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/literary-guides),” published in May 2023 by Archipelago Books, was translated by Jennifer Shyue. He [*died*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/literary-guides) in Lima in April 2023.

PHOTOS: Peruvian art from 1848 attributed to Pancho Fierro.; Miraflores is a popular Lima neighborhood that stretches along the city’s coastal bluffs. (PHOTOGRAPHS FROM LEFT: VIA THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART; CHRIS CARMICHAEL FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (BR13) This article appeared in print on page BR12, BR13.

**Load-Date:** August 7, 2024

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[***Mike Lynch, Former U.K. Tech Mogul, Faces the Trial of His Life***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BJT-BCY1-JBG3-61BK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 16, 2024 Saturday

The New York Times on the Web

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**Section:** Section ; Column 0; Business/Financial Desk

**Length:** 1397 words

**Byline:** By Michael J. de la Merced

**Body**

A criminal trial is set to begin for Mr. Lynch, the founder of the software company Autonomy, which was sold to Hewlett-Packard in 2011 and later accused of being a fraud.

Every morning in his townhouse in the tony San Francisco neighborhood of Pacific Heights, the man once referred to as Britain's Bill Gates gets to work.

That man, Mike Lynch, checks in with his investment firm, Invoke Capital, on its recent performance. He speaks with researchers in Cambridge, England, whom he funds personally, about the ways artificial intelligence could be used to help those with hearing difficulties. He receives updates on the heritage Red Poll cattle and other livestock at his farm in Suffolk, in the east of England.

Eventually, Mr. Lynch, 58, turns to his most important task: defending himself against 16 criminal counts of conspiracy and fraud. If convicted, he will face up to 20 years behind bars.

The trial begins on Monday in San Francisco, where federal prosecutors -- who extradited Mr. Lynch from Britain in May and placed him under house arrest -- have accused the former tech mogul of defrauding Hewlett-Packard of billions when he sold HP his software company, Autonomy, for $11 billion in 2011.

In 2012, HP announced an $8.8 billion write-down and blamed it on ''serious accounting improprieties'' at Autonomy. Stunned investors called it one of the worst acquisitions in history. Mr. Lynch has since waged a series of complex, overlapping legal battles in the United States and Britain.

In 2022, a London judge in a civil case found Mr. Lynch and Sushovan Hussain, Autonomy's former finance chief, liable for defrauding HP The judge said the case was ''amongst the longest and most complex in English legal history,'' with the trial running for more than three months, the presentation of tens of thousands of documents and, in the end, a ruling that ran to well over 1,000 pages.

Mr. Lynch contests HP's claims and plans to appeal the ruling. His lawyers called it ''a case study in buyer's remorse,'' and point the finger at HP's executives for mismanaging Autonomy. Hearings were held last month to decide on damages, with HP seeking some $4 billion and Mr. Lynch arguing that he owed nothing.

Mr. Lynch's legal travails also serve as a reminder of the decline of Hewlett-Packard, a onetime titan of the U.S. technology industry. The former Silicon Valley giant has since split up, and has long been overshadowed by younger leviathans like Alphabet, Apple and Microsoft.

For his upcoming criminal trial, Mr. Lynch's odds do not look good. The judge, Charles Breyer of the Northern District of California, has dismissed some of the evidence Mr. Lynch's lawyers tried to introduce which they say showed that HP mismanaged Autonomy after acquiring the company. Judge Breyer also oversaw the trial of Mr. Hussain, who was convicted in 2018 of charges similar to those Mr. Lynch now faces. Mr. Hussain was recently released from a federal prison in Pennsylvania.

Last year, Mr. Lynch lost a bid to avoid extradition despite lobbying the British government, which had approved his transfer to the United States on the same day as the judgment against him in the civil case brought by HP.

Last month, he sued the Serious Fraud Office, Britain's securities regulator, over its handling of data requests by the United States government. The lawsuit, a last-ditch bid to delay the U.S. criminal trial, was settled earlier this month.

Mr. Lynch still wields considerable resources to defend himself in the San Francisco courtroom. ''Mike Lynch has faith that he will be vindicated when he finally gets a chance to tell his story to a jury,'' Reid Weingarten, one of several prominent white-collar defense lawyers representing Mr. Lynch in the United States, said in a statement. ''We look forward to this opportunity to tell Mike Lynch's story and allow him to put this unfortunate chapter behind him.''

Since his extradition, Mr. Lynch has lived under 24-hour surveillance and court-mandated private security, a drastic fall for a man once considered one of Britain's biggest tech success stories.

Born into a ***working-class*** family outside of London, he attended private school on a scholarship and graduated from Cambridge before founding Autonomy in 1996. The company helped clients analyze unstructured information in order to unearth hidden insights about their businesses.

By 2011, Autonomy had become one of Britain's most prominent technology companies, with its home base of Cambridge sometimes called ''Silicon Fen.''

''He certainly raised the profile of Cambridge technology,'' said Tony Quested, the editor of Business Weekly, a technology trade publication based in Cambridge. ''There wasn't that much around at the time.''

Mr. Lynch became a celebrity in British tech circles. He was a member of the Royal Society, one of the country's top scientific associations; an adviser to David Cameron, the prime minister at the time; and sat on the board of the BBC.

HP, then led by Léo Apotheker, a former chief of the German software giant SAP, hit upon the notion of buying Autonomy to transform itself from an aging hardware provider to a higher-margin software company. HP agreed to buy Autonomy in mid-2011 for some 60 percent more than its market value.

Things soured quickly.

Mr. Apotheker was out as chief executive a month after the deal was announced, as investors and analysts revolted against both the high price of the Autonomy acquisition and a plan to spin off HP's personal computer division (which was born from another major takeover, of Compaq.)

He was replaced by Meg Whitman, the former eBay chief who sat on HP's board. Within HP, Autonomy's star quickly dimmed amid rapidly declining sales. Mr. Lynch, who clashed with Ms. Whitman, was fired in May 2012.

Later that year, HP said it had been duped by Autonomy, misled by improprieties including the backdating of contracts and the use of hardware sales to bolster revenue, particularly at the end of a quarter. The multibillion-dollar write-down marked the beginning of Mr. Lynch's legal travails, which will culminate this month in another long and complex trial.

Over the years, Mr. Lynch has denied the characterization that the company was riddled with fraud. He has blamed Ms. Whitman, now the United States ambassador to Kenya, and other senior executives who clashed with him, for Autonomy's disintegration. His lawyers have argued in court filings that HP executives, for example, knew about the hardware sales and hadn't raised them as an issue.

They have pointed to internal emails showing the shifting calculations of Autonomy's worth, at one point putting it at more than $11 billion. They have also noted that accountants for EY, the global accounting and consulting firm previously known as Ernst & Young, who were working for HP had not believed the Autonomy takeover price was inflated because of accounting irregularities.

U.S. federal prosecutors argued in court documents that Mr. Lynch, long known as a hard-charging boss, relished being tough and maintaining control. (In one filing, government lawyers described an internal sales video at Autonomy in which he portrayed himself as a Mafia don, and noted that he had named conference rooms after James Bond movie villains.) Witness depositions have included Ms. Whitman and Catherine Lesjak, HP's former chief financial officer.

The prosecutors have sought to introduce tens of thousands of exhibits and a 44-person witness list, and they estimate that the trial could last until the end of May.

Mr. Lynch's freedom, and his legacy, are at stake.

He has sought to foster a reputation as a public intellectual by giving interviews on the subject of technology, but has kept a low profile since his extradition. His last published piece was in April, when he encouraged British policymakers to embrace A.I. start-ups.

Autonomy is now part of the Canadian software company OpenText. Mr. Lynch's investment firm, Invoke, has made crucial early investments in companies like the cybersecurity provider Darktrace.

But associations with Mr. Lynch can be fraught. In December, Darktrace shareholders rejected a nominee for the board proposed by Invoke. And in the company's financial filings, Darktrace has described ''Autonomy related matters'' as a risk ''from both a reputational and a legal perspective.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/15/business/dealbook/lynch-hp-autonomy-trial.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/15/business/dealbook/lynch-hp-autonomy-trial.html)

**Load-Date:** March 16, 2024

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[***In Milwaukee, Restaurants and Venues Worry of Seeing Limited R.N.C. Boost***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BRH-P291-DXY4-X066-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 7, 2024 Sunday

The New York Times on the Web

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**Section:** Section ; Column 0; Politics

**Length:** 1671 words

**Byline:** By Jonathan Weisman

**Body**

In Chicago, venues are booking fast for the Democratic convention in August. But Milwaukee, host of the Republican convention, is wondering if customers will come.

Dan Jacobs, a contestant on the newest season of ''Top Chef,'' is having a national star turn with his soups, cheese treats and elevated snacks -- and his open struggle with a rare degenerative disease.

But that publicity has not translated to a surge of prospective customers booking soirees at his Milwaukee restaurants, DanDan and EsterEv, ahead of the Republican National Convention, which is just three months away.

''We haven't gotten one single inquiry, like nothing,'' said the restaurateur. ''That's where I think everybody's like, 'What's going on?'''

With the Republican convention slated to kick off in Milwaukee on July 15, some of the city's biggest and most sought-after restaurants, concert halls and other venues are alarmed at how slowly the expected events around the gathering are taking shape.

Birch, whose chef, Kyle Knall, has twice been nominated for a James Beard Award for the best chef in the Midwest, has no signed contracts, and indeed has received only one inquiry, restaurant management said. The gracious, old-world Pabst and Riverside theaters also remain unbooked, according to entertainment industry officials. Leslie West, who co-owns and runs the Rave, Eagles Club and Eagles Ballroom, said she had given up and would ''just book our own shows during the R.N.C. time period, no need to stress about it.''

''We're seeing what everyone else is seeing,''said Adam Siegel, whose restaurant, Lupi & Iris, is finalizing contracts on two 100-plate brunches but has not seen the complete restaurant buyouts he was expecting. ''There's no sense of security that it will move forward in the way that most conventions move forward.''

His co-owner, Michael DeMichele, later pronounced himself ''thrilled about brunches that are being booked.''

Last August, when the Republican Party chose Milwaukee to host its convention, the city's Democratic mayor, Cavalier Johnson, promoted it as ''full of unexpected gems'' and urged conventioneers and partygoers alike to ''take all your money to Milwaukee, spend it that week and leave it.''

Now, theories abound in Milwaukee about why bookings are off to such a slow start. Among them: turnover of convention staff after the presumptive nominee, former President Donald J. Trump, cleaned house at the Republican National Committee; a small city lacking event infrastructure; and a reluctance by would-be conventioneers to participate in an event showcasing Mr. Trump and his most ardent followers.

Republicans involved in the planning of the convention say that the concerns are overstated, that fund-raising is ahead of schedule and that bookings are actively being worked out between groups and venues. The R.N.C.'s Committee on Arrangements cited 50 events that ''have already been signed or are moving to contract in short order.''

''The fact is the incredible support from the Milwaukee business community and beyond has put this convention in an unprecedented position for success,'' said Reince Priebus, a former R.N.C. chairman and Mr. Trump's first White House chief of staff, who now chairs the Milwaukee host committee. ''We're ahead of previous host committees in our fund-raising efforts, and ahead of schedule on our financial and other goals.''

And some bookings are coming through. The Bradley Symphony Center has ''confirmed bookings,'' said Rick Snow, the center's vice president of facilities and building operations, with ''additional events in the works.''

''A lot of work will start coming together now,'' he said. ''People who have done large-scale events before know things really come together in the final weeks of planning; it's the nature of the beast.''

But about 100 miles south in Chicago, the city that will play host to the Democrats about a month after Milwaukee, the beast's nature has been the opposite, organizers and event planners said. Navy Pier is booked up. Its Offshore Rooftop restaurant and another popular penthouse bar overlooking the lake, Cindy's Rooftop, have multiple contracts, as does Chicago Cut, a popular steakhouse on the Chicago River. The Salt Shed, which has a capacity of 3,600, is signed for concerts.

Kimball Stroud, a Democratic event planner, said so many theaters were taken in Chicago this spring that she ''dug deep'' and discovered the newly renovated and opened Ramova Theater in the ***working-class*** neighborhood of Bridgeport, and then bought it out for two nights: one for former Representative Gabrielle Giffords's gun-control organization, another for a yet-to-be-disclosed client. She is trying to get a third night as well.

Republicans involved in the convention planning say business in Milwaukee should begin heating up soon, though. Democrats putting together their convention in Chicago, a much larger city, had the advantage of being able to book the state delegations quickly into eight hotels downtown. In Milwaukee, though, the G.O.P. just sent out hotel assignments to delegates in late March -- in 110 hotels scattered around southern Wisconsin.

Delegates, corporations, lobbying firms and trade associations may have been waiting to know where those hotels would be located before they would be ready to sign contracts for restaurant gatherings, concerts and warehouse parties.

Evan Hughes, a co-founder and the chief executive of Central Standard Distillery and Central Standard Crafthouse & Kitchen, said Friday he had three evening buyouts booked and three proposals in negotiation. CNN and Politico are expected to open a joint dining and media center, most likely at the same decorous downtown Turner Hall venue that the media organizations had booked for the aborted 2020 convention.

Mr. Hughes said he had heard from several planners that groups had prioritized securing venues for the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, and that they were now ''turning their focus to Milwaukee.''

But if Mr. Trump is involved, white knuckles tend to follow. Venue managers say upheaval at the Republican National Committee, after Mr. Trump became the presumptive nominee and began installing an even more loyal team, has meant business partners have dropped out and been replaced by new faces. Prospective customers have asked for clauses in contracts to hold them harmless in case Mr. Trump simply calls off the convention.

''This is a great opportunity for our city to shine,'' said Mr. Siegel, of Lupi & Iris, ''and that's all we want, for our city to shine.''

In 2020, Democrats opted to hold their convention virtually because of the coronavirus pandemic, canceling on the city of Milwaukee as hotels and businesses emptied across the country. Republicans staged part of theirs at the White House, a radical break from tradition that mixed politics with the trappings of governance and prompted Democrats to charge the Trump administration with a litany of Hatch Act violations. (The law generally bars government employees from participating in partisan activities.)

Eight years later, Mr. Trump is a known quantity, and his presence is far more of a complicating factor. One Milwaukee bar, the Mothership, announced last month that it was closing down for the convention, because, the owner, Ricky Ramirez, said, ''I'm not trying to get involved with or actively take money or rent the space out to that tomfoolery.''

Some organizations will have a toehold in Milwaukee as they go all in on Chicago. The Latino Leaders Network will hold a reception at a Milwaukee law office for about 150 people, said the group's chairman, Mickey Ibarra. It is holding a blowout on Navy Pier for 750 guests, with a contract that allows it to expand to 1,000.

''There will be a very big difference,'' he said.

But even in Chicago, there is some concern that, beyond labor unions, state delegations and liberal interest groups, major corporations could be shying away from the Democratic convention, because those businesses are also shying away from the Republicans, said Sam Toia, the president of the Illinois Restaurant Association. As in Milwaukee, conversations are happening with such companies, but contracts have yet to be signed.

Skittishness from deep-pocketed corporations may be keeping some of the largest, priciest venues out of the conversation. The Milwaukee Art Museum, with its panoramic views of Lake Michigan designed by the renowned Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava, will not be hosting private parties, for instance, convention and Milwaukee officials said, citing cost and a desire not to entangle the museum with politics.

In some cases, there has been a clear mismatch in expectations. The Riverside Theater had planned to charge one group $116,804 for a film screening, an open bar and appetizers for 50 people, according to an invoice obtained by The New York Times. The venue remains unbooked, entertainment industry officials say.

Numerous businesses say that, three months out, such disputes should have been long smoothed over. By February 2020, just before the pandemic threw plans into chaos, much of Milwaukee was already booked for the summer Democratic convention.

Ms. Stroud, the Democratic event planner, said that, by February, she had been looking into building a temporary floor over the fixed seats at the Pabst and Riverside theaters to let partyers dance and mingle. And Mr. Jacobs, the Milwaukee restaurateur, said he had been selling single tables for a day at $1,000 a seat, as Democratic conventioneers nailed down places to hold court.

There is a potential cost to the slow start. Like other Great Lake cities, Milwaukee comes alive in the summer. The convention will put much of the city off limits in the middle of July, and send locals scurrying out of town.

''If we don't see the business, I don't think our locals are going to be here to support us,'' Mr. Jacobs said. ''With the D.N.C., we never felt this level of trepidation.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/07/us/politics/republican-convention.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/07/us/politics/republican-convention.html)

**Load-Date:** April 7, 2024

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[***No Degree? No Problem. Biden Tries to Bridge the ‘Diploma Divide.’***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:687M-WV01-DXY4-X0PJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 15, 2023 Monday 10:30 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1424 words

**Byline:** Zolan Kanno-Youngs

**Highlight:** President Biden is trying to appeal to ***working-class*** voters by emphasizing his plans to create well-paid jobs that do not require a college degree.

**Body**

President Biden is trying to appeal to ***working-class*** voters by emphasizing his plans to create well-paid jobs that do not require a college degree.

When President Biden told a crowd of union workers this year that every American should have a path to a good career — “whether they go to college or not” — Tyler Wissman was listening.

A father of one with a high school education, Mr. Wissman said he rarely heard politicians say that people should be able to get ahead without a college degree.

“In my 31 years, it was always, ‘You gotta go to college if you want a job,’” said Mr. Wissman, who is training as an apprentice at the Finishing Trades Institute in Philadelphia, where the president spoke in March.

As Mr. Biden campaigns for re-election, he is trying to bridge an educational divide that is reshaping the American political landscape. Even though both political parties portray education as crucial for advancement and opportunity, college-educated voters are now more likely to identify as Democrats, while those without college degrees are more likely to support Republicans.

That increasingly clear split has enormous implications for Mr. Biden as he tries to expand the coalition of voters that sent him to the White House in the first place. In 2020, Mr. Biden [*won 61 percent of college graduates,*](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1GIovkPfwUJvFZeFPdOi0fK8Rr7aOVFCYBzrlMG4Vjro/edit#gid=0) but only 45 percent of voters without a four-year college degree — and just 33 percent of white voters without a four-year degree.

“The Democratic Party has become a cosmopolitan, college-educated party even though it’s a party that considers itself a party of working people,” said David Axelrod, a top adviser to former President Barack Obama.

Mr. Axelrod added that the perception that Wall Street had been bailed out during the 2008 recession while the middle class was left to struggle deepened the fissure between Democrats and blue-collar workers who did not attend college.

The election of Donald J. Trump, who harnessed many of those grievances for political gain, [*solidified the trend*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/08/us/politics/how-college-graduates-vote.html).

“There’s a sense among ***working-class*** voters, and not just white ***working-class*** voters, that the party doesn’t relate to them or looks down on people who work with their hands or work with their backs or do things that don’t require college education,” Mr. Axelrod said.

Now, in speeches around the country, Mr. Biden rarely speaks about his signature piece of legislation, a $1 trillion infrastructure bill, without also emphasizing that it will lead to trade apprenticeships and, ultimately, union jobs.

“Let’s offer every American a path to a good career whether they go to college or not, like the path you started here,” Mr. Biden said at the trades institute, referring to its apprenticeship program.

The White House says apprenticeship programs, which typically combine some classroom learning with paid on-the-job experience, are crucial to overcoming a tight labor market and ensuring that there is a sufficient work force to turn the president’s sprawling spending plan into roads, bridges and electric vehicle chargers.

Mr. Biden has offered incentives for creating apprenticeships, with hundreds of millions of dollars in federal grants for states that expand such programs.

“Biden is the first president that’s reducing the need to get a college degree since World War II,” said Douglas Brinkley, a presidential historian.

Mr. Biden’s approach is a shift from previous Democratic administrations, which were far more focused on college as a path to higher pay and advancement. Mr. Obama, during his first joint session of Congress, said that the United States should “once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world.”

Mr. Obama’s wife, Michelle Obama, started a campaign encouraging Americans to go to college, at one point suggesting in a satirical video that life without higher education was akin to [*watching painting dry*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_1yAOK0nSb0).

Democrats have long walked a careful line on the issue. Mr. Biden has been a champion of higher education, particularly community colleges, and one of his most ambitious proposals as president was a $400 billion program to [*forgive up to $20,000 in student loan debt*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/biden-student-loan-forgiveness.html) for individuals who earn under $125,000 a year. Republicans have portrayed that proposal as a giveaway for elites.

Mitch Landrieu, the president’s infrastructure coordinator, said Mr. Biden had always believed college was important, but “it is absolutely not the only way to build an economy.”

“He sees that men and women like that have been left behind for a long time,” Mr. Landrieu said of people without college degrees. “They’ve always been part of the Democratic Party. It’s not until recently that’s changed.”

The shift coincides with a stark political reality.

The battleground states that voted for the winning candidate in both 2016 and 2020 rank roughly in the middle on higher-education levels, which means that Mr. Biden’s effort to appeal to those without a degree could make a real difference in 2024, according to Doug Sosnik, a former senior adviser to President Bill Clinton.

“You need to both try to mitigate losses with noncollege voters and at the same time try to exploit the advantage in those states with educated voters,” Mr. Sosnik said. “You can’t rely on the diploma divide solely to win. But it’s part of the formula.”

A similar dynamic is playing out nationwide.

Gov. Josh Shapiro, Democrat of Pennsylvania, released campaign ads focused on expanding apprenticeships and removing requirements for college degrees for thousands of state government jobs — a pledge he made good on when he entered office. His fellow Democratic governor in New Jersey has also removed similar degree requirements, as have Republicans in Maryland, Alaska and Utah.

Gov. Spencer Cox, Republican of Utah, said he was not only hoping to address a stigma attached to those who do not attend college but also appease employers increasingly anxious about persistent worker shortages.

“We can’t do any of this stuff if we don’t have a labor force,” Mr. Cox said.

Christopher Montague, 29, an Air Force veteran from the Philadelphia suburbs, who trained as an apprentice in drywall instead of going to college, said he had noticed an “awakening” by politicians on the upside of pursuing training in trades.

“There is money in working with your hands,” he said.

At the Finishing Trades Institute in Philadelphia, instructors say they have noticed an increase in demand. Drew Heverly, an industrial painting instructor, said he typically had 10 apprentices working on construction projects in “a good year.”

This year, he has already sent nearly 40 apprentices to work on projects in Philadelphia that are partially funded by Mr. Biden’s infrastructure package.

“We’ve definitely seen the ramp-up and the need for manpower,” Mr. Heverly said.

The prospect of pursuing an education in trade while earning money on projects has also gained momentum among high school students, according to the Finishing Trades Institute’s recruitment coordinator, Tureka Dixon. Community colleges in the area are even reaching out to see if they can form joint partnerships to train students on trade.

“Whether it’s cranes, high-rise buildings, bridges, that is trade work,” Ms. Dixon said as the apprentices in hard hats listened to a lesson on lead removals. “That is physical labor. That is the country, so I think people need to consider it more.”

Mark Smith, 30, who is training as an apprentice at the institute, said learning a trade was not a fallback position for him — it was his preferred career.

“School wasn’t for me,” Mr. Smith said. “I did the Marine Corps and then I started right in this. For me it was a waste of money.”

Mr. Wissman, who has never voted in a presidential election and identifies as an independent, said he was not sure yet if the recognition from the White House would move him to finally vote in the 2024 election.

“I want in office whoever is going to help me put food on my table,” said Mr. Wissman, whose girlfriend is pregnant with their second child. “At the end of the day, that’s all it’s going to come down to.”

PHOTOS: The president has been advocating trade apprenticeships. (PHOTOGRAPH BY RACHEL WISNIEWSKI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A1); In my 31 years, it was always, ‘You gotta go to college if you want a job,’” said Tyler Wissman, above, third from left, in training at the Finishing Trades Institute in Philadelphia. Below right, safety training at the institute, where President Biden spoke in March. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY RACHEL WISNIEWSKI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A19) This article appeared in print on page A1, A19.

**Load-Date:** May 16, 2023

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[***Paging Senator Schumer …; David French***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C0D-6BP1-DXY4-X0C7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 9, 2024 Thursday 11:34 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 2165 words

**Byline:** David French David French is an Opinion columnist, writing about law, culture, religion and armed conflict. He is a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom and a former constitutional litigator. His most recent book is &amp;#8220;Divided We Fall: America&amp;#8217;s Secession Threat and How to Restore Our Nation.&amp;#8221; You can follow him on Threads (@davidfrenchjag).

**Highlight:** There is a simple way to fix the Antisemitism Awareness Act.

**Body**

What is antisemitism? It’s easy to think of a colloquial definition — hatred and bigotry directed against Jews — but it’s much harder than you might think to define it legally. It doesn’t fit neatly into existing federal anti-discrimination law.

This legal ambiguity is especially problematic when our nation is facing what President Biden called a “[*ferocious surge*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html)” in antisemitism. This year, the Anti-Defamation League reported [*a 140 percent increase in antisemitic incidents*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) in 2023 compared with 2022 — and 2022 was already a record year. The crisis on college campuses was particularly acute. According to the ADL, the number of antisemitic incidents on campus tripled in 2023.

Acting with surprising consensus, the House of Representatives has responded. Last week, the [*Antisemitism Awareness Act*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html), a bill intended to protect Jewish students from discrimination on campus, passed with broad bipartisan support. The law is motivated by good intentions in support of a necessary purpose, but the bill itself is deeply flawed. Those flaws aren’t fatal, but they need to be addressed in the Senate.

To understand what’s good about the act, it’s necessary to understand the legal ambiguities that now exist on campus. “No person in the United States,” [*Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 states*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html), “shall, on the ground of race, color or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.” There is no corresponding federal prohibition on discrimination on the basis of religion.

The problem is immediately obvious. Jewishness doesn’t fit neatly into any of those three categories. Israelis of all races, religions and ethnicities are protected because of their national origin, but what about American Jews? Judaism is a religion, and religion isn’t covered. Jewishness is more of an ancestry than a “race” or a “color” — there are Jews of many races and colors.

Both the Trump and the Biden administrations attempted to solve the problem by interpreting Title VI to apply to antisemitism, at least in some circumstances. The Trump administration [*issued an executive order*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) stating that “discrimination against Jews may give rise to a Title VI violation when the discrimination is based on an individual’s race, color or national origin.” Biden’s Department of Education has [*interpreted Title VI*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) to apply when students “experience discrimination, including harassment,” on the basis of their “shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics.”

But these statements — even if fairly rooted in the text of Title VI — are not a solution. Executive orders and administrative regulations are more ephemeral than federal statutes. The next president (or one elected in 2036 or 2052) may choose to interpret Title VI differently. Biden’s interpretation is broader than Trump’s, for example. Courts will also have their own say, and they are now [*less deferential*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) to presidential interpretations of the law than they’ve been in decades.

There is an answer to the problem. Congress should pass legislation clearly stating that antisemitism is included in the scope of Title VI. This change would remove discretion from presidents and clarify the law for the courts. It would provide bedrock legal protection for Jewish students across the United States.

The best parts of the Antisemitism Awareness Act explicitly incorporate discrimination based on “actual or perceived shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics” into federal statutory law, elevating the legal protections well beyond the executive orders and guidance letters of previous administrations. If the law had stopped there — or even if it had gone further and explicitly stated that discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived Jewish identity is by definition discrimination on the basis of shared ancestry, then it would be a vital addition to federal law.

But the law did not stop there. It goes on to require schools to consider the [*International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s working definition*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) of antisemitism when determining whether there has been a violation of Title VI. This is a serious mistake. The alliance’s definition includes examples of antisemitism that encompass a broad range of statements that are protected by the First Amendment.

For example, it is wrong and immoral to denounce the state of Israel as a “racist endeavor,” but that is constitutionally protected speech. So is the ancient Christian libel that Jews are collectively responsible for killing Jesus. So is the claim that the state of Israel is comparable to Nazis. And so is the assertion that Jews are more loyal to Israel than their home countries. Those statements are all examples of antisemitism in the alliance’s definition — and I believe they are actually antisemitic — but if public colleges and universities punish students simply for engaging in such expression, then they’ll violate the First Amendment.

The definitions don’t just implicate the First Amendment, they also breed confusion around the very concept of harassment itself. Hearing unpleasant or even hateful thoughts or ideas isn’t “harassment.” That’s an inescapable part of life in a free, pluralistic nation. Harassment is something else entirely.

In a 1999 case, [*Davis v. Monroe County Board of Education*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html), the Supreme Court defined student-on-student harassment under Title IX (the federal statute prohibiting sex discrimination in federally funded education) as conduct “so severe, pervasive and objectively offensive, and that so undermines and detracts from the victims’ educational experience, that the victims are effectively denied equal access to an institution’s resources and opportunities.”

Harassment doesn’t depend so much on the content or viewpoint of the objectionable speech as where, when and how it happens. If students chant, “Globalize the intifada,” at a lawful public protest, then that’s protected. If they shout down Jewish students in class using the same phrase, or chant it outside the dorm rooms of Jewish students at 3 a.m., then they’re engaging in harassment. Jewish students can’t study or sleep on an equal basis with other students.

In both of those circumstances, the actual content of the words is less important than the timing and the targets. A person can commit an act of antisemitic harassment if he targets Jewish students with words that have nothing to do with ancestry or ethnicity. For example, if someone stands outside a Jewish student’s room night after night yelling, “Michael Jordan is the GOAT” relentlessly so that the student can’t sleep or targets her Jewish roommate with constant interruption and distraction then she’s engaging in antisemitic harassment not because of the content or viewpoint of the words, but rather because of the identity of the target and the time and manner of the speech.

In that sense, the Antisemitism Awareness Act is both overinclusive and underinclusive. By sweeping constitutionally protected speech into the statute, it can cause schools to unlawfully suppress speech. By incorporating the alliance’s explicit lists of “examples” of antisemitism, it can cause schools to ignore other forms of harassment.

And that brings us back to the ugliness of the moment. The instant that the House passed the bill, social media lit up with objections. Principled civil libertarians on the right and left raised the same objection that I am raising now — the act can suppress free speech. But the far right went much further and used the passage of the act as an opportunity to spew its antisemitism all over the internet.

Representative Matthew Gaetz, for example, [*posted*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) that “the Gospel itself would meet the definition of antisemitism under the terms of this bill!” Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene [*said*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) the bill “could convict Christians of antisemitism for believing the Gospel that says Jesus was handed over to Herod to be crucified by the Jews.”

Charlie Kirk, the founder of Turning Point USA, asked on X, “Did the House of Representatives just make parts of the Bible illegal?” [*Tucker Carlson responded*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html), “Yes, the New Testament.”

These complaints are absurd. The Romans crucified Jesus, and while in the biblical account there were certainly Jews who wanted to crucify Jesus, Jesus was a Jew and so were his early disciples. The idea that “the Jews” writ large bear enduring responsibility for Christ’s death isn’t “the Gospel.” It’s blood libel.

The MAGA reaction was particularly nonsensical given that the Trump administration [*used the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) in its own executive order, and the text of the Antisemitism Awareness Act reflects much of that same language. The Gospel wasn’t outlawed under Trump, and it’s not outlawed by the bill, either.

My heart breaks for my Jewish friends and fellow citizens. Many millions feel under siege regardless of their stance on the war. The pain of the worst massacre of Jews since the Holocaust has been magnified by a wave of antisemitism at home aimed at people who have nothing at all to do with the military policies of the Israeli government. And now even federal efforts to combat antisemitism are triggering waves of fresh abuse.

The ball is now in the Senate’s court, and the Senate majority leader, Chuck Schumer, has noted that there are “[*objections on both sides*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html)” to the legislation. But he appears open to compromise. “We’re going to look for the best way to move forward,” he said.

If I may, I’d like to humbly offer a better way. Strip the problematic incorporation of the alliance’s antisemitism definition and examples from the bill entirely. Instead, simply amend Title VI itself to make it explicit that discrimination based on “actual or perceived shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics” is prohibited by the statute and that antisemitic discrimination meets that definition.

And that’s it. That should be the whole bill. There is no need for examples or definitions of antisemitism because these definitions both threaten free speech and don’t come close to capturing all the myriad ways in which antisemites can and do discriminate against Jews on campus. By revising Title VI, you protect Jewish students from the evolving priorities of future administrations, and you make it plain that American law gives no purchase to antisemitic harassment.

Crucially, by revising Title VI to clearly prohibit discrimination against Jews without any further amplification or definition, antisemitic harassment will fit neatly into existing case law that has longed harmonized free speech principles and nondiscrimination law. The First Amendment has existed side by side on public campuses with Title VI for generations, and we largely know the proper distinctions between free speech and discriminatory harassment.

American Jewish students need robust legal protection from discrimination and harassment. Those protections should be no more and no less than the protections we provide Black students, white students and students from any other race or nationality. The Antisemitism Awareness Act goes too far, but it’s easily fixed. And it must be fixed to fully protect American Jews from the vile hatred that is spreading across our land.

Some other stuff I did

[*My Sunday column*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) was about the lessons learned from the clash between Mike Johnson and Marjorie Taylor Greene over Ukraine aid and her threats to oust Johnson from the speaker’s chair. Johnson is clearly winning — at least so long as Trump stays on the sidelines — and this holds lessons for the staying power of MAGA after Trump leaves the scene:

The scandals and conspiracies that don’t seem to touch Trump at all can still bring down other Republicans, including the MAGA candidates who hug Trump the hardest. It turns out that the vaunted ideological change of the Republican Party from Reaganite conservatism to America First and ***working-class*** populism may well be overblown.

This makes the 2024 election all the more crucial. If Trump wins, MAGA has four more years to consolidate its hold on the Republican Party and transform the conservative movement from the inside out. But if Trump loses, the battle is joined once again.

I don’t want to bore you with all my podcast and media appearances, but I’ll highlight two. On Tuesday [*I spoke to PBS’s Lisa Desjardins*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) about the proper response to campus protests. It’s a short conversation, but we went as deep as we could on the distinctions between free speech, civil disobedience, and outright lawlessness and rebellion.

For something completely different, [*I spoke to a very sharp college student named Andrew Xu*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) about masculinity, gender roles and the role that religious institutions can play in cultivating character. It’s difficult to find the right solutions for the plight of millions of young men, but it’s imperative that we try.

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Illustration by George Douglas; photograph by mbell/Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** May 16, 2024

**End of Document**



[***How German Atheists Made America Great Again; Nonfiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BMY-H201-JBG3-60MN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 26, 2024 Tuesday 21:27 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 1505 words

**Byline:** S. C. Gwynne

**Highlight:** Taken together, two new books tell the century-long story of the revolutionary ideals that transformed the United States, and the counterrevolutionaries who fought them.

**Body**

Taken together, two new books tell the century-long story of the revolutionary ideals that transformed the United States, and the counterrevolutionaries who fought them.

AN EMANCIPATION OF THE MIND: Radical Philosophy, the War Over Slavery, and the Refounding of America, by Matthew Stewart

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE SECOND AMERICAN REPUBLIC: Reconstruction, 1860-1920, by Manisha Sinha

What was the Civil War about? In a word, slavery.

What actually caused the war, however, is a vastly more difficult idea. Try this explanation on for size: The driving force in American politics in the decades after the American Revolution was the rise of an arrogant, ruthless, parasitic oligarchy in the South, built on a foundation of Christian religion and a vision of permanent, God-ordained economic inequality.

Though much of the South was poor, this new aristocracy was vastly rich. Two-thirds of all estates in the United States worth more than $100,000 were in the hands of Southern white men. Their goal in seceding was to undo the basic ideals of the American republic and keep their wealth.

These counterrevolutionaries — for that is what they were — insisted that men were by divine design unequal, both racially and economically. To fight this notion and crush what amounted to an existential threat to democracy, the antislavery movement needed ideas as much as, ultimately, guns.

That’s the narrative that frames Matthew Stewart’s engaging and often surprising new book, “An Emancipation of the Mind.” The title refers to the rise of new ways of thinking in the antislavery movement, what Stewart calls “the philosophical origins of America’s second revolution.”

The most significant ideas that Stewart traces are religious. From 1770 to 1860, religion in America underwent a massive shift. The number of churches exploded, North and South. Soon, most of these churches, using clear and manifold endorsements of slavery from the Bible (“Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ”), were promoting and actively defending the slave republic.

As the antislavery crowd soon learned, it was impossible to spin “slavery is sin” arguments against biblical literalism. Ending slavery, Stewart says, “was hardly part of God’s plan.” This wasn’t just a Southern opinion: Three out of five clerics who published pro-slavery books and articles were educated at Northern divinity schools. Two decades before the outbreak of war, abolitionism was still a skulking pariah, a despised minority in the North as well as the South.

The abolitionists clearly needed help. Enter the Germans, specifically the freethinking Germans whose radical republican philosophy underpinned the failed European revolutions of 1848. “Freidenkers’’ like the theologian David Friedrich Strauss and the philosopher and anthropologist Ludwig Feuerbach formulated ideas of the laws of nature and “nature’s God” that were at odds with the tenets of Christianity.

A large group of German intellectuals, fresh from the battles of 1848, arrived on American shores, joined the abolitionist movement and radicalized it. As he did in his 2014 book “Nature’s God,” which traced the way [*that the heretical philosophies of Spinoza and Lucretius*](https://wwnorton.com/books/9780393351293) influenced American founders like [*Thomas Jefferson*](https://wwnorton.com/books/9780393351293) and Ben Franklin, Stewart here argues convincingly that these philosophers found willing listeners in the persons of Abraham Lincoln, who kept Strauss and Feuerbach on his shelf; Frederick Douglass, who saw American Christianity as “the bulwark of slavery”; and the abolitionist firebrand Theodore Parker, whose lectures reached as many as 100,000 people a year in the 1850s.

Wasn’t much of this simply revolutionary atheism? Yes, it was, and it’s a bit of a shock to find out how close Lincoln and Douglass were to these ideas, though they paid lip service to more conventional Christian beliefs when translating them for the public.

The other big idea here — also with help from the Germans, especially Karl Marx (a great admirer of Lincoln, who, Stewart argues, liked him too) — has to do with the economics of slavery. “At the root of the ills of the slave system,” writes Stewart, “lies the extreme economic inequality that it inevitably produces — not just between races but among the white population.”

Between 1852 and 1862, Marx and Friedrich Engels wrote 487 articles for The New York Daily Tribune; [*Lincoln likely read them*](https://wwnorton.com/books/9780393351293). They explained the war as “nothing but a struggle between two social systems, the system of slavery and the system of free labor.”

After the war came Reconstruction. How do you deconstruct Reconstruction? Very, very carefully. It’s one of the toughest, most maddeningly complicated tasks in the writing of American history. That’s because Reconstruction — the word we use to denote the failed post-Civil War attempt to build a more inclusive country — unfolded in different ways in different states, on different timetables and with a wildly proliferating cast of players.

In her new book, “The Rise and Fall of the Second American Republic,” the historian Manisha Sinha not only has taken on this vast subject, but has greatly expanded its definition, both temporally and spatially. Her Reconstruction embraces the Progressive Era, women’s suffrage, the final wars against Native Americans, immigration and even U.S. imperialism in the latter 19th and early 20th centuries. She covers these difficult issues with remarkable skill and clarity.

In Sinha’s telling, the achievements of Reconstruction — we are in the latter 1860s and early 1870s here — are truly amazing. The federal decision to use the Army against recalcitrant ex-Confederates to secure rights for Black people resulted, she writes, in “a brief, shining historical moment when abolition democracy triumphed in much of the South and across the rest of the nation,” which “meant the inauguration of a progressive, interracial democracy.”

These years saw the passage of constitutional amendments that guaranteed citizenship, equal protection under the law and the vote for Black men. They also saw the rise of a powerful Freedmen’s Bureau, Black voting on a massive scale and the election of thousands of Black representatives to national, state and local office. More than 600 Black politicians were elected in the South to state legislatures alone.

Black Americans and freedpeople, Sinha reminds us, were themselves behind much of this change, a process she calls “grass-roots reconstruction.” As she laid out in her 2016 book “[*The Slave’s Cause*](https://wwnorton.com/books/9780393351293),” and shows more briefly here, they documented atrocities and pushed to have them exposed, filed petitions, swore out affidavits at the risk of their lives and formed political organizations and lobbies.

But the Second American Republic would soon come crashing down, the victim of another violent counterrevolution whose principal weapons were racial terror and political assassination. In its place rose a New South, where class distinctions were shored up, where the government was by and for white men and where the belief that Black people were inferior to white people was firmly in place. Instead of economic freedom, Americans got debt peonage, stolen wages, criminalized self-employment and a convict leasing system. The great flowering of education during Reconstruction was trampled too as terrorists burned down more than 600 Black schools.

Sinha tells these stories well. She also pushes out beyond the conventionally defined subjects of Reconstruction. In her account, the ascendancy of Jim Crow and the conquest of the West, among other forms of repression, are profoundly connected, and not only because the government failed to protect Black liberty as well as Indigenous land rights and sovereignty. The Army that was raised to fight Southern counterrevolutionaries was redeployed in the West to subjugate Indians. The literacy requirements used to disenfranchise Black Americans in the South also proved effective in targeting immigrants and ***working-class*** people in the North.

Still, the ideals of the Second Republic did not completely wither on the vine. Sinha convincingly advances her vision of Reconstruction all the way forward to 1920, when the 19th Amendment granted women’s suffrage. That landmark event was inspired by the marquee equal rights amendments of the Reconstruction era, which, Sinha writes, “bequeathed a legacy of political activism and progressive constitutionalism” on the movement, a breath of air that gave America new life.

AN EMANCIPATION OF THE MIND: Radical Philosophy, the War Over Slavery, and the Refounding of America | By Matthew Stewart | Norton | 374 pp. | $32.50

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE SECOND AMERICAN REPUBLIC: Reconstruction, 1860-1920 | By Manisha Sinha | Liveright | 562 pp. | $39.99

PHOTOS: From top: Frederick Douglass, Abraham Lincoln and Karl Marx. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ASSOCIATED PRESS; CORBIS, VIA GETTY IMAGES; POPPERFOTO HULTON-DEUTSCH COLLECTION/CORBIS, VIA GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page BR13.

**Load-Date:** April 18, 2024

**End of Document**



[***A Modern Cairo, at History's Expense***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:691S-6WY1-JBG3-604S-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 27, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1466 words

**Byline:** By Vivian Yee

**Body**

The Egyptian government has demolished historic tombs, cultural centers, artisan workshops and gardens in pursuit of large-scale urban renewal.

Ancient tombs have been shattered. Gardens have vanished, and with them many of Cairo's trees.

A growing number of historic but shabby ***working-class*** neighborhoods have all but disappeared, too, handed over to developers to build concrete high-rises while families who have lived there for generations are pushed to the fringes of the sprawling Egyptian capital.

Few cities live and breathe antiquity like Cairo, a sun-strafed, traffic-choked desert metropolis jammed with roughly 22 million people. But President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi is modernizing this superannuated city, fast.

He is trying to buff its unruly complexity into a place of efficient uniformity -- the traffic tamed, the Nile River promoted as a tourist attraction, the slums cleaned up and their residents rehoused in modern apartments. And he considers the construction as one of the major accomplishments of his tenure.

''There is not a single place in Egypt that has not been touched by the hand of development,'' Mr. el-Sisi proclaimed in a recent speech.

So the old stone and brick must go, paved over by concrete. New elevated highways undulate over ancient cemeteries, riding skinny struts like giant gray roller coasters. A freshly built walkway lined with fast-food joints runs along the Nile, the entrance fee out of reach for many Egyptians, with consumer inflation running at about 38 percent annually.

New roads, overpasses and offramps materialize so quickly that taxi drivers and Google Maps alike can barely keep up. And Cairo is not just being made over, but replaced: Mr. el-Sisi is erecting a supersized new capital, all right angles, tall towers and luxury villas, in the desert just outside of Cairo.

The estimated cost of the new capital alone is $59 billion, with billions more going to other construction projects, including roads and high-speed trains meant to link the new capital to the old. Most of it was paid for by debt, the sheer mass of which has crippled Egypt's ability to handle a deep economic crisis set off by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

A few weeks ago, the modernization efforts reached Fustat, the city's most ancient district, founded as Egypt's capital centuries before Cairo was even a thought.

A district official knocked on the door of the artist Moataz Nasreldin and told him to start packing up Darb 1718, the popular cultural center he founded in the neighborhood 16 years ago. The government would be widening the road behind it to build an elevated highway, Mr. Nasreldin, 62, said the official told him.

Darb, along with some of the nearby pottery workshops run for decades by local craftsmen and some nearby housing, would have to go.

As often happens nowadays in Egypt, where stories abound of government excavators and bulldozers appearing on private property with barely any notice, information about the decision was scant. Mr. Nasreldin and the owners of the pottery workshops said local officials had not presented a written demolition order or any other paperwork.

''Every day, you wake up and you don't know what's going to happen,'' said Mohamed Abdin, 48, who owns one of the workshops slated for destruction. He said his family has been making pottery in the area since the 1920s.

Some Cairenes are proud of the construction, seeing it as tangible evidence of progress.

''These are the developments that the country had to see,'' a pro-Sisi TV presenter, Ahmed Moussa, said on his program recently.

Others say they no longer recognize their own city.

''If you were being invaded, all what you'd care about is your monuments, your trees, your history, your culture,'' said Mamdouh Sakr, an architect and urbanist. ''And now, it's all being destroyed, without any reason, without any explanation, without any need.''

Most of the time, Egyptians simply submit, powerless before the state. But not Mr. Nasreldin, who sued to stop the destruction and raised a fuss on social media. The municipality said it was reconsidering the plans, but did not say when a final decision would be made or who would make it.

Construction of roads, bridges and major projects such as the new capital is usually overseen by Egypt's powerful military. It was the military that elevated Mr. el-Sisi, a former general, to power in 2013 amid mass protests demanding the ouster of the country's first democratically elected president, who took office after the country's 2011 Arab Spring uprising.

Cairenes, as this city's residents are known, who have contacted government officials to push back against the development say those in charge tend to wave off experts' advice and dismiss the concerns of local residents. Only in isolated cases have preservationists managed to save historical monuments.

The proliferation of military-led projects has given rise to a sarcastic phrase, ''the generals' taste,'' implying a certain drab boxiness, a monotony occasionally spritzed with glitz.

The style is exemplified by the gleaming new National Museum of Egyptian Civilization, not far from Darb, where ancient Egypt's most famous royal mummies are housed. Bulldozers and heavy machinery have nosed around the surrounding district for years, demolishing housing in ***working-class*** neighborhoods, apparently to make way for new construction.

A new lakeside restaurant next to the museum boasts the Frenchified name ''Le Lac du Caire.'' While diners enjoy the greenery around the water, trees elsewhere have been felled one by one.

It might be a stretch to call Cairo lush. But Egypt's 19th-century rulers adorned their capital with public gardens, importing greenery that now seems inseparable from the city itself, like the flame trees that flare with bright red flowers every spring.

Many of those gardens and trees have disappeared in the past few years, reducing what little public space Cairo once had -- usually without any environmental review, and often over the objections of local residents.

In their place have come fast-food stalls and cafes, new roads and military-owned gas stations, lining the once-green Nile banks and leafy neighborhoods like Zamalek and Heliopolis.

Amid unrelenting bad press at home and abroad over the demolitions, the prime minister, Mostafa Madbouly, recently said new gardens, parks and roads would be built where large swaths of the ancient cemeteries known as the City of the Dead have been leveled. A new ''Garden for the Immortals'' will house the remains of some historic figures whose original tombs were razed ''due to urgent development needs,'' as a state-owned newspaper, Al Ahram, put it.

So far, only the roads have appeared.

Locals say modernization is not unwelcome, but wholesale destruction is.

When Mr. Nasreldin and a few other artists started working and living in the area near Darb in the 1990s, it was a crowded jumble of illegally, often unsafely built housing. It has only grown bigger and unrulier since.

Hearing that the government had its eye on the neighborhood, he envisioned better housing, maybe designed by an architect with an eye for preservation and community needs, definitely with reliable electricity and running water. Smoother roads. More businesses opening to serve food to those who came to Darb from around Cairo and beyond for concerts, film screenings and exhibitions.

Not the wrecking of what, to him, was drawing more life and economic activity to the area: art studios, cultural ferment, a symbiotic relationship between the traditional pottery workshops and the artists who came to Darb from Egypt and elsewhere.

''There should be 100 Darbs all over Egypt,'' Mr. Nasreldin said. ''To me, this is not a very wise decision at all.''

One of the homes slated for demolition belongs to Mohamed Amin, 56, a former construction worker turned jack-of-all-trades at Darb.

Yes, the neighborhood was unprepossessing, he said, but it was home, and had been for generations. Yes, the housing was illegally built. But, he argued, the government had refused to issue building permits, forcing residents to take matters into their own hands.

In such cases, the government usually offers new subsidized apartments. But they tend to be a considerable distance away from the original neighborhood and, in many cases, ultimately unaffordable.

Clearing everyone out for the new highway meant that while some people would be able to reach the new museum more easily, former residents of the area would now have to make an exhausting commute across Cairo to get to work, if their livelihoods survived.

''Everyone is scared,'' said Mr. Amin, adding that no one in the neighborhood had been told what the plan was. ''Why are you suffocating us like this?''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/26/world/middleeast/egypt-cairo-city-construction-demolition.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/26/world/middleeast/egypt-cairo-city-construction-demolition.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Homes in ***working-class*** areas have been razed to make way for concrete high-rises. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HEBA KHAMIS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Highway construction in Fustat, Cairo's most ancient district. New roads pop up so fast that Google Maps can barely keep up. (A1)

A new highway, top, threatens the Darb 1718, a cultural center founded in Fustat 16 years ago by the artist Moataz Nasreldin, above. A pottery workshop at the center, left. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY SIMA DIAB FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A10) This article appeared in print on page A1, A10.

**Load-Date:** August 27, 2023

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[***The Backpack You Need Isn’t for Carrying Books; Nicholas Kristof***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B9C-9JV1-DXY4-X00D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 10, 2024 Saturday 13:44 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 981 words

**Byline:** Nicholas Kristof Nicholas Kristof became a columnist for The Times Opinion desk in 2001. He has won two Pulitzer Prizes, for his coverage of China and of the genocide in Darfur.

**Highlight:** Study Spanish in Bolivia. Or teach English in South Korea. Or volunteer in Nepal.

**Body**

Why has the isolationist wing of Congress been [*blocking aid*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/07/us/politics/united-states-support-ukraine.html) to Ukraine and become, in effect, a tool for President Vladimir Putin of Russia?

Republican politics explain some of this folly, but I think another reason is pure cluelessness. Congress has a thread of insularity, reflecting an American population that is, by the standards of the rich world, poorly traveled — only [*48 percent*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/07/us/politics/united-states-support-ukraine.html) of Americans have a passport — and notoriously bad at languages:

Question: If someone who speaks two languages is bilingual, and someone who speaks three languages is trilingual, then what do you call a person who speaks just one language?

Answer: an American.

Lack of familiarity with the world is, I think, one reason the United States periodically pursues self-destructive policies around the world. Perhaps the worst foreign policy mistake in this century was the George W. Bush administration’s expectation that Iraqis would welcome American troops with flowers in 2003; that’s the kind of delusion found among people who have never actually had a conversation with an Arab person. A second Trump presidency might entail even more consequential mistakes: pulling out of NATO, abandoning Ukraine, upending the post-World War II international system.

Time spent abroad corrodes stereotypes (of the kind one hears these days about Israelis and Palestinians alike) and shores up our empathy by reminding us of our common humanity. It also makes our country more competitive: I would argue that Utah has benefited economically because it is unusually cosmopolitan, a consequence of having a large number of residents who have lived abroad as Mormon missionaries.

So my message to young people: Go west! Go east! Go north! And above all, go to the global south! Universities should likewise push students harder to study abroad for at least a semester (or to take a gap year before college to work or study in another country).

We wouldn’t consider university graduates fully educated if they had never read Shakespeare, didn’t know the cube root of 27 and thought Plato’s “Republic” was a small Central American country. And as the world becomes increasingly interconnected, another component of a complete education is some international experience.

I spent a summer before college earning money working on a farm in France, and it helped change my life trajectory. But don’t think that the way to study abroad is necessarily to join a herd touring Rome or London. Instead, try teaching English in a small town in South Korea, Taiwan or Japan. Or volunteer in Nepal or Sierra Leone. (You can explore options at idealist.org and omprakash.org.)

The United States is increasingly integrating with Latin America, so learn Spanish! But don’t learn it in a college classroom. For a tiny fraction of the cost of college tuition, you can have a blast studying or working on your own in Chile, Argentina or a safe part of Mexico. Or in Bolivia — is any country more magical? And not to suggest anything untoward, but note that the best language teachers are, of course, girlfriends and boyfriends.

Cost is already an obstacle for young people seeking college degrees, of course, and studying abroad can make educational debts even more onerous. Colleges should do a better job of offering programs in inexpensive countries like India, Morocco and Mexico.

I’d love to see a cultural shift that put more emphasis on young people traveling the world on a shoestring. Perhaps the best example is the way young Australians — including ***working-class*** men and women — sometimes save for a few years, quit their jobs and fly one-way to Europe, and then gradually [*travel home overland*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/07/us/politics/united-states-support-ukraine.html) over the course of many months. They periodically run out of money and then look for jobs to finance the next leg. Many have told me it was a defining experience of their lives.

Because financial challenges are real, let me add that what’s most important for personal growth is that the experience be “foreign” to you, without necessarily unfolding in a foreign country. You build new muscles when you get out of your comfort zone, and that can be in your hometown, volunteering in a homeless shelter or teaching at a prison — or busing tables can be its own education. An American who grew up in the city might apply for a job on a Texas ranch; a farm girl from Kansas could get a job at a McDonald’s in El Paso.

Parents invariably worry about risks, and these can be real: The biggest peril may be road accidents, especially with motorcycles. Be prudent, maybe travel with a friend, don’t accept drinks that might be drugged and put everything in perspective by remembering that people abroad often think of the United States as a dangerous place.

In my own small effort to promote global issues, since 2006 I’ve picked an American university student to travel with me each year on my “win a trip” reporting trip somewhere in the world. I’m thrilled to announce that the winner this year is [*Trisha Mukherjee*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/07/us/politics/united-states-support-ukraine.html) of New Jersey, a student at the Columbia University School of Journalism. The runner-up, if Mukherjee can’t make it, is [*Audrey Thibert*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/07/us/politics/united-states-support-ukraine.html) of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Stay tuned.

Thanks to all who applied. To those who weren’t chosen, and to other university students, my counsel is simple: Take a leap and land in a place — abroad or at home — where you’re out of your depth and have no idea what’s going on. You’ll learn about yourself, your horizons will be extended, and you may return able to offer sound counsel about Ukraine and the entire world to some parochial members of our Congress.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/07/us/politics/united-states-support-ukraine.html) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/07/us/politics/united-states-support-ukraine.html). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/07/us/politics/united-states-support-ukraine.html).

Follow the New York Times Opinion section on [*Facebook*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/07/us/politics/united-states-support-ukraine.html), [*Instagram*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/07/us/politics/united-states-support-ukraine.html), [*TikTok*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/07/us/politics/united-states-support-ukraine.html), [*X*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/07/us/politics/united-states-support-ukraine.html) and [*Threads*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/07/us/politics/united-states-support-ukraine.html).

This article appeared in print on page SR2.

**Load-Date:** February 16, 2024

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[***There Is Another Paris; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69H0-5JD1-DXY4-X0P3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 28, 2023 Saturday 12:12 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1341 words

**Byline:** Cole Stangler

**Highlight:** With a little bit of time and patience, you can still find it.

**Body**

Tourists visiting the [*Sacré-Coeur Basilica*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/12/world/europe/paris-sacre-coeur-landmark-status.html), the magnificent snow-white church towering over northern Paris, tend to descend the Butte Montmartre the way they came up. After visiting, they might make a stop at the Place du Tertre, the historic square of Montmartre encircled by restaurants promising authentic French cuisine at unauthentically French prices. They might admire the dozens of street artists churning out quick sketches of passers-by and peddling hastily made watercolors. They might even jostle to the edge of the square to sneak a final glance at the city from one of its highest points. But once they’ve had enough, they’ll most likely make their way down the south side of the hill, following the path of the funicular toward the recognizable sights of central Paris.

But if they stroll down the north or east side, a very different kind of city takes shape. At the bottom of the hill, the street traffic moves faster, and the storefronts bear the traces of the area’s immigrant population: All-service tech stores hawk cellphones, SIM cards and pay-by-the-minute internet connections; halal butcheries offer a dizzying display of just about every meat besides pork; corner stores sell everything from yams and palm oil to candy bars and cheap gin; and hole-in-the-wall eateries churn out greasy kebabs and fries until the early morning hours.

This Paris exists mostly outside the gaze of tourists, the whopping [*12.7 million people*](https://mesinfos.fr/ile-de-france/l-ile-de-france-a-accueilli-127-millions-de-touristes-cet-ete-182807.html) who visited the area this summer. But with a little bit of time and patience, you can still find it. It’s alive in the bustling boulevards at the bottom of the Butte Montmartre, across the alleyways and the streets snaking around the northeast of the city, and in the public housing towers scattered around the periphery. These parts of the city can be loud, messy and, every once in a while, a bit dangerous. But they refuse to abide by the half-theme-park, half-museum ambience that prevails in much of central Paris. Unlike the ossified quarters downtown, long ago colonized by the wealthy and hordes of short-term visitors, these areas are full of life. Here, another Paris is alive and kicking.

At its heart is affordable housing. Consider the neighborhood of Belleville, a melting pot in the city’s northeast that has for decades welcomed waves of immigrants, initially from Eastern and Southern Europe and more recently from the Maghreb and China. To be sure, the area is experiencing gentrification, and rents on the open market can be quite high. Still, around [*40 percent*](https://sig.ville.gouv.fr/Cartographie/QP075020#thematique) of Belleville’s housing stock is composed of what’s known as social housing — apartments managed by public authorities that guarantee below-market rates for residents with low to middle incomes. This type of housing allows residents and their families to stay in the area. Thankfully, many have chosen to do so.

Their presence has enabled certain facets of life in Belleville to carry on over the years: a willingness to embrace difference, a streak of rebelliousness and a recognition of the fact that multiple populations share this space — that this neighborhood has never belonged to any one group. In its multiplicity lies its charm. Older ***working-class*** residents, immigrant shop owners and younger artists have all forged the distinctive hybrid culture permeating Belleville’s streets, from the dive bars and Chinese restaurants to the halal butcheries and cafes specializing in off-track betting.

In a Paris transformed by gentrification, Belleville is something of an outlier. As Parisians know all too well, booming housing prices have reshaped the city: from 2000 to 2020, the average price of real estate per square meter [*tripled*](https://www.bfmtv.com/immobilier/voici-le-classement-des-50-grandes-villes-ou-les-prix-immobiliers-ont-le-plus-progresse-en-20-ans_AV-202201060259.html). But Belleville’s rambunctious spirit bears witness to a much deeper Parisian tradition. The battle for neighborhoods — over what space belongs to whom and what can be done in it — is embedded in the city’s DNA.

The French Revolution was propelled, in large part, by the gaping wealth divide in Paris, with the modest eastern quarters turning against their moneyed counterparts to the west. And throughout the early 19th century, Parisian masses revolted time and time again, waging street battles from barricades in their neighborhoods. Under Baron Haussmann’s massive renovation program — a form of gentrification avant la lettre — many of those low-income areas were targeted, their buildings razed and residents removed to reduce the risks of revolt. But he failed to fully achieve that goal. When laborers reclaimed the streets in 1871 and declared the short-lived Paris Commune, it marked the revenge of those who had been pushed out to the city’s periphery.

The revolution never quite arrived, but the power and influence of the Parisian ***working class*** did usher in a long period of affordable housing. Fearful of upsetting a delicate social peace, the French government repeatedly extended rent controls imposed during World War I through the end of World War II, giving Paris some of the cheapest big-city rents in all of Europe. And those low housing costs didn’t just benefit workers; they also played an underappreciated role in the city’s emergence as a global hub for the arts and the avant-garde, those glory years stretching from the birth of the Surrealists to the development of New Wave cinema.

Low rents are what paved the way for economically distressed creatives like James Joyce, Man Ray and George Orwell to soak up the heady atmosphere of Paris in the 1920s. They’re also why, decades later, a then-unknown James Baldwin could show up with $40 in his pocket and find himself at the center of the Western literary world. It’s grimly ironic to consider how this artistic heritage, so contingent on inexpensive housing, has now become another piece of the city’s marketable lore, trotted out by real estate agents to lure in wealthy investors and fuel higher rents.

Yet while the gentrifiers may have the upper hand today, the battle is far from over. Housing activists are putting pressure on authorities to keep the city affordable, and city officials are already using some of the regulatory tools at their disposal. Part of the solution involves beefing up supply, something that, despite a lack of construction space in Paris, can partly be achieved through clamping down on [*Airbnb rentals*](https://www.thelocal.fr/20210701/airbnb-clamps-down-on-unregistered-paris-rentals) and hiking the tax on [*secondary residences*](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/feb/14/paris-proposes-upping-second-home-tax-tackle-population-drain-france). But increasing supply isn’t a silver bullet. Parisian authorities should also continue to create subsidized housing, purchase more properties and impose rent controls.

There’s a more fundamental challenge. Since 2014, Paris has been losing about [*12,000 inhabitants*](https://www.leparisien.fr/paris-75/demographie-a-paris-pres-de-20-000-habitants-ont-quitte-la-capitale-en-un-an-30-12-2022-LJCMUPZDRNHIHBPKPPDUDA5NLU.php) every year, many of the emigrants taking up residence in the sprawling, suburban mass that’s now much more inhabited than the city itself. According to the official figures, the Paris metropolitan area now has a whopping 11 million inhabitants, nearly nine million of whom live in the suburbs — the banlieues. Many of these residents often lack access to the public services, transportation, small businesses and cultural events that shape the capital.

Finding more egalitarian ways to treat the metropolitan area as a unified whole, tearing down the borders between the capital and banlieues once and for all, is the route to a profoundly better Paris. Because all Parisians deserve neighborhoods that offer the humanizing effects of rich, intricate street life so spectacularly on display at the bottom of Butte Montmartre.

Cole Stangler ([*@ColeStangler*](https://twitter.com/ColeStangler)) is a journalist and the author of “[*Paris Is Not Dead: Surviving Hypergentrification in the City of Light*](https://thenewpress.com/books/paris-not-dead),” from which this essay is adapted.

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**Load-Date:** October 31, 2023

**End of Document**



[***In Push to Modernize Cairo, Cultural Gems and Green Spaces Razed***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:691H-PXV1-DXY4-X562-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 26, 2023 Saturday 11:35 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; middleeast

**Length:** 1541 words

**Byline:** Vivian Yee

**Highlight:** The Egyptian government has demolished historic tombs, cultural centers, artisan workshops and gardens in pursuit of large-scale urban renewal.

**Body**

The Egyptian government has demolished historic tombs, cultural centers, artisan workshops and gardens in pursuit of large-scale urban renewal.

Ancient tombs have been shattered. Gardens have vanished, and with them many of Cairo’s trees.

A growing number of historic but shabby ***working-class*** neighborhoods have all but disappeared, too, handed over to developers to build concrete high-rises while families who have lived there for generations are pushed to the fringes of the sprawling Egyptian capital.

Few cities live and breathe antiquity like Cairo, a sun-strafed, traffic-choked desert metropolis jammed with roughly 22 million people. But President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi is modernizing this superannuated city, fast.

He is trying to buff its unruly complexity into a place of efficient uniformity — the traffic tamed, the [*Nile River*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/29/world/middleeast/egypt-nile-houseboats-demolition.html) promoted as a tourist attraction, the slums cleaned up and their residents rehoused in modern apartments. And he considers the construction as one of the major accomplishments of his tenure.

“There is not a single place in Egypt that has not been touched by the hand of development,” Mr. el-Sisi proclaimed in a recent speech.

So the old stone and brick must go, paved over by concrete. New elevated highways undulate over [*ancient cemeteries*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/24/world/middleeast/cairo-city-of-dead-cemetery.html), riding skinny struts like giant gray roller coasters. A freshly built walkway lined with fast-food joints runs along the Nile, the entrance fee [*out of reach*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/23/world/middleeast/egypt-economy.html) for many Egyptians, with consumer inflation running at about 38 percent annually.

New roads, overpasses and offramps materialize so quickly that taxi drivers and Google Maps alike can barely keep up. And Cairo is not just being made over, but replaced: Mr. el-Sisi is erecting a supersized [*new capital*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/08/world/middleeast/egypt-new-administrative-capital.html), all right angles, tall towers and luxury villas, in the desert just outside of Cairo.

The estimated [*cost of*](https://pomed.org/publication/report-egypt-new-administrative-capital/) the new capital alone is $59 billion, with billions more going to other construction projects, including roads and high-speed trains meant to link the new capital to the old. Most of it was paid for by debt, the sheer mass of which has crippled Egypt’s ability to handle a deep [*economic crisis*](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&amp;rct=j&amp;q=&amp;esrc=s&amp;source=web&amp;cd=&amp;cad=rja&amp;uact=8&amp;ved=2ahUKEwjyjICu8vSAAxV_mmoFHW1BB6wQFnoECBIQAQ&amp;url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.nytimes.com%2F2022%2F10%2F27%2Fworld%2Fmiddleeast%2Fwith-economy-reeling-from-ukraine-war-egypt-secures-3-billion-imf-loan.html&amp;usg=AOvVaw1AQVxE6GZFY_hMU1SOMkyV&amp;opi=89978449) set off by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

A few weeks ago, the modernization efforts reached Fustat, the city’s most ancient district, founded as Egypt’s capital centuries before Cairo was even a thought.

A district official knocked on the door of the artist Moataz Nasreldin and told him to start packing up Darb 1718, the popular cultural center he founded in the neighborhood 16 years ago. The government would be widening the road behind it to build an elevated highway, Mr. Nasreldin, 62, said the official told him.

Darb, along with some of the nearby pottery workshops run for decades by local craftsmen and some nearby housing, would have to go.

As often happens nowadays in Egypt, where stories abound of government excavators and bulldozers appearing on private property with barely any notice, information about the decision was scant. Mr. Nasreldin and the owners of the pottery workshops said local officials had not presented a written demolition order or any other paperwork.

“Every day, you wake up and you don’t know what’s going to happen,” said Mohamed Abdin, 48, who owns one of the workshops slated for destruction. He said his family has been making pottery in the area since the 1920s.

Some Cairenes are proud of the construction, seeing it as tangible evidence of progress.

“These are the developments that the country had to see,” a pro-Sisi TV presenter, Ahmed Moussa, said on his program recently.

Others say they [*no longer recognize*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2023/08/01/cairo-gardens-disappearing-development-military/) their own city.

“If you were being invaded, all what you’d care about is your monuments, your trees, your history, your culture,” said Mamdouh Sakr, an architect and urbanist. “And now, it’s all being destroyed, without any reason, without any explanation, without any need.”

Most of the time, Egyptians simply submit, powerless before the state. But not Mr. Nasreldin, who sued to stop the destruction and raised a fuss on social media. The municipality said it was reconsidering the plans, but did not say when a final decision would be made or who would make it.

Construction of roads, bridges and major projects such as the new capital is usually overseen by Egypt’s powerful military. It was the military that elevated Mr. el-Sisi, a former general, to power in 2013 amid mass protests demanding the ouster of the country’s first democratically elected president, who took office after the country’s 2011 Arab Spring uprising.

Cairenes, as this city’s residents are known, who have contacted government officials to push back against the development say those in charge tend to wave off experts’ advice and dismiss the concerns of local residents. Only in isolated cases have preservationists managed to save historical monuments.

The proliferation of military-led projects has given rise to a sarcastic phrase, “the generals’ taste,” implying a certain drab boxiness, a monotony occasionally spritzed with glitz.

The style is exemplified by the gleaming new National Museum of Egyptian Civilization, not far from Darb, where ancient Egypt’s most famous royal mummies are housed. Bulldozers and heavy machinery have nosed around the surrounding district for years, demolishing housing in ***working-class*** neighborhoods, apparently to make way for new construction.

A new lakeside restaurant next to the museum boasts the Frenchified name “Le Lac du Caire.” While diners enjoy the greenery around the water, trees elsewhere have been felled one by one.

It might be a stretch to call Cairo lush. But Egypt’s 19th-century rulers adorned their capital with public gardens, importing greenery that now seems inseparable from the city itself, like the flame trees that flare with bright red flowers every spring.

Many of those gardens and [*trees have disappeared*](https://apnews.com/article/science-business-africa-cairo-middle-east-8a6748cc1168074bb6aafaee9de99db8) in the past few years, reducing what little public space Cairo once had — usually without any environmental review, and often over the objections of local residents.

In their place have come fast-food stalls and cafes, new roads and military-owned gas stations, lining the once-green Nile banks and leafy neighborhoods like Zamalek and Heliopolis.

Amid unrelenting bad press at home and abroad over the demolitions, the prime minister, Mostafa Madbouly, recently [*said*](https://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/1235/503645/Egypt/Urban--Transport/Newly-announced-cemetery-for-historical-figures-to.aspx) new gardens, parks and roads would be built where large swaths of the ancient cemeteries known as the [*City of the Dead*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/24/world/middleeast/cairo-city-of-dead-cemetery.html) have been leveled. A new “Garden for the Immortals” will [*house the remains*](https://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/2/502873/Egypt/Society/President-Sisi-directs-construction-of-cemetery-an.aspx) of some historic figures whose original tombs were razed “due to urgent development needs,” as a state-owned newspaper, Al Ahram, put it.

So far, only the roads have appeared.

Locals say modernization is not unwelcome, but wholesale destruction is.

When Mr. Nasreldin and a few other artists started working and living in the area near Darb in the 1990s, it was a crowded jumble of illegally, often unsafely built housing. It has only grown bigger and unrulier since.

Hearing that the government had its eye on the neighborhood, he envisioned better housing, maybe designed by an architect with an eye for preservation and community needs, definitely with reliable electricity and running water. Smoother roads. More businesses opening to serve food to those who came to Darb from around Cairo and beyond for concerts, film screenings and exhibitions.

Not the wrecking of what, to him, was drawing more life and economic activity to the area: art studios, cultural ferment, a symbiotic relationship between the traditional pottery workshops and the artists who came to Darb from Egypt and elsewhere.

“There should be 100 Darbs all over Egypt,” Mr. Nasreldin said. “To me, this is not a very wise decision at all.”

One of the homes slated for demolition belongs to Mohamed Amin, 56, a former construction worker turned jack-of-all-trades at Darb.

Yes, the neighborhood was unprepossessing, he said, but it was home, and had been for generations. Yes, the housing was illegally built. But, he argued, the government had refused to issue building permits, forcing residents to take matters into their own hands.

In such cases, the government usually offers new subsidized apartments. But they tend to be a considerable distance away from the original neighborhood and, in many cases, ultimately unaffordable.

Clearing everyone out for the new highway meant that while some people would be able to reach the new museum more easily, former residents of the area would now have to make an exhausting commute across Cairo to get to work, if their livelihoods survived.

“Everyone is scared,” said Mr. Amin, adding that no one in the neighborhood had been told what the plan was. “Why are you suffocating us like this?”

PHOTOS: Homes in ***working-class*** areas have been razed to make way for concrete high-rises. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HEBA KHAMIS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Highway construction in Fustat, Cairo’s most ancient district. New roads pop up so fast that Google Maps can barely keep up. (A1); A new highway, top, threatens the Darb 1718, a cultural center founded in Fustat 16 years ago by the artist Moataz Nasreldin, above. A pottery workshop at the center, left. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY SIMA DIAB FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A10) This article appeared in print on page A1, A10.

**Load-Date:** August 27, 2023

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[***Affirmative Action for College: Race or Class?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68FR-H1J1-JBG3-612R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 13, 2023 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 23; LETTERS

**Length:** 285 words

**Body**

Summary summary summary

To the Editor:

Re ''I'm in High School. I Hope Affirmative Action Is Rejected and Replaced With Something Stronger,'' by Sophia Lam (Opinion guest essay, nytimes.com, June 5):

The facts are clear: The vast majority of Asian Americans support affirmative action. Amplifying the voices of the Asian American minority that oppose affirmative action without this essential context privileges their position at the expense of the 69 percent of Asian Americans who believe that affirmative action offers communities of color better access to higher education.

Regardless of the Supreme Court's ruling, we will continue to stand in solidarity with communities of color and fight for policies that increase equal access to educational opportunities for all, particularly the underrepresented children of our multiracial society.

Michelle BoykinsNiyati ShahWashingtonMs. Boykins is the senior director of strategic communications at Asian Americans Advancing Justice-AAJC. Ms. Shah is its director of litigation.

To the Editor:

Sophia Lam is entirely right. What is most puzzling about college admissions is that no colleges, including the most prestigious, are focused on diversity in such a socioeconomic-based way. ''Underprivileged'' includes many immigrants, people of color and all Americans from ***working-class*** backgrounds.

If a socioeconomic standard were applied, clearly African Americans and other students of color would benefit, but it would not be solely for their skin color.

Soft or hard quotas make Americans (and the Supreme Court for more than 40 years) uncomfortable. Why doesn't Harvard, Princeton or Yale take this common-sense step?

Howard FishmanHaddon Township, N.J.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/12/opinion/letters/affirmative-action-in-college-admissions-race-or-class.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/12/opinion/letters/affirmative-action-in-college-admissions-race-or-class.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A23.

**Load-Date:** June 13, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Will Europe's Rising Far Right Gradually Erode Democracy?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BYW-XF61-JBG3-60N2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 7, 2024 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 1; NEWS ANALYSIS

**Length:** 2184 words

**Byline:** By Roger Cohen

**Body**

Jordan Bardella, 28, is the new face of the far right in France. Measured, clean-cut and raised in the hardscrabble northern suburbs of Paris, he laces his speeches with references to Victor Hugo and believes that ''no country succeeds by denying or being ashamed of itself.''

That phrase, at a recent rally in the eastern town of Montbéliard, brought a chorus of ''Jordan! Jordan!'' from a crowd that had lined up for hours to see him. Cries of ''Patrie'' -- homeland -- filled the hall. Bardellamania is in the air.

Mr. Bardella, the son of Italian immigrants and a college dropout who joined the National Front party (now National Rally) at 16, is the protégé of Marine Le Pen, the perennial hard-right French presidential candidate. Moderate in tone if not content, he is also the personification of the normalization -- or banalization -- of a party once seen as a quasi-fascist threat to the Republic.

Across Europe, the far right is becoming the right, absent any compelling message from traditional conservative parties. If ''far'' suggests outlier, it has become a misnomer. Not only have the parties of an anti-immigrant right surged, they have seen the barriers that once kept them out crumble as they are absorbed into the arc of Western democracies.

In Italy, Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, who has political roots in a neo-fascist party, now leads Italy's most right-wing government since Mussolini. In Sweden, the center-right government depends on the fast-growing Sweden Democrats, another party with neo-Nazi origins, for its parliamentary majority. In the Netherlands, Geert Wilders, who has called Moroccan immigrants ''scum,'' won national elections in November at the head of his Party for Freedom, and center-right parties there have agreed to negotiate with him to form a governing coalition.

In France, Mr. Bardella, as president of the National Rally, is leading his party's campaign for the elections in June to the European Parliament, a relatively powerless institution but one still important for being the only directly elected body with representatives from all European Union countries.

Precisely because the Parliament is relatively weak, the election is closely watched as a measure of uninhibited popular sentiment, where voters register their discontent with potentially powerful downstream effects on national politics.

This year the far-right surge across the continent looks dramatic. The latest polls show the National Rally with a clear lead, set to take some 31 percent of the vote in France compared with about 16 percent for the centrist Renaissance coalition of President Emmanuel Macron. Mr. Bardella is the only politician among France's 50 ''favorite personalities,'' according to a recent ranking in the Journal du Dimanche newspaper.

The result is that anti-immigrant parties may win as many as a quarter of the seats in the 720-seat European Parliament. This could lead to a hardening of immigration regulations Europewide, hostility to environmental reform, and pressure to be more amenable to President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia.

For France, it means that a party that is nationalist, xenophobic and Islamophobic may well emerge reinforced -- accepted, legitimized and eminently electable to high office in a way that would have been unthinkable even a decade ago.

France used to call its barrier to the hard right ''la digue,'' or the dam. The floodgates are now open in France, but also beyond. Mr. Macron's successor in 2027 -- he is term limited -- may well come from a party whose founder, Jean-Marie Le Pen, called the Holocaust a ''detail'' of history.

Could this resurgence of parties with fascist roots really overturn European freedom and democracy? The optimistic view is that they are no more than pale descendants of history's tyrants, constrained by the existence of a European Union that was created to guarantee peace among its members. That is a lulling view. The language of these parties may be less incandescent than former President Donald J. Trump's invocations of ''bloodshed,'' but as they whip up support by scapegoating immigrants, and even move to lock in systems that could perpetuate their power, the threat to the postwar order seems real enough.

Not a Monolith

Historical lessons, it seems, fade after three generations. Warnings of the disasters that engulfed 20th-century Europe under fascist governments tend not to resonate with 21st-century supporters of xenophobic nationalist movements that have none of the militarism of fascism, nor the personality cults of its dictatorial leaders, but are fed by hatred of ''the other'' and jingoistic hymns to national glory.

Europe's collective cataclysm between 1914 and 1945 seems like ancient history to many people, even if the blood shed in the trenches of Ukraine summons images of that time. ''You can no longer rely on saying, 'This is evil, because look what happened in the fascist past,''' said Nathalie Tocci, a leading Italian political scientist. ''You have to have an argument for why those ideas are bad today.''

The post-fascist or fascist-lite European right of today is not monolithic. At the most menacing end of the spectrum stands the Alternative for Germany party, founded in 2013 and now polling as high as 20 percent. It contains about 10,000 extremists, according to the country's domestic intelligence service. Plans for mass deportation of immigrants and even a plot to overthrow the government have been linked to it.

The National Rally in France began life in 1972 as the National Front, the creation of Mr. Le Pen, who described the United States as a ''mongrel nation'' and the Nazi-puppet Vichy regime in France as not ''especially inhumane.''

As for Ms. Meloni, she got her start in the postwar Italian Social Movement, founded in 1946 by Mussolini supporters bent on defending the legacy of fascism. It had violent strands into the 1970s, but it eventually folded and its leaders broke off to start new more moderate parties, though still proud of their lineage. The symbol of the Brothers of Italy is a tricolor flame, previously used by a neo-fascist party, and its hostility to immigrants remains firm.

The path to power, or the brink of it, by the far right has been a long one. Over the almost 80-year arc of the postwar period, the once-dominant center-left and center-right -- represented in France by the Socialists and the Gaullists, and in Germany by the Social Democrats and the Christian Democrats -- have seen the foundations of their support (labor unions for the left and the church for the right) gradually erode.

This accelerated with globalization after the end of the Cold War and the onset of atomization with the arrival of the smartphone (that prodigious generator of status anxiety), leading to more unequal, more polarized, more fretful societies. The political commons shrank. The definition of truth wobbled. Parliaments and parties grew more marginal as political heft shifted to social media.

Increasingly, with major ideological disputes over the place of the state in the economy settled, moderate right and moderate left began to feel indistinguishable to many people. They had no answers to mass migration. The ***working class***, long the cornerstone of socialism in Europe, migrated en masse to the anti-immigrant right as an expression of frustration at growing inequality and stagnant paychecks.

The core confrontation in Western societies is no longer over internal issues. It is global vs. national, the connected living in the ''somewhere'' of the knowledge economy vs. the forgotten living ''nowhere'' in industrial wastelands and rural areas. There lies the frustration, even fury, on which a Trump, a Meloni, a Wilders, a Le Pen could build.

Progressive changes in social mores have offered a new rhetorical weapon to these leaders. For them, as for Mr. Putin, it has been easy to present a simplistic portrayal of the West of liberal urban elites as the decadent locus of cultural suicide, the place where family, church, nation and traditional notions of marriage and gender go to die.

''There is a disproportionate sense of disappointment in our societies,'' Thomas Bagger, the state secretary of the German Foreign Office, told me. ''We lost our trust that we had figured out the long arc of history and that it bends toward democracy. Russia lost its idea of the future, and Putin turned to the past. We are in danger of falling into the same trap.''

Normalized, but Still Extreme

The hard right in Europe has moderated and prepared itself to govern. It has abandoned calls to leave the European Union -- the disaster of Brexit made sure of that -- and to leave the shared euro currency. It has toned down, but not eliminated, outright racism, even if Islamophobia lurks everywhere.

Mass immigration -- some 5.1 million immigrants entered the European Union in 2022, more than double the number the previous year -- is the core issue behind the changing nature of the right in Europe. It is widely resented, particularly because aging populations have put enormous financial pressure on the cherished social safety nets that they, and previous generations, have long paid into. Overlooked are the benefits that immigrants can bring to societies with shrinking labor forces and tax bases. Instead the focus is on migrants benefiting from handouts.

''We have to make our country less attractive to a form of immigration that sees us as a social cash machine,'' Mr. Bardella said. ''The vocation of France is not to support all the world's misery! Social assistance and child benefits must be reserved for French citizens.''

Quiet-spoken and methodical, he is no demagogue. But in its last election program in 2022, the National Rally called for a referendum to amend France's Constitution. One proposed new article read: ''Foreigners must respect France's identity and way of life, and not engage in political activity contrary to national interests. Their presence must not constitute an unreasonable burden on public finances and the social welfare system. Family reunification of foreigners may be prohibited or limited.''

The program also envisaged the expulsion of undocumented immigrants. ''Because they are sovereign, and the only sovereign, the French people have the right to make decisions considered necessary to remain themselves,'' it said.

Another serious question that looms over these movements is this: If elected, would such parties ever leave office?

Prime Minister Viktor Orban of Hungary, who has been in power for a total of 18 years and is an ally of Mr. Trump, has established a template for the new right. Demonize migrants and neutralize an independent judiciary. Subjugate much of the news media. Create loyal new elites through crony capitalism. Energize a national narrative of victimhood and heroism through the manipulation of historical memory. Claim that the ''people's will'' overrides constitutional checks and balances.

The upshot is a form of European single-party rule that retains a veneer of democracy while skewing the contest sufficiently to ensure that it is likely to yield only one result.

In Italy, Ms. Meloni has proposed a constitutional change that would automatically give the party with the highest number of votes (right now her Brothers of Italy) 55 percent of the seats in Parliament. She says it would make Italian governments more stable, but her opponents fear that it could also create opportunities for a future autocrat.

Following the Orban playbook would face strong constitutional pushback in France, with its fierce attachment to freedom and human rights as embodied in the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen. But if the National Rally controlled the presidency and Parliament, all bets would be off.

''The normalization of the right does not necessarily make it less extreme,'' said Ms. Tocci, the Italian political scientist. ''If constraints loosen, perhaps with the return of Trump as president in November, Meloni will be more than happy to show her true face. If Trump and Orban agree to force Ukraine to surrender, she will not think twice.''

That said, the right's ascendancy is not universal, uniform or assured. Poland, through a protest movement, led the liberation of Europe from the Soviet imperium, culminating with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Last year, in a November election, Poland ousted its nationalist governing party, Law and Justice, which had led an assault on the rule of law. The party had also propagated xenophobic hatred, portrayed the country as eternal victim and distanced Poland from the European Union.

''Poles said, 'We have a more positive vision to put in the place of a dark view of human and national life,''' Mr. Bagger, the German state secretary, said. ''They pulled themselves back from the brink.''

Underestimating the resourcefulness and resilience of democracies is always dangerous. But so, too, is discounting the unimaginable. As Mr. Bardella's beloved Victor Hugo wrote, ''Nothing is more imminent than the impossible.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/05/world/europe/europe-far-right.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/05/world/europe/europe-far-right.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: FRANCE: Jordan Bardella, Marine Le Pen's protégé and leader of the National Rally, personifies the normalization of a party once seen as a quasi-fascist threat. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MANON CRUZ/REUTERS)

ITALY: Giorgia Meloni, who has roots in a neo-fascist party, leads the most right-wing government since Mussolini. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBERTO MONALDO/LAPRESSE, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS)

HUNGARY: Viktor Orban, the longtime prime minister and a Trump ally, has established a playbook for the new right. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DENES ERDOS/ASSOCIATED PRESS) (A6) This article appeared in print on page A1, A6.

**Load-Date:** May 7, 2024

**End of Document**



[***For These Characters, Age Was Not an Issue***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69V5-9NP1-JBG3-602R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 10, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section ST; Column 0; Style Desk; Pg. 12; FACE FORWARD

**Length:** 675 words

**Byline:** By Rhonda Garelick

**Body**

The shows of Norman Lear, who died on Tuesday, celebrated the needs and complexities of the everyday woman.

Amid the 1970s television landscape selling obvious sex and youth, Norman Lear understood the magnetism of older everyday women.

Mr. Lear, who died on Tuesday at 101, has long gotten credit for being the first to train the television spotlight on issues of racism and class, war and poverty, to create plots centered on hot-button feminist issues such as equal pay or abortion. He deserves all of those accolades. But little has been said about the much quieter feminism expressed simply through his choice of leading ladies and the characters they portrayed.

Mr. Lear made stars out of gifted midlife actresses, without requiring them to look 20 years younger than they were. Instead, he made these women the focal points of important conversations, granting them dignity and gravitas and humor that was never cruel or at their expense.

Amid the 1970s television landscape of sexy pinups (Farrah Fawcett, Suzanne Somers), beautiful superheroes (Lynda Carter in ''Wonder Woman,'' Lindsay Wagner in ''The Bionic Woman''), and relatable-but-thin-and-gorgeous heroines like Mary Tyler Moore, Mr. Lear's leading ladies stood out for their sheer everyday-ness.

Edith Bunker, Maude Findlay, Louise Jefferson and Florida Evans were all middle- or ***working-class*** middle-aged women -- attractive, but hardly supermodels. Over the years of their series, the actresses who played these roles ranged in age from their 40s to late sixties. They wore regular clothes on their regular bodies, simple dresses with tie belts, housecoats or tunic pantsuits (varied slightly to reflect their characters' social status) -- outfits any audience member might find in a department store. Their hair and makeup were unobtrusive.

Yet within these parameters lay real power. In their unflashy outfits, they had a commanding appeal different from and more enduring than that of all the bikini- and evening-gown-clad glamour girls of the era. (In her floor-length vests, Bea Arthur as the feminist suburbanite Maude could at times resemble a Roman senator.)

Mr. Lear's characters held our attention, making us care about their struggles and joys, marriages and children, their money or work woes. They made us laugh. What's more, these women had romantic lives. Sometimes, they would hint at having actual sex, despite the serious handicap of being over 40.

Esther Rolle was 53 when she began playing Florida Evans on ''Good Times'' (spinning off from her role in ''Maude'') -- 19 years older than John Amos, the handsome actor who played her husband, James. Yet they were depicted as having a vital, erotic relationship. In one episode, James whisks Florida off to a snowbound cabin for a second honeymoon, carries her across the threshold and murmurs that he wants to ''get it on.''

Even the demure and innocent Edith Bunker -- played by Jean Stapleton from age 47 to 56 -- referred on occasion to her still-active bedroom activities. In an episode titled ''The Joys of Sex,'' Edith consults a sex manual to spice up her marriage. ''Ain't I always there when you're in the mood?'' asks a wounded Archie. ''Yeah, Archie, and even when I ain't,'' Edith replies.

Mr. Lear's heroines also confronted feminine reproductive issues: Edith endured a rocky menopause -- replete with crying, rage and mood swings. On ''The Jeffersons,'' Louise Jefferson (played by Isabel Sanford from age 57 to 67) tries some marriage therapy techniques on her recalcitrant husband, George (Sherman Hemsley), trying gamely to get him to talk about sex. Most dramatically, Maude had a late-life abortion (when the character was 47 and Arthur was 50). In other words, these female characters had female bodies, and those bodies got to be part of the story: not as jiggling eye candy, objects of leering jokes or fashion plates, but as the flesh-and-blood, complex, flawed and sexual entities that bodies actually are -- and that all women have, whether they're 25 or 60, supermodels or not.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/07/style/norman-lear-tv-women-feminism.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/07/style/norman-lear-tv-women-feminism.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: From left, Isabel Sanford as Louise Jefferson, Marla Gibbs as Florence Johnston and Roxie Roker as Helen Willis in ''The Jeffersons.

Center left, Bill Macy and Bea Arthur in ''Maude.'' Left from top, Sally Struthers, Rob Reiner, Jean Stapleton and Carroll O'Connor in ''All in the Family.'' (PHOTOGRAPH BY ABOVE AND RIGHT: CBS, VIA GETTY IMAGES

CBS) (ST12-ST13) This article appeared in print on page ST12, ST13.

**Load-Date:** December 10, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Arab Americans in a Michigan City Endure the Agony of War***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69SD-N791-JBG3-639N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 2, 2023 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2023 The New York Times Company

**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 9

**Length:** 1511 words

**Byline:** By Kurt Streeter

**Body**

''We are feeling everything happening every day,'' Abdullah Hammoud, the mayor of Dearborn, Mich., says of the Israel-Hamas war.

Abdullah Hammoud, the 33-year-old mayor of Dearborn, Mich., feels the painful weight of a war being fought 6,000 miles away.

He feels it in every corner of his city.

He feels it through anguished stories told as he eats breakfast at AlTayeb Restaurant, as he visits Ronnie Berry's Halal Meats, and in late-night discussions with his closest friends.

He feels it when he sees cars and homes freshly draped with the Palestinian flag.

He feels it during normally joyful moments: at his city's Christmas tree lighting, where the mood felt notably somber and subdued; or on Halloween night, when far fewer kids than usual walked his city's neighborhoods.

''With the level of Islamophobia, parents are worried,'' Mr. Hammoud says. ''Many people are not in the mood to have a good time.''

He pauses for a moment. ''Not when bombs are dropping in Gaza.''

Dearborn, a suburb of roughly 110,000 people bordering Detroit, has one of the highest percentages of Arab Americans among U.S. cities. Census figures show that it is roughly 54 percent Arab American, a figure experts believe is a significant undercount. When he took office in 2022, Mr. Hammoud -- the son of Lebanese immigrants, raised in the city's ***working-class*** east side -- became the first Arab American Muslim mayor in Dearborn history.

But all is not well in Dearborn now. This is a community suffering intensely as it beholds the carnage wrought by the war between Israel and Hamas.

The recent pause in fighting brought a respite, but Mr. Hammoud, like many in Dearborn, believed it would only be temporary. And it sparked hard emotion, giving residents a chance to step back and more fully feel the weight of the calamity: the dead and the missing, the wounded and displaced. It also highlighted the potential of a diplomatic solution, which the mayor indignantly said should have been the focus all along.

''In this community, right now there is a lot of grief, anger and fear,'' Mr. Hammoud said on a recent day, his voice sad and insistent, as he drove around Dearborn in his black Ford F-150 truck. ''You can't help but be anxious when the whole city tells you that they stay up every night following the news, trying to understand how much more death and destruction is happening.''

''We are feeling everything happening every day,'' he added. ''This is personal for me. And it is personal for a great majority of my city.''

'Sometimes, people here differ very sharply'

Mr. Hammoud's ascendance to mayor symbolizes how today's Dearborn starkly diverges from its past. Orville Hubbard, the mayor from 1942 to 1978, was an avowed segregationist who worked to keep Black residents from buying homes in his city, and used a racist slur when referring to Arab Americans. As the population of immigrants from the Middle East climbed during the 1980s, another mayor ran on his ability to solve the city's ''Arab problem.''

These days, Dearborn showcases a proud, unabashed Arab American spirit. It is visible in the predominance of Arabic script fronting businesses across the city, many of which also make a point of displaying the American flag. It is visible in the groups of older women in chadors and teenage girls wearing hijabs, walking confidently through a local mall. It is visible in the city's vaulted mosques, smoky hookah bars, and bustling markets selling Iranian pistachios and Aleppo pepper.

It can even be seen at the ballot box. In 2022, Dearborn began offering Arabic-language ballots in its elections.

One would be mistaken, however, to think of the community as monolithic, said Sally Howell, a professor of history and Arab American studies at the University of Michigan-Dearborn.

''The majority are Muslim,'' Dr. Howell said, ''but there are Arab Christians in Dearborn. There's a ***working class***, a professional class, Republicans and Democrats. The Arab community in Dearborn reflects the full diversity of political points of view and cultural identifications, and it's all held within this enclave.''

Tension in the Middle East among rival Muslim nations sometimes reverberates in Dearborn, Dr. Howell noted, creating schisms and tense relationships. And last year, division roiled Arab American residents when many began pushing to ban books with L.G.B.T.Q. themes or stories in public schools.

''Sometimes, people here differ very sharply,'' Dr. Howell said. ''But generally,'' she added, ''they get along.''

Case in point: Arab Americans from Dearborn banded together to counter anti-Muslim protesters who repeatedly descended upon the city in the aftermath of the Sept. 11 attacks and the Iraq war, at times visibly armed and on at least one occasion toting a severed pig's head -- a grievous insult to Muslims.

One target of the protesters was the Islamic Center of America, led at the time by Imam Hassan Qazwini, 59, an Iraqi-born cleric who fled the persecution of Saddam Hussein and came to United States in the 1990s. Never, Imam Qazwini said, has he seen Dearborn's Arab Americans coalesce around an issue as they have around the war in Gaza.

''The community is boiling'' he said, ''and completely united.''

Unified by anguish

In Dearborn, war is no abstraction. Most people in the city, Mr. Hammoud said, either have firsthand experience with such pain or have family and friends in the Middle East who know all too well the cost of war.

Home to the Ford Motor Company, the city has always been shaped by waves of newcomers from foreign lands. The lure of the automobile assembly line drew a significant wave of Arab immigrants as Dearborn incorporated in the 1920s.

More recently, the mayor said, Arab immigration of the last several decades ''was the result of war.''

''The Lebanese civil war, and the fighting there against Israel, brought a large Lebanese population,'' he explained. ''The wars in Iraq brought a big Iraqi population. The Yemenis are the latest arrivals. They are here because of war.''

Mr. Hammoud's mother fled from Lebanon to the United States in the 1970s to escape civil war, and his mother-in-law was born in a Palestinian refugee camp. Mr. Hammoud worked as a volunteer for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in Jordan. More than a hundred of the agency's workers have been killed in Gaza.

Anguish is the unifying emotion in Dearborn now. Worry about Islamophobia, anti-Arab bigotry and the violence they can spark are part of daily reality. Such fear heightened in mid-October when the police arrested a man from a nearby suburb who had made online threats against Palestinians in Dearborn. The Thanksgiving weekend shooting of three Palestinian American college students in Vermont magnified the sense of danger. Investigators have not determined if it was a hate crime.

Another reality: the sense of being unmoored. Arab Americans have long faced tides of discrimination as they have sought to gain acceptance across the United States. Still, the 2020 presidential election gave the Dearborn community belief that it had gained a foothold in national politics and corridors of power. Arab American support in Dearborn and throughout Michigan, a critical swing state, helped usher President Biden into the White House.

But Mr. Biden's support for Israel has left many Arab Americans furious and adrift.

''Who do we turn to?'' said a congregant at the Islamic Center of America, one of the largest mosques in the United States, as Mr. Hammoud attended Friday prayer.

The question hung in the air. The congregant said there was no good answer. ''I hear some say they'll vote, but it will be a write-in. People will write Gaza.''

Mr. Hammoud's coterie of close friends and advisers includes a small cluster of Arab Americans in their late 20s and early 30s who grew up in Dearborn, left the comfort of family and a tightly knit community to attend college and returned home, intent on making the city a better place.

On a recent day, he gathered with three from this group at a local cafe. Each had a personal story of war. Mariam Jalloul's was typical. She remembered being 12 years old, on a trip to see family in Lebanon, as deadly fighting between Israel's army and Hezbollah put her Beirut suburb in the crossfire. She recalled the thrum of falling bombs, the trembling of her shelter and being sure she would not live. ''Well, if the building goes down and we all die,'' she recalled thinking, ''at least I'm with my mom and sisters. I'm not alone. We will all go out together.'''

Over Yemeni chai, the scent of roasted cardamom in the air, Mr. Hammoud and his friends searched for solutions and solace.

''Before this,'' Ms. Jalloul said, ''it felt like Arab Americans were becoming part of the fabric within U.S. society. We were being listened to and taken seriously.''

The friends agreed that the war had been a reality check. ''Was all that progress just theater? Was it lip service?'' Ms. Jalloul pondered.

''Can this country be for us?''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/01/us/israel-hamas-war-dearborn-muslims.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/01/us/israel-hamas-war-dearborn-muslims.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Abdullah Hammoud is the first Arab American mayor in the 100-year history of Dearborn, Mich.

Mariam Jalloul, a resident, was visiting family in Lebanon in 2006 when fighting broke out. She was 12.

Afternoon prayers at the Islamic Center of America mosque in Dearborn. Worries about Islamophobia, anti-Arab bigotry and violence are part of a daily reality.

Dearborn, a suburb of roughly 110,000 citizens on the edge of Detroit, is the only city with an Arab American majority in the United States. Census figures show that it is 54 percent Arab American. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY VALAURIAN WALLER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A9.

**Load-Date:** December 2, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Toby Keith Was an Enigma Wrapped in a Riddle Wrapped in the Flag; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B8Y-2361-JBG3-601X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 8, 2024 Thursday 01:21 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1020 words

**Byline:** Michael Patrick F. Smith

**Highlight:** He’s best known for a red-state anthem. But he existed in a tradition of country rabble-rousers of all political stripes.

**Body**

Toby Keith already had a string of country hits before he wrote the 2002 [*song*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ruNrdmjcNTc) that cemented his place in the then-burgeoning culture wars: “Courtesy of the Red, White and Blue (The Angry American).” He later said the song was written in 20 minutes as an emotional response to both his father’s death and the Sept. 11 attacks. When Mr. Keith played it for the first time in a solo performance (his band hadn’t yet learned the chord changes) at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md., the response was rapturous.

As the Rolling Stone writer Mark Binelli wrote, “The room went silent, then, when he hit the chorus, broke into a roar.” As a post-9/11, pro-America anthem — whether you like the song or not — it’s hard not to see why: “The eagle will fly man, it’s gonna be hell / When you hear mother freedom start ringin’ her bell / And it’ll feel like the whole wide world is raining down on you/ Brought to you courtesy of the red, white and blue.”

Mr. Keith, who [*sold*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ruNrdmjcNTc) over 40 million albums worldwide and died this week at 62, always claimed he initially didn’t plan to make a studio recording of “Courtesy” — “it wasn’t written for everybody,” he [*said*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ruNrdmjcNTc). (When he did release the song, it went to [*No. 1*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ruNrdmjcNTc) on the Billboard Hot Country Songs chart.) The song was a personal statement crafted specifically for an audience of American soldiers. In this way, it was more of a folk song than a stadium rocker — a rousing prompt to get something done.

To casual listeners, “Courtesy” heralded Mr. Keith’s coming out as a conservative, pro-war, red-state warrior, and he did little to dissuade that impression. But like country music — and like the rural America Mr. Keith hailed from — he was more complicated than that. When people encounter country music, they’re often quick to try to categorize, no matter where they sit in the political divide: Are these anthems meant for us or meant for them? The truth is almost always more nuanced. What we miss when we don’t acknowledge this is the same thing we miss when we divide the nation into intractable red and blue states.

“Courtesy of the Red, White and Blue” recalled another of country music’s biggest in-your-face-conservative political hits: Merle Haggard’s 1969 hit “Okie From Muskogee,” which took aim at student-led antiwar protests and was written in the voice of a fed-up rural American. (“We don’t smoke marijuana in Muskogee / We don’t take our trips on LSD.”) In some ways Mr. Keith modeled himself on Mr. Haggard. Both former oil field hands, they shared true ***working-class*** bona fides and expressive baritones but practiced a personal brand of politics that could seem confusing. Mr. Keith had broken into the country music scene with his first [*single*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ruNrdmjcNTc), “Should’ve Been a Cowboy,” a light-as-a-breeze nostalgic number that went on to become the most-played song on country radio in the 1990s. Mr. Haggard was, early in his career, more of a sad-sack singer, performing songs about jail stints, hard drinking and heartache.

Over the years Mr. Haggard gave conflicting accounts as to whether “Okie” was intended sincerely or meant as a sly satire. I like to think it was a bit of a joke, but then my politics are more progressive in general. As a guy who has debated this topic over flat beer in honky-tonks across America, I’ve found that opinions tend to fall neatly along party lines.

Mr. Keith’s political affiliations could be just as [*confounding*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ruNrdmjcNTc). He was a Democrat until 2008, when he switched his registration to independent, and in 2009 he [*traveled*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ruNrdmjcNTc) to Oslo to perform at a celebration of President Barack Obama’s being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. In 2017 he headlined President Donald Trump’s inauguration — where he took a moment to thank Mr. Obama from the stage. His politics certainly seemed contradictory but his stubborn willingness to treat every American president with respect revealed a consistent moral code. He was a throwback to a time when a man could play a guitar with an American flag on it, wearing an American flag on his shirt, in front of the American flag, and nobody would assume he voted one way or the other.

In 2017, Mr. Keith [*performed*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ruNrdmjcNTc) the first live concert by an artist in Saudi Arabia in 20 years on [*a double bill*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ruNrdmjcNTc) with the oud player Rabeh Saqer. Mr. Keith’s willingness to do this gig — or the Nobel Prize ceremony — reminds me of the words of Pete Seeger, who, when he was questioned in 1955 by the House Un-American Activities Committee about whether he had performed at Communist Party meetings, said, “I have sung for Americans of every political persuasion, and I am proud that I never refuse to sing to an audience, no matter what religion or color of their skin or situation in life.”

In this way, Mr. Keith was less a precursor to a musician like Jason Aldean, who had a hit last year with the jingoistic provocation “Try That in a Small Town,” than a spiritual predecessor to Oliver Anthony, the singer whose backyard recording of “Rich Men North of Richmond” created a political firestorm last summer. Mr. Anthony’s politics are also a roller-coaster ride, especially for an American public conditioned to map everything along red-state/blue-state lines. His song was championed as an antigovernment screed by conservative pundits before Mr. Anthony [*denounced*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ruNrdmjcNTc) conservative news, praised immigrants and declared himself “pretty dead center down the aisle on politics.”

At a time when purity tests have become a defining feature of America’s two political parties, it is refreshing to hear from anyone in the public sphere who thinks a little differently, which, it turned out, Mr. Keith did.

Michael Patrick F. Smith is a musician and the author of “The Good Hand: A Memoir of Work, Brotherhood, and Transformation in an American Boomtown.”

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ruNrdmjcNTc) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ruNrdmjcNTc). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ruNrdmjcNTc).

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PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY ALLEN CLARK/NBC, VIA GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page A20.

**Load-Date:** February 10, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Annie Ernaux’s Work Dissecting the Deeply Personal Is Awarded the Nobel***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66JF-GK41-JBG3-611S-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 6, 2022 Thursday 11:11 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS

**Length:** 1678 words

**Byline:** Alex Marshall, Alexandra Alter, Laura Cappelle and Aurelien Breeden

**Highlight:** Ernaux’s writing has spoken particularly to women and to others who, like her, come from a ***working class*** seldom depicted with such clarity in literature.

**Body**

Ernaux’s writing has spoken particularly to women and to others who, like her, come from a ***working class*** seldom depicted with such clarity in literature.

For decades, the French writer Annie Ernaux has dissected the most humiliating, private and scandalous moments from her past with almost clinical precision: “I shall carry out an ethnological study of myself,” she wrote in her 1997 memoir “Shame.”

On Thursday, she was awarded one of literature’s highest honors, the Nobel Prize, for her body of work. Ernaux’s writing has spoken particularly to women and to others who, like her, come from a ***working class*** seldom depicted with such clarity in literature: She has described her upbringing in a small town in Normandy, an illegal abortion she had the 1960s, her dissatisfaction with domestic life, and a passionate extramarital affair.

It was a striking choice by the Nobel committee to honor a writer whose work is woven from intensely personal and often ordinary experiences. Mats Malm, the permanent secretary of the Swedish Academy, which decides the prize, announced the decision at a news conference in Stockholm, lauding the “courage and clinical acuity with which she uncovers the roots, estrangements and collective restraints of personal memory.”

At a news conference at the Paris offices of her publisher, Gallimard, Ernaux, 82, promised to keep writing. “To receive the Nobel Prize is, for me, a responsibility to continue,” she said.

She felt compelled, in particular, to keep examining the inequality and struggles that women face. “Speaking from my condition as a woman,” she said, “it does not seem to me that we, women, have become equal in freedom, in power.”

Ernaux becomes only the 17th woman to have been awarded the prize, which has been given to 119 writers since it was formed in 1901. She is the second woman to receive the prize in three years after Louise Glück, the American poet, was given [*2020’s award*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/08/books/nobel-prize-literature-winner.html).

While early on in her career Ernaux wrote autobiographical fiction, she quickly cast off any pretense that she was inventing a plot and began writing memoirs, though she has often resisted labeling her work as either fiction or nonfiction.

“Everything she writes, every word, is literal and factually true,” said Dan Simon, the founder of Seven Stories Press, which has been publishing Ernaux in English for 31 years. “And yet these are tremendous works of the imagination.”

The experiences she wrote about in the 1980s and 1990s — an unwanted pregnancy and abortion, her love affairs, her ambivalence about marriage and motherhood — were considered shocking by some social conservatives, but resonated deeply with a broad readership.

Ernaux has described her writing as a political act, one meant to reveal entrenched social inequality, and has compared her use of language to “a knife.” She was influenced by Simone de Beauvoir, the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and by the social upheaval of May 1968, when there were weeks of demonstrations, strikes and civil unrest in France. She has described her prose as “brutally direct, ***working-class*** and sometimes obscene.”

She often situated her own private experiences and memories within the context of French culture and society, drawing parallels between her life and more universal struggles of women and ***working class*** people. Her work captured a moment of intense social change in France, away from traditional Catholic values and toward more secular, permissive and sexually liberated mores.

“When she started out, it was very challenging to the establishment, the way she put herself and her life at the center of large questions about social change in France,” said the novelist Hari Kunzru, who often teaches Ernaux’s work to his writing students at New York University. “For the literary establishment, a ***working class*** woman from the north of France is not supposed to do that, and yet she makes herself a very powerful stand-in. She wants to speak in a general way through the particular.”

Ernaux was born in 1940 and grew up in a ***working-class*** Catholic family in Yvetot, a small town in Normandy where her parents had a grocery store and cafe. Her father was violent and abusive, and when she was 12, she saw him try to kill her mother, an event she writes about with shocking directness in “Shame”: “My father tried to kill my mother one Sunday in June, in the early afternoon,” the first line reads.

She tried writing in college, but publishers rejected her book as “too ambitious,” she[*told The New York Times in 2020*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/books/annie-ernaux-a-girls-story.html). She didn’t take up writing again until her 30s, when she was a married mother of two, working as a French teacher.

That effort led to her 1974 debut, “Cleaned Out,” a deeply autobiographical novel that she worked on in secret from her husband, who belittled her writing. After she sold the book to a prestigious publishing house, Gallimard, her husband was incensed that she had concealed the project, pretending that she was working on her Ph.D. thesis. The marriage unraveled shortly after the publication of her third book, “A Frozen Woman,” in 1981, which explored her discomfort with marriage and motherhood. After their divorce, Ernaux never remarried, and said she preferred the freedom of living alone.

She found broad commercial success in France in 1992, when she released “Simple Passion,” a book that detailed her affair with a married foreign diplomat. It incensed social conservatives for its unapologetic depiction of female desire, but struck a chord with readers for its frank portrayal of sexual longing without moral approbation. The book sold 200,000 copies in its first two months.

“Men and women confided in me, told me they wish they’d written that book,” Ernaux told The Times [*in 2020*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/books/annie-ernaux-a-girls-story.html).

Ernaux has frequently examined and re-examined the same events in her life from different angles. Her 2000 memoir, “Happening,” is a stark account of her abortion in 1963 as a college student, a pivotal event that she first attempted to address in fiction, with “Cleaned Out.” After chronicling her affair with the diplomat in “Simple Passion,” she later gave readers an unfiltered glimpse of that relationship when she released her diaries, which includes entries from 1988 too 1990, in a volume titled “Getting Lost.”

“The almost primitive directness of her voice is bracing,” the Times critic Dwight Garner [*wrote*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/19/books/annie-ernaux-getting-lost.html) in his review of the book. “It’s as if she’s carving each sentence onto the surface of a table with a knife.”

It took her decades to write about one of the most agonizing events of her life — a confusing sexual experience she had in the summer of 1958, when she was 18, which left her feeling ashamed and abandoned, and resulted in depression and an eating disorder. “I am endowed by shame’s vast memory, more detailed and implacable than any other, a gift unique to shame,” she wrote in that memoir, “[*A Girl’s Story*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/24/books/review/schrodingers-dog-martin-dumont-girls-story-annie-ernaux-finding-dora-maar-brigitte-benkemoun.html).”

Scholars, critics and fellow authors have praised her work for the way she connects individual memory to collective experience, particularly for women and for members of the ***working class***. Ernaux also upended assumptions about what literature could be, said the French writer [*Édouard Louis*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/31/magazine/edouard-louis-french-literature.html), the author of “[*The End of Eddy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/17/books/review-end-of-eddy-edouard-louis.html).”

“She achieved a hugely important formal revolution in literature, away from metaphors, pretty sentences and characters,” said Louis, who writes about his own ***working class*** roots. “Annie Ernaux didn’t try to fit into existing definitions of literature, of what is beautiful: She came up with her own.”

While Ernaux has long been celebrated in France, and has been widely translated for decades, she didn’t gain much recognition in the English-speaking world until her memoir “The Years” was shortlisted for the International Booker Prize in 2019. The book serves both as an account of Ernaux’s experience and as a generational memoir of postwar France, and captures the shift toward sexual liberation and consumerism.

“This is an autobiography unlike any you have ever read; you might call it a collective autobiography,” Edmund White [*wrote in*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/19/books/review/the-years-annie-ernaux-autobiography.html)The New York Times.

Fans of Ernaux say that part of what makes her work so extraordinary is the ordinariness of the experiences she chronicles. She writes about the tedium of marriage and motherhood, the confusion and ambivalence over her first sexual experience, the grinding sadness of watching an elderly parent deteriorate.

“Her tone is remarkably unsentimental, even when she’s talking about very difficult material,” said the writer Francine Prose, who said she’s been a reader of Ernaux’s work for decades. “I can’t think of anyone quite like her, period. You can’t really say what the genre is, it’s not autofiction, it’s not, strictly speaking, memoir. It’s as if she invented her own genre and perfected it.”

Ernaux has long been a favorite for the Nobel Prize, which is given for a writer’s entire body of work, and comes with an award of 10 million Swedish krona, or about $911,000. Past winners have included[*Toni Morrison*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/06/books/toni-morrison-dead.html), J.M. Coetzee and[*even Bob Dylan*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/14/arts/music/bob-dylan-nobel-prize-literature.html).

The Swedish Academy has tried to increase the diversity of considered authors, after facing criticism that, before Thursday’s announcement, 95 of the past 118 Nobel laureates were European or North American, and only 16 women.

Anders Olsson, the chair of the academy’s Nobel Committee, defended the choice of another European writer, saying at a news conference on Thursday that there had been a dearth of female laureates, and that “our focus must be on literary quality first of all.”

For Ernaux, memory and personal experience isn’t something to be mined and written up once, but something to be constantly revisited and reinterpreted.

“For me, writing was and remains a way to shed light on things that one feels but are unclear,” she said at the news conference. “Writing is a path to knowledge.”

Elizabeth A. Harris contributed reporting from New York.

Elizabeth A. Harris contributed reporting from New York.

PHOTO: Annie Ernaux’s books, starting with “Cleaned Out” in 1974, were penetrating looks at her most intimate and ordinary experiences. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ISABELLE ESHRAGHI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** October 7, 2022

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[***The Politics of Class***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68HN-VYM1-JBG3-64WM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 22, 2023 Thursday 10:46 EST

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1636 words

**Byline:** David Leonhardt

**Highlight:** We’re covering the class inversion in American politics, severe weather in Texas and the Indian prime minister’s visit to the U.S.

**Body**

We’re covering the class inversion in American politics, severe weather in Texas and the Indian prime minister’s visit to the U.S.

The [*class inversion in American politics*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/07/briefing/democratic-party-covid-georgia.html) — Republicans’ struggles with college graduates and Democrats’ struggles with the ***working class*** — is a running theme of this newsletter. To help make sense of it, I asked four Times Opinion writers to join me in an exchange this morning. They are Michelle Cottle, Carlos Lozada, Lydia Polgreen and Ross Douthat, and they’re also the hosts of a new podcast, “Matter of Opinion.”

David: Democrats are nearly shut out of statewide office in almost 20 states, largely because of [*their weakness with* ***working-class*** *voters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/13/briefing/democrats-elections-poll.html). And in the past five years, the party has [*lost ground*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/06/briefing/asian-americans-conservative-republican.html) with ***working-class*** voters of color. How can Democrats do better?

Michelle: There are concrete issues on which some Democrats stumbled too far to the left, [*crime being notable*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/10/nyregion/asian-voters-republican-crime-nyc.html). But I don’t think the main problem is with the party’s policies so much as its overall vibe. Dems need to relearn how to talk to ***working-class*** voters — to sound less condescending and scoldy. Too many Democrats radiate an aura of, If only voters understood what was good for them, they would back us.

Carlos: Dispensing political strategy is not my comfort zone, so all I’ll say is that it seems a bit shortsighted when politicians talk to Latino voters as if the only thing they care about is immigration and the border, or when they address Black voters as if all that animates them is policing reform or racial discrimination. Don’t try to woo large and varied voting groups with narrow appeals. It’s pandering, it’s obvious and it’s dismissive.

Lydia: As Michelle hinted at, the Democrats have become the party of officious technocracy, which makes so many things they propose sound, well, ridiculous. A classic for me was Kamala Harris’s student loan forgiveness plan from the 2020 race: You had to be a Pell Grant recipient, start a business in a disadvantaged community and keep that business going for three years. That’s no “Make America Great Again.” They should talk about big, bold and simple ways you will improve people’s lives.

Michelle: “Officious technocracy” is my new favorite term, Lydia! I’m officially — and officiously — appropriating it.

Carlos: The irony of the Democrats’ officious technocracy is that, in some cases, it misrepresented how science works. Admonishing people to “[*follow the science*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/11/briefing/covid-cdc-follow-the-science.html)” on Covid can be counterproductive when recommendations should change as new data comes in. Science is a method of inquiry, not a set of off-the-shelf solutions.

Ross: Talking about working people’s material interests in language that doesn’t sound like it was lifted from a glossary of progressive-activist terminology is the right path for Democrats. Right now, though, I think they have a lot to gain by treating the Covidian and George Floyd-era breakdown in public order as their major political problem — treating homicide rates, drug abuse, school discipline and border security as key issues where they need to separate themselves from their own activist class, which has a tendency to act like living with disorder is an essential part of left-wing tolerance.

Remember Kamala Harris the prosecuting attorney, once disdained by the left? The Democrats could use a leader like that.

Craziness and chaos

David: What about the other side of the class inversion? Republicans used to win white-collar professionals. [*Not anymore*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/04/briefing/democrats-election-working-class-voters.html).

Ross: The G.O.P. has multiplied the reasons for college graduates to turn against them: The craziness and chaos of the Trumpist style cost them with one group; the fact that they can now legislate against abortion costs them with another.

I think you can see in [*the success of Brian Kemp*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/08/us/politics/brian-kemp-georgia-stacey-abrams.html) in Georgia a model for how they can advance pro-life legislation without suffering dramatic losses. But the Kemp model requires a rigorous reasonability, a studied outreach to suburbanites, a moderate and competent affect, none of which a Trump 2024 candidacy is likely to offer, and the effort to defeat Donald Trump may push Ron DeSantis from the Kempian sweet spot as well.

Lydia: I think it’s brave to take a principled stand on a defining moral question like abortion, electoral consequences be damned! Just ask the Democrats what embracing civil rights cost them. Maybe there is something for the G.O.P. to learn from Bill Clinton, who was able to triangulate his way into the Oval Office by undercutting the critiques of liberal overreach.

Michelle: It goes beyond the Trumpian crazy. Republicans have, for a while now, been spinning up their voters by painting every issue as an existential crisis such that compromise, triangulation and moderation are anathema. College-grad-moderate-swing-voter-suburban types find it unsettling.

Carlos: Maybe the thing to remember is that “rigorous reasonability,” as Ross calls for, is relative, and the G.O.P. could benefit from the soft bigotry of low expectations. It might not take all that much for college grads turned off by Trumpism but still wary of the activist left to consider a Republican who combines populist policy impulses with a more sober governing style. [*In his book*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/19/opinion/ron-desantis-donald-trump-courage-free.html), DeSantis brags that his administration in Florida was “substantively consequential.”

Michelle: I like your optimism, Carlos. But I’d venture that DeSantis’s nerdier approach is a key reason he’s getting his booty stomped in polls by the MAGA king. Not juicy enough and way too wonky/jargony at times.

Listen to the latest episode of “[*Matter of Opinion*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/22/opinion/democracy-and-american-global-dominance.html)” — about America’s place in the world and the significance of this week’s visit to the U.S. by Narendra Modi, India’s prime minister.

THE LATEST NEWS

Politics

* The Republican-led House voted to [*censure Representative Adam Schiff*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/21/us/politics/house-censures-adam-schiff.html), a Democrat, for his role leading investigations into Trump.

1. Justice Samuel Alito took a vacation with a billionaire who frequently has cases before the Supreme Court, [*ProPublica reported*](https://www.propublica.org/article/samuel-alito-luxury-fishing-trip-paul-singer-scotus-supreme-court). Alito sought to rebut the report ahead of time with a [*Wall Street Journal op-ed*](https://www.wsj.com/articles/propublica-misleads-its-readers-alito-gifts-disclosure-alaska-singer-23b51eda).
2. A federal judge sentenced a rioter who assaulted an officer on Jan. 6 to [*more than 12 years in prison*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/21/us/politics/daniel-rodriguez-jan-6-sentence.html).

Modi’s U.S. Visit

* President Biden is [*welcoming Narendra Modi*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/22/us/politics/biden-modi-state-visit.html), India’s prime minister, today, hoping to woo the country at a time of conflict with Russia and rising tension with China.
* By staying neutral in the war in Ukraine, [*India has profited*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/06/22/business/india-russia-oil.html): It has emerged as a primary buyer of Russia’s crude oil, which it refines and exports.

Severe Weather

* [*A storm barreled through a Texas town*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/21/us/matador-storm-tornado.html)with about 600 residents, killing at least three people.

1. Extreme heat is [*stalled over Oklahoma and Texas*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/21/us/oklahoma-heat-power.html) and could linger until the Fourth of July, straining the power grid.

Other Big Stories

* A [*superyacht helped rescue 100 migrants*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/21/world/europe/yacht-migrant-rescue-greece.html) thrown overboard in a deadly wreck in the Mediterranean, reflecting a new inequality of the seas.

1. The search for the missing submersible continues in the North Atlantic. [*The vessel’s oxygen could run out today*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/06/22/us/titanic-missing-submarine/heres-the-latest-on-the-missing-submersible?smid=url-share).
2. Math and reading scores for 13-year-olds in the U.S. hit their [*lowest levels in decades*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/21/us/naep-test-results-education.html).
3. The U.S. approved the production and sale of [*laboratory-grown chicken meat*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/21/us/lab-grown-meat-sale-approval.html).
4. A Florida county is trying to contain an invasive species of giant snail that can grow [*as big as a fist*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/21/us/african-land-snails-florida.html).

Opinions

As Modi visits the U.S., President Biden should promote shared democratic values with [*an increasingly autocratic ally*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/22/opinion/biden-modi-meeting.html), The Times’s editorial board writes.

Here are columns by Tressie McMillan Cottom on [*a Black rodeo in Portland, Ore.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/21/opinion/freedom-black-rodeo.html), and Zeynep Tufekci on [*the lab-leak theory*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/21/opinion/covid-lab-leak-origins.html).

MORNING READS

Return to office: Bosses have reached [*the desperation phase*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/20/business/return-to-office-remote-work.html).

Beauty: The salon where a corporation tries to [*understand Black women’s hair*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/21/business/unilever-black-women-hair-products.html).

The Ethicist: “My wife lives in a nursing home. [*Can I take a lover?*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/21/magazine/marriage-lover-ethics.html)”

Lives Lived: Haim Roet survived the Holocaust by hiding in a Dutch village. At a protest in 1989, he read out the names of people murdered by the Nazis, starting a practice that has become a part of memorial ceremonies around the world. [*He died at 90*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/21/world/europe/haim-roet-dead.html).

SPORTS NEWS FROM THE ATHLETIC

N.B.A. blockbuster: Kristaps Porzingis is heading to Boston and Marcus Smart to Memphis in a [*three-team swap*](https://theathletic.com/4629162/2023/06/21/kristaps-porzingis-celtics-wizards-trade-negotiations/).

Wunderkind: Meet Ness Mugrabi, the [*N.F.L.’s youngest agent*](https://theathletic.com/4576150/2023/06/22/nfl-agent-ness-mugrabi-orthodox-jew).

Scrutiny: Leaders of the PGA Tour, Saudi Arabia’s Public Investment Fund and the LIV Tour were invited [*to testify*](https://theathletic.com/4629094/2023/06/21/pga-liv-senate-golf/) in front of a congressional committee.

ARTS AND IDEAS

Role-playing games: The Final Fantasy video game series has been around for more than three decades. Recently, as its creators worked on the next entry, Final Fantasy XVI, they confronted what The Times’s Brian X. Chen [*calls the “Star Wars” problem*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/20/arts/final-fantasy-xvi-square-enix.html): Can a long-running franchise reinvent itself to win over new audiences without losing longtime fans who crave nostalgia?

Final Fantasy XVI is out today, and [*Corey Plante writes at Kotaku*](https://kotaku.com/review-final-fantasy-16-ffxvi-ps5-rpg-release-date-1850558485) that it successfully threads the needle: “It just may be the best the series has been in more than 20 years.”

More on culture

* The second season of “And Just Like That …” premieres today. [*Catch up*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/21/arts/television/and-just-like-that-season-2.html).

1. Six writers selected [*essential works of queer literature*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/22/t-magazine/queer-postwar-books-plays-poems.html).

THE MORNING RECOMMENDS …

Broil [*miso-honey chicken*](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1023863-sheet-pan-miso-honey-chicken-and-asparagus).

Exercise your body and mind [*with tai chi*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/20/well/move/tai-chi-workout.html).

Visit the site [*where Caesar was killed*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/20/world/europe/rome-julius-caesar-assassination.html).

Upgrade your [*bath towels*](https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/reviews/best-bath-towel/).

Skip the [*silicone baking mats*](https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/blog/6-alternatives-to-pro-kitchen-tools/).

GAMES

Here are [*today’s Spelling Bee*](https://www.nytimes.com/puzzles/spelling-bee) and [*the Bee Buddy*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/upshot/spelling-bee-buddy.html), which helps you find remaining words. Yesterday’s pangrams were autocracy and carryout.

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

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

P.S. The Society for News Design named The Times [*best-designed newspaper*](https://www.nytco.com/press/times-wins-top-s-n-d-print-honors/).

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

PHOTO: Voters in the Bronx, where President Trump improved his margin from 2016 to 2020. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Desiree Rios for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** June 22, 2023

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[***Just How Dangerous Is Europe’s Rising Far Right?; News Analysis***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BYF-HMJ1-JBG3-610T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 5, 2024 Sunday 16:45 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; europe

**Length:** 2259 words

**Byline:** Roger Cohen Roger Cohen is the Paris Bureau chief for The Times, covering France and beyond. He has reported on wars in Lebanon, Bosnia and Ukraine, and between Israel and Gaza, in more than four decades as a journalist. At The Times, he has been a correspondent, foreign editor and columnist.

**Highlight:** Anti-immigration parties with fascist roots — and an uncertain commitment to democracy — are now mainstream.

**Body**

Jordan Bardella, 28, is the new face of the far right in France. Measured, clean-cut and raised in the hardscrabble northern suburbs of Paris, he laces his speeches with references to Victor Hugo and believes that “no country succeeds by denying or being ashamed of itself.”

That phrase, at a recent rally in the eastern town of Montbéliard, brought a chorus of “Jordan! Jordan!” from a crowd that had lined up for hours to see him. Cries of “Patrie” — homeland — filled the hall. Bardellamania is in the air.

Mr. Bardella, the son of Italian immigrants and a college dropout who joined the [*National Front party (now National Rally)*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/26/world/europe/france-far-right-parliament.html) at 16, is the protégé of [*Marine Le Pen, the perennial hard-right French presidential candidate*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/26/world/europe/france-far-right-parliament.html). Moderate in tone if not content, he is also the personification of the normalization — or banalization — of a party once seen as a quasi-fascist threat to the Republic.

Across Europe, the far right is becoming the right, absent any compelling message from traditional conservative parties. If “far” suggests outlier, it has become a misnomer. Not only have the parties of an anti-immigrant right surged, they have seen the barriers that once kept them out crumble as they are absorbed into the arc of Western democracies.

In Italy, [*Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, who has political roots in a neo-fascist party,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/26/world/europe/france-far-right-parliament.html) now leads Italy’s most right-wing government since Mussolini. In Sweden, the center-right government depends on the fast-growing [*Sweden Democrats, another party with neo-Nazi origins*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/26/world/europe/france-far-right-parliament.html), for its parliamentary majority. In [*the Netherlands, Geert Wilders*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/26/world/europe/france-far-right-parliament.html), who has called Moroccan immigrants “scum,” won national elections in November at the head of his Party for Freedom, and center-right parties there have agreed to negotiate with him to form a governing coalition.

In France, Mr. Bardella, as president of the National Rally, is leading his party’s campaign for the elections in June to the European Parliament, a relatively powerless institution but one still important for being the only directly elected body with representatives from all European Union countries.

Precisely because the Parliament is relatively weak, the election is closely watched as a measure of uninhibited popular sentiment, where voters register their discontent with potentially powerful downstream effects on national politics.

This year the far-right surge across the continent looks dramatic. The latest polls show the National Rally with a clear lead, set to take some 31 percent of the vote in France compared with about 16 percent for the centrist Renaissance coalition of President Emmanuel Macron. Mr. Bardella is the only politician among France’s 50 “favorite personalities,” according to a recent [*ranking in the Journal du Dimanche newspaper*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/26/world/europe/france-far-right-parliament.html).

The result is that anti-immigrant parties may win as many as a quarter of the seats in the 720-seat European Parliament. This could lead to a hardening of immigration regulations Europewide, hostility to environmental reform, and pressure to be more amenable to President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia.

For France, it means that a party that is nationalist, xenophobic and Islamophobic may well emerge reinforced — accepted, legitimized and eminently electable to high office in a way that would have been unthinkable even a decade ago.

France used to call its barrier to the hard right [*“la digue,” or the dam*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/26/world/europe/france-far-right-parliament.html). The floodgates are now open in France, but also beyond. Mr. Macron’s successor in 2027 — he is term limited — may well come from a party whose founder, [*Jean-Marie Le Pen*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/26/world/europe/france-far-right-parliament.html), called the Holocaust a “detail” of history.

Could this resurgence of parties with fascist roots really overturn European freedom and democracy? The optimistic view is that they are no more than pale descendants of history’s tyrants, constrained by the existence of a European Union that was created to guarantee peace among its members. That is a lulling view. The language of these parties may be less incandescent than former President Donald J. Trump’s invocations of “bloodshed,” but as they whip up support by scapegoating immigrants, and even move to lock in systems that could perpetuate their power, the threat to the postwar order seems real enough.

Not a Monolith

Historical lessons, it seems, fade after three generations. Warnings of the disasters that engulfed 20th-century Europe under fascist governments tend not to resonate with 21st-century supporters of xenophobic nationalist movements that have none of the militarism of fascism, nor the personality cults of its dictatorial leaders, but are fed by hatred of “the other” and jingoistic hymns to national glory.

Europe’s collective cataclysm between 1914 and 1945 seems like ancient history to many people, even if the blood shed in the trenches of Ukraine summons images of that time. “You can no longer rely on saying, ‘This is evil, because look what happened in the fascist past,’” said Nathalie Tocci, a leading Italian political scientist. “You have to have an argument for why those ideas are bad today.”

The post-fascist or fascist-lite European right of today is not monolithic. At the most menacing end of the spectrum stands the Alternative for Germany party, founded in 2013 and now [*polling as high as 20 percent*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/26/world/europe/france-far-right-parliament.html). It contains about 10,000 extremists, according to the country’s domestic intelligence service. Plans for mass deportation of immigrants and even a plot to overthrow the government have been linked to it.

The National Rally in France began life in 1972 as the National Front, the creation of Mr. Le Pen, who described the United States as a “mongrel nation” and the Nazi-puppet Vichy regime in France as not “especially inhumane.”

As for Ms. Meloni, she got her start in the postwar Italian Social Movement, founded in 1946 by Mussolini supporters bent on defending the legacy of fascism. It had violent strands into the 1970s, but it eventually folded and its leaders broke off to start new more moderate parties, though still proud of their lineage. The symbol of the Brothers of Italy is a tricolor flame, previously used by a neo-fascist party, and its hostility to immigrants remains firm.

The path to power, or the brink of it, by the far right has been a long one. Over the almost 80-year arc of the postwar period, the once-dominant center-left and center-right — represented in France by the Socialists and the Gaullists, and in Germany by the Social Democrats and the Christian Democrats — have seen the foundations of their support (labor unions for the left and the church for the right) gradually erode.

This accelerated with globalization after the end of the Cold War and the onset of atomization with the arrival of the smartphone (that prodigious generator of status anxiety), leading to more unequal, more polarized, more fretful societies. The political commons shrank. The definition of truth wobbled. Parliaments and parties grew more marginal as political heft shifted to social media.

Increasingly, with major ideological disputes over the place of the state in the economy settled, moderate right and moderate left began to feel indistinguishable to many people. They had no answers to mass migration. The ***working class***, long the cornerstone of socialism in Europe, migrated en masse to the anti-immigrant right as an expression of frustration at growing inequality and stagnant paychecks.

The core confrontation in Western societies is no longer over internal issues. It is global vs. national, the connected living in the “somewhere” of the knowledge economy vs. the forgotten living “nowhere” in industrial wastelands and rural areas. There lies the frustration, even fury, on which a Trump, a Meloni, a Wilders, a Le Pen could build.

Progressive changes in social mores have offered a new rhetorical weapon to these leaders. For them, as for Mr. Putin, it has been easy to present a simplistic portrayal of the West of liberal urban elites as the decadent locus of cultural suicide, the place where family, church, nation and traditional notions of marriage and gender go to die.

“There is a disproportionate sense of disappointment in our societies,” Thomas Bagger, the state secretary of the German Foreign Office, told me. “We lost our trust that we had figured out the long arc of history and that it bends toward democracy. Russia lost its idea of the future, and Putin turned to the past. We are in danger of falling into the same trap.”

Normalized, but Still Extreme

The hard right in Europe has moderated and prepared itself to govern. It has abandoned calls to leave the European Union — the disaster of Brexit made sure of that — and to leave the shared euro currency. It has toned down, but not eliminated, outright racism, even if Islamophobia lurks everywhere.

Mass immigration — some [*5.1 million immigrants entered the European Union in 2022*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/26/world/europe/france-far-right-parliament.html), more than double the number the previous year — is the core issue behind the changing nature of the right in Europe. It is widely resented, particularly because aging populations have put enormous financial pressure on the cherished social safety nets that they, and previous generations, have long paid into. Overlooked are the benefits that immigrants can bring to societies with shrinking labor forces and tax bases. Instead the focus is on migrants benefiting from handouts.

“We have to make our country less attractive to a form of immigration that sees us as a social cash machine,” Mr. Bardella said. “The vocation of France is not to support all the world’s misery! Social assistance and child benefits must be reserved for French citizens.”

Quiet-spoken and methodical, he is no demagogue. But in its last election program in 2022, the National Rally called for a referendum to amend France’s Constitution. One proposed new article read: “Foreigners must respect France’s identity and way of life, and not engage in political activity contrary to national interests. Their presence must not constitute an unreasonable burden on public finances and the social welfare system. Family reunification of foreigners may be prohibited or limited.”

The program also envisaged the expulsion of undocumented immigrants. “Because they are sovereign, and the only sovereign, the French people have the right to make decisions considered necessary to remain themselves,” it said.

Another serious question that looms over these movements is this: If elected, would such parties ever leave office?

Prime Minister Viktor Orban of Hungary, who has been in power for a total of 18 years and is an ally of Mr. Trump, has established a template for the new right. Demonize migrants and neutralize an independent judiciary. Subjugate much of the news media. Create loyal new elites through crony capitalism. Energize a national narrative of victimhood and heroism through the manipulation of historical memory. Claim that the “people’s will” overrides constitutional checks and balances.

The upshot is a form of European single-party rule that retains a veneer of democracy while skewing the contest sufficiently to ensure that it is likely to yield only one result.

In Italy, Ms. Meloni has proposed a constitutional change that would automatically give the party with the highest number of votes (right now her Brothers of Italy) 55 percent of the seats in Parliament. She says it would make Italian governments more stable, but her opponents fear that it could also create opportunities for a future autocrat.

Following the Orban playbook would face strong constitutional pushback in France, with its fierce attachment to freedom and human rights as embodied in the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen. But if the National Rally controlled the presidency and Parliament, all bets would be off.

“The normalization of the right does not necessarily make it less extreme,” said Ms. Tocci, the Italian political scientist. “If constraints loosen, perhaps with the return of Trump as president in November, Meloni will be more than happy to show her true face. If Trump and Orban agree to force Ukraine to surrender, she will not think twice.”

That said, the right’s ascendancy is not universal, uniform or assured. Poland, through a protest movement, led the liberation of Europe from the Soviet imperium, culminating with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Last year, in a November election, Poland ousted its nationalist governing party, Law and Justice, which had led an assault on the rule of law. The party had also propagated xenophobic hatred, portrayed the country as eternal victim and distanced Poland from the European Union.

“Poles said, ‘We have a more positive vision to put in the place of a dark view of human and national life,’” Mr. Bagger, the German state secretary, said. “They pulled themselves back from the brink.”

Underestimating the resourcefulness and resilience of democracies is always dangerous. But so, too, is discounting the unimaginable. As Mr. Bardella’s beloved Victor Hugo wrote, “Nothing is more imminent than the impossible.”

PHOTOS: FRANCE: Jordan Bardella, Marine Le Pen’s protégé and leader of the National Rally, personifies the normalization of a party once seen as a quasi-fascist threat. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MANON CRUZ/REUTERS); ITALY: Giorgia Meloni, who has roots in a neo-fascist party, leads the most right-wing government since Mussolini. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBERTO MONALDO/LAPRESSE, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS); HUNGARY: Viktor Orban, the longtime prime minister and a Trump ally, has established a playbook for the new right. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DENES ERDOS/ASSOCIATED PRESS) (A6) This article appeared in print on page A1, A6.

**Load-Date:** May 10, 2024

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[***Paris Votes to Triple the Cost To Park Many Hefty Vehicles***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B8G-RBK1-JBG3-6025-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 6, 2024 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 4

**Length:** 986 words

**Byline:** By Aurelien Breeden

**Body**

The city authorities say that large cars pollute more and are dangerous for pedestrians. Opponents say the mayor is on a crusade against motorists.

Voters in Paris have approved an effort to drastically increase parking fees for large sport utility vehicles and other heavy cars, the latest move by Mayor Anne Hidalgo to reshape the French capital with environmentally conscious and pedestrian-friendly policies.

The new parking fees are expected to be approved in May by the Paris City Council, where Ms. Hidalgo's Socialist Party and Green allies have a majority. The new fees are then expected to come into effect in September, Ms. Hidalgo said.

Some car owners have complained that they are being shut out of the capital, but Ms. Hidalgo was unrepentant at a news conference on Sunday night. ''Parisians made a clear choice,'' she said, adding that, ''We are very proud of this result.''

Still, turnout was extremely low. While some 54.5 percent of Parisians voted in favor of the measure, only about 5.7 percent of eligible voters went to the polls.

Although much of the public debate was focused on S.U.V.s, or sport utility vehicles, the new fees will apply to all cars that weigh more than 1.6 metric tons if they have traditional combustion engines or are hybrids, or more than two metric tons if they are electric.

People with those vehicles will have to pay 18 euros, a little more than $19, for the first hour of public parking in central Paris, and 12 euros in the French capital's outer neighborhoods -- triple the normal rate. For additional hours, prices rise sharply, so drivers of S.U.V.-like vehicles will end up paying more than $240 for six hours of parking in central Paris, instead of around $80 for regular cars.

But there are several exemptions, so the measure will mostly apply to outside visitors.

Paris residents who park in their neighborhood will not be affected. Neither will taxis or other professional vehicles, or people who use larger vehicles because of a disability.

The city authorities had argued that big S.U.V.s and other large cars emit more greenhouse gases than average cars and are more dangerous for pedestrians because of their bulkiness, citing a report that suggests that pedestrians are twice as likely to be killed in a collision with an S.U.V. than with a standard vehicle.

The referendum on parking fees was the second time in recent months that Ms. Hidalgo had sought direct popular approval for policies that are intended to make the city more appealing to pedestrians and cyclists.

In April, Parisians voted to ban rental electric scooters from the streets of the French capital, a measure that went into effect in September after complaints that they were essentially taking over the sidewalks.

As mayor since 2014, Ms. Hidalgo has pushed to make the capital less car-centric, closing off roads along some Seine River banks to motorized vehicles and significantly expanding the number of bicycle lanes.

Paris is served by a dense network of subways and buses, although the Olympic Games this summer, which are expected to attract millions of visitors, could seriously test the capital's transportation.

The city authorities have said before the vote on Sunday that while the number of car owners and cars in the capital had steadily decreased over the past decade, the average car size had increased.

The city cited a 2020 report by the World Wide Fund for Nature that said that the trend toward bigger cars was threatening France's climate goals.

David Belliard, the deputy mayor in charge of transportation in Paris, said the referendum was proof that despite pushing for ''unpopular'' measures like higher parking fees, ''when you encourage debate, when you try to explain, you end up with decisions that are in favor of the climate, of the environment, and of health.''

S.U.V.s have grown increasingly popular around the world, a trend that experts say is a roadblock toward efforts to fight climate change because they tend to be less fuel-efficient than smaller cars.

The International Energy Agency, the world's leading energy agency, said in an analysis last year that carbon dioxide emissions from S.U.V.s worldwide had reached nearly one billion metric tons in 2022, despite the growing popularity of electric models.

But Ms. Hidalgo's opponents -- motorist groups, and her centrist and right-wing political opponents on the City Council -- complained that the debate was skewed.

On Sunday, voters were asked if they were ''against the creation of a specific parking rate for heavy, cumbersome, polluting private cars?''

''Given how biased the question was, the result is a snub for the mayor,'' said Philippe Nozière, the president of 40 Million Motorists, a motorist lobbying group.

Mr. Nozière said the new fees would unfairly affect tourists, residents of the capital's suburbs and Parisian families. Sport utility vehicles and similar crossover cars have only become more popular because of increasing safety norms, he said.

''Ms. Hidalgo doesn't want any more cars in Paris,'' Mr. Nozière said. ''In that case, she should just come out and say it.''

The referendum showed a clear divide in Paris between the capital's wealthier western neighborhoods, which mostly voted against the new parking fees, and the city's more ***working-class*** and socially diverse eastern ones, which mostly voted in favor.

Mr. Belliard, the deputy mayor, said that roughly 10 to 15 percent of the cars that currently circulate in Paris would be affected by the increased parking fees. He acknowledged that some recently manufactured S.U.V.s were less polluting than smaller, older cars. But he argued that automakers should be encouraged to use fewer resources, not more.

''If you build bigger, heavier vehicles, you need more materials and more energy than to build lighter ones,'' he said. ''You have to look at the issue in its entirety.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/05/world/europe/paris-vote-suvs-parking.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/05/world/europe/paris-vote-suvs-parking.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Traffic around the Arc de Triomphe in Paris. New parking fees aimed at S.U.V.s are expected to be approved in May and take effect in September. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHEL EULER/ASSOCIATED PRESS) This article appeared in print on page A4.

**Load-Date:** February 6, 2024

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[***The 401(k) Problem***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C10-NCY1-DXY4-X05C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 12, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section MM; Column 0; Magazine Desk; Pg. 18

**Length:** 4678 words

**Byline:** By Michael Steinberger

**Body**

Jen Forbus turned 50 this year. She is in good health and says her life has only gotten better as she has grown older. Forbus resides in Lorain, Ohio, not far from Cleveland; she is single and has no children, but her parents and sisters are nearby. She works, remotely, as an editorial supervisor for an educational publishing company, a job that she loves. She is on track to pay off her mortgage in the next 10 years, and having recently made her last car payment, she is otherwise debt-free. By almost any measure, Forbus is middle class.

Still, she worries about her future. Forbus would like to stop working when she is 65. She has no big retirement dreams -- she is not planning to move to Florida or to take extravagant vacations. She hopes to spend her later years enjoying family and friends and pursuing different hobbies. But she knows that she hasn't set aside enough money to ensure that she can realize even this modest ambition.

A former high school teacher, Forbus says she has around $200,000 in total savings. She earns a high five-figure salary and contributes 9 percent of it to the 401(k) plan that she has through her employer. The company also makes a matching contribution that is equivalent to 5 percent of her salary. A widely accepted rule of thumb among personal-finance experts is that your retirement income needs to be close to 80 percent of what you earned before retiring if you hope to maintain your lifestyle. Forbus figures that she can retire comfortably on around $1 million, although if her house is paid off, she might be able to get by with a bit less. She is not factoring Social Security benefits into her calculations. ''I feel like it's too uncertain and not something I can depend on,'' she says.

But even if the stock market delivers blockbuster returns over the next 15 years, her goal is going to be difficult to reach -- and this assumes that she doesn't have a catastrophic setback, like losing her job or suffering a debilitating illness.

She also knows that markets don't always go up. During the 2008 global financial crisis, her 401(k) lost a third of its value, which was a scarring experience. From the extensive research that she has done, Forbus has become a fairly savvy investor; she's familiar with all of the major funds and has 60 percent of her money in stocks and the rest in fixed income, which is generally the recommended ratio for people who are some years away from retiring. Still, Forbus would prefer that her retirement prospects weren't so dependent on her own investing acumen. ''It makes me very nervous,'' she concedes. She and her friends speak with envy of the pensions that their parents and grandparents had. ''I wish that were an option for us,'' she says.

The sentiment is understandable. With pensions, otherwise known as defined-benefit plans, your employer invests on your behalf, and you are promised a fixed monthly income upon retirement. With 401(k)s, which are named after a section of the tax code, you choose from investment options that your company gives you, and there is no guarantee of what you will get back, only limits on what you can put in. This is why they are known as defined-contribution plans. Pensions still exist but mainly for unionized jobs. In the private sector, they have largely been replaced by 401(k)s, which came along in the early 1980s. Generally, contributions to 401(k)s are pretax dollars -- you pay income tax when you withdraw the money -- and these savings vehicles have been a bonanza for a lot of Americans.

Not all companies offer 401(k)s, however, and millions of private-sector employees lack access to workplace retirement plans. Availability is just one problem; contributing is another. Many people who have 401(k)s put little if any money into their accounts. With Americans now aging out of the work force in record numbers -- according to the Alliance for Lifetime Income, a nonprofit founded by a group of financial-services companies, 4.1 million people will turn 65 this year, part of what the AARP and others have called the ''silver tsunami'' -- the holes in the retirement system are becoming starkly apparent. U.S. Census Bureau data indicates that in 2017 49 percent of Americans ages 55 to 66 had ''no personal retirement savings.''

The savings shortfall is no surprise to Teresa Ghilarducci, an economist at the New School in New York. She has long predicted that the shift to 401(k)s would leave vast numbers of Americans without enough money to retire on, reducing many of them to poverty or forcing them to continue working into their late 60s and beyond. That so many people still do not have 401(k)s or find themselves, like Jen Forbus, in such tenuous circumstances when they do, is proof that what she refers to as this ''40-year experiment with do-it-yourself pensions'' has been ''an utter failure.''

It certainly appears to be failing a large segment of the working population, and while Ghilarducci has been making that case for years, more and more people are now coming around to her view. Her latest book, ''Work, Retire, Repeat: The Uncertainty of Retirement in the New Economy,'' which was published in March, is drawing a lot of attention: She has been interviewed on NPR and C-SPAN and has testified on Capitol Hill.

It is no longer just fellow progressives who are receptive to her message. Ghilarducci used to be an object of scorn on the right, once drawing the megaphonic wrath of Rush Limbaugh. Today, though, even some conservatives admit that her assessment of the retirement system is basically correct. Indeed, Kevin Hassett, who was a senior economic adviser to President Trump, teamed up with Ghilarducci not long ago to devise a plan that would help low- and middle-income Americans save more for retirement. Their proposal is the basis for legislation currently before Congress.

And Ghilarducci recently found her critique being echoed by one of the most powerful figures on Wall Street. In his annual letter to investors, Larry Fink, the chairman and chief executive of BlackRock, one of the world's largest asset-management companies, wrote that the United States was facing a retirement crisis due in no small part to self-directed retirement financing. Fink said that for most Americans, replacing defined-benefit plans with defined-contribution plans had been ''a shift from financial certainty to financial uncertainty'' and suggested that it was time to abandon the ''you're on your own'' approach.

While that isn't likely to happen anytime soon, it seems fair to ask whether the country as a whole has been well served by the 401(k) revolution. The main beneficiaries have been higher-income workers; instead of making an economically secure retirement possible for more people, 401(k)s have arguably become another driver of the inequality that is a defining feature of American life.

When it comes to generating wealth, 401(k)s have been an extraordinary success. The Investment Company Institute, a financial-industry trade group, calculates that the roughly 700,000 401(k) plans now in existence hold more than $7 trillion in assets. But the gains have gone primarily to those who were already at or near the top. According to the Federal Reserve, the value of the median retirement-saving account for households in the 90th to 100th income percentile has more than quintupled during the last 30 years and is currently more than $500,000. In one sense, it is not surprising that the affluent have profited to this degree from 401(k)s: The more money you can invest, the more money you stand to make.

In 2024, annual pretax contributions for employees are capped at $23,000, but with an employer match and possibly also an after-tax contribution (which is permitted under some plans), the maximum can reach $69,000. Workers 50 and over are also allowed to kick in an additional $7,500, potentially pushing the total to $76,500. Needless to say, only a sliver of the U.S. work force can contribute anything like that to their 401(k)s.

The withdrawal rules have evolved in a way that also favors high earners. You are generally not supposed to begin taking money from a 401(k) before you are 59½; doing so could incur a 10 percent penalty (on top of the income-tax hit). What's more, you can now put off withdrawing money until age 73; previously, you had to begin drawing down 401(k)s by 70½. Those extra years are an added tax benefit for retirees who are in no rush to tap their 401(k)s.

People in lower-income brackets may have also made money from 401(k)s but hardly enough to retire on with Social Security. In 2022, the median retirement account for households in the 20th through 39th percentile held just $20,000. For this segment of the working population, 401(k)s sometimes end up serving a very different purpose. They become a source of emergency funds, not retirement income. But then, for many of these people, retirement seems like an impossibility.

Laura Gendreau directs a program called Stand by Me, a joint venture between the United Way of Delaware and the state government that provides free financial counseling. She says that when she asks clients if they are putting aside any money for retirement, they often look at her in disbelief: ''They say, 'How do you expect me to save for retirement when I'm living paycheck to paycheck?''' She and her colleagues try to identify expenditures that can be eliminated or reduced so that people can start saving at least a small portion of what they earn. But she says that some clients are having such a hard time just getting by that they can't fathom being able to retire. Sometimes it does not even occur to them to look into whether their employers offer 401(k)s. ''They have no idea,'' Gendreau says.

Ghilarducci has been hearing this sort of thing for years. Her career in academia began around the time that 401(k)s first emerged, and from the start, she regarded these savings plans with skepticism. For one thing, she feared that a lot of people would never have access to them. But she also felt that 401(k)s were unsuitable for lower-income Americans, who often struggled to save money or who might not have either the time or the knowledge to manage their own investments. In her judgment, the offloading of retirement risk onto workers was worse than just an economic misstep -- it represented a betrayal of the social contract.

Ghilarducci, who is 66, has the unusual distinction of being a high school dropout with a Ph.D. in economics. She also has firsthand experience of economic hardship, and her ***working-class*** roots have shaped her worldview. She was raised by a single mother in Roseville, Calif., and money was always tight. Despite a turbulent home life, she excelled academically and was able to take advantage of a program that allowed California students with strong grades and test scores to attend schools within the California university system without charge.

After being accepted at the University of California, San Diego, she stopped going to high school -- it bored her -- and never graduated. A year later, she transferred to the University of California, Berkeley. Neither university knew that she had not completed high school. ''They didn't ask, and I didn't tell,'' she says with a laugh. She majored in economics at Berkeley and also obtained her doctorate there. She then taught at the University of Notre Dame for 25 years (she joined the faculty of the New School in 2008). During that time, she acquired a national reputation for her expertise on retirement.

In 2008, Ghilarducci proposed replacing 401(k)s with ''guaranteed retirement accounts,'' a program that would combine mandatory individual and employer contributions with tax credits and that would guarantee at least a 3 percent annual return, adjusted for inflation. Her plan drew the wrath of voices on the right -- the conservative pundit James Pethokoukis called her ''the most dangerous woman in America.''

But her timing proved to be apt: That year, the global financial crisis imperiled the retirement plans of millions of Americans. Ghilarducci suggested that if the government was going to bail out the banks, it also had an obligation to help people whose 401(k)s had tanked. Her idea inflamed the right: Rush Limbaugh attacked her during his daily radio show, which brought her a wave of hate mail.

Her hostility to 401(k)s is partly anchored in a belief that when it comes to retirement, the country was on a better path in the past. In the 1950s and 1960s, many Americans could count on pensions and Social Security to provide them with a decent retirement. It was a different era, of course -- back then, men (and it was almost always men) often spent their entire careers with the same companies. And even at their peak, pensions were not available to everyone; only around half of all employees ever had one. Still, in Ghilarducci's view, it was a time when the United States put more emphasis on the interests of ***working-class*** Americans, including ensuring that they could retire with some degree of economic security.

She portrays the move to defined contribution retirement plans as part of the sharp rightward turn that the United States took under President Ronald Reagan, when the notion of individual responsibility became economic dogma -- what the Yale University political scientist Jacob Hacker has called ''the great risk shift.'' The downside of this shift was laid bare by the great recession. Many older Americans lost their savings and were forced to scavenge for work.

This was the subject of the journalist Jessica Bruder's book ''Nomadland,'' for which Ghilarducci was interviewed and that was the basis for the Oscar-winning film of the same title. To Ghilarducci, the portraits in ''Nomadland'' -- of lives upended, of the indignity of being old and having to scramble for food and shelter -- presaged the insecure future that awaited millions of other older Americans. And Ghilarducci believes that with record numbers of people now reaching retirement age, that grim future is arriving.

Her new book makes a powerful case for why all working people deserve a comfortable, dignified retirement and why, for so many Americans, the current retirement system is incapable of providing that. Her nationwide book tour has had the feel of a victory lap, although the vindication she can plausibly claim is no cause for celebration. ''It's the pinnacle of my career because what I told people would happen is happening,'' she says. ''So it's a big told-you-so, and that told-you-so is on the backs of around 40 million middle-class workers who will be poor or near-poor elders.''

Ghilarducci finds it outrageous that Americans who don't have enough money set aside for retirement are now being told that the solution to their financial woes is to just keep working. Forcing senior citizens to stay on the job is cruel, she says, and especially so if it involves physically demanding labor. She has observed that older workers often have ''a shame hunch'' -- their body language suggests embarrassment. They are spending their last years in quiet humiliation.

To Ghilarducci, all of this represents a retreat from the ideals that fueled America's prosperity and made the United States a beacon of opportunity. As she writes in her book, ''A signature achievement of the postwar period -- the democratization of who has control over the pace and content of their time after a lifetime of work -- is being reversed.''

Back in the 1960s and 1970s, many companies, in addition to providing their employees with pensions, offered tax-deferred profit-sharing programs, which were available mostly to executives. But there was a lot of murkiness surrounding these defined-contribution plans -- and a lot of concern that the I.R.S. might eventually ban them. When Congress passed the Revenue Act of 1978, it included an addition to the Internal Revenue Code that was intended to provide greater clarity about how these plans were to be structured and who could participate. The provision, which took effect in 1980, was called Section 401(k). According to a 2014 Bloomberg article, the staff members who drafted it thought it was a minor regulatory tweak, of no particular consequence. One former senior congressional aide was quoted as saying it was ''an insignificant provision in a very large bill. It took on a life of its own afterwards.''

That's because Ted Benna saw something in that new section of the Internal Revenue Code that had eluded the people who wrote it. Benna, a retirement-benefits consultant, was in his suburban Philadelphia office on a Saturday afternoon in 1979, trying to figure out how to devise a deferred-compensation plan for one of his firm's clients, a local bank. At the time, the top marginal tax rate was 70 percent, and the bank wanted to see if there was a way to award bonuses to its executives that could limit their tax bill.

As Benna read the provisions of section 401(k), a solution dawned on him: The language seemed to indicate that he could create a plan in which the bonuses were put in a tax-deferred retirement plan. There was a catch, though. Under the terms of 401(k), this could be done only if rank-and-file employees participated in the plan. Benna knew that getting them to agree to set aside some of their pay would not be easy, so he came up with a sweetener -- he proposed that the bank would partly match the contributions of its employees.

The bank balked at Benna's proposal; it was concerned that regulators would rule the scheme illegal. Benna's own firm decided to implement the idea, however, and it proved wildly popular with the company's 50 or so employees. Benna and his colleagues called the plan ''cash-op,'' but the name never caught on, and instead came to be known as the 401(k). The new savings vehicle eventually did run into government resistance, when the Reagan administration, concerned about the lost tax revenues, tried to eliminate 401(k)s in 1986 -- this notwithstanding the fact that 401(k)s, with their promise of individual empowerment, seemed emblematic of the so-called Reagan Revolution. But by then it was too late. A number of companies were already offering 401(k)s to their employees, and the financial industry, eyeing a lucrative new revenue stream, threw its lobbying muscle behind these investment plans.

Benna is 82 now, and I recently met with him in York, Pa. (He was there visiting family; he lives near Williamsport, Pa.) He is still working. He told me that his religious faith had compelled him to put off his own retirement. ''The Creator didn't create us to spend 30 years doing nothing,'' he said. A tall, unassuming man, Benna suggested that we meet at the Cracker Barrel in York. There, over iced tea and coffee, we talked about the trillion-dollar business that resulted from his close reading of section 401(k). Benna had been quoted in the past voicing some misgivings about these savings plans. He told the magazine Smart Money in 2011, for instance, that he had given rise to a ''monster.''

But he explained to me that the remorse he expressed had nothing to do with 401(k)s themselves, which he said had helped convert millions of Americans from ''spenders into savers.'' Rather, what he regretted was the complexity of many plans -- he thought a lot of employees were overwhelmed by all the investment options -- and the fact that the financial-services industry profited from them to the degree that it did. Benna said that the advent of the 401(k) turned the mutual-fund industry into the colossus that it is today and that too many fund managers charged what he considers unjustifiably high fees. ''Over the life of an investment, it is a real hit -- it is gigantic,'' he says.

Yet Benna rejects the idea that 401(k)s took the country in the wrong direction. He contends that traditional pensions were doomed with or without 401(k)s. He recalls visiting Bethlehem Steel in the 1980s to talk about 401(k)s. ''I told them that they had to start helping their employees save for retirement, and their H.R. person said, 'Our employees don't need to do that because we take care of them for life.' And what happened to that?'' (Bethlehem Steel filed for bankruptcy in 2001, and the government had to fulfill its pension obligations.) Likewise, he doesn't think it is true that 401(k)s have really only benefited the well-off. He mentioned his brother-in-law, who lived in York and worked as a supervisor at Caterpillar, the construction-equipment manufacturer. When Caterpillar announced in 1996 that it was relocating its York plant to Illinois, he chose to take early retirement rather than uproot his family. ''He told me that was only possible because of his 401(k),'' Benna said. But he conceded that too many people are being let down by the retirement system and that something needs to be done to help them save for their later years.

Benna is one of a number of experts who believe that mandates will ultimately be needed to improve retirement financing -- that the voluntary approach, in which companies decide whether they want to sponsor 401(k)s and employees decide whether they wish to participate, is leaving too many gaps. He thinks all companies above a certain size should have to offer employees 401(k)s or alternative retirement-savings options. (Starting next year, employers that establish new 401(k) plans will be required to automatically enroll workers in those plans. There is still no obligation, however, to actually provide the plans themselves.)

Other countries go further. Australia's Superannuation Guarantee requires companies to contribute the equivalent of 11 percent of an employee's monthly pay to an investment account that is controlled by the worker, who can also put in additional money. The ''Super,'' as it is known, includes full-time and part-time workers and has proved to be enormously successful. With its relatively small population -- just 27 million -- Australia now has the world's fourth-highest per capita contributions to a pension system, and almost 80 percent of its work force is covered. BlackRock's Larry Fink says that ''Australia's experience with Supers could be a good model for American policymakers to study and build on.''

The desire to give less affluent Americans the chance to build a decent nest egg is one that is shared across ideological lines. That in itself is a big change from, say, the debate about health care reform, which bitterly divided liberals and conservatives. (It is worth recalling that the Affordable Care Act was enacted in 2010 without a single Republican vote.) In fact, concern about the retirement-savings shortfall has become a rare source of bipartisan cooperation in Washington, and it has also yielded some unlikely alliances.

A few years ago, Kevin Hassett, who was chairman of the White House's Council of Economic Advisers for a portion of Donald Trump's presidency, became familiar with Ghilarducci's work and sent her, unsolicited, the draft of a paper he was writing about the retirement-savings gap. She replied enthusiastically, and he suggested that she write the paper with him. Their partnership eventually yielded a plan for helping lower- and middle-income Americans save for retirement.

The idea they hatched was to make the Thrift Savings Plan, a government-sponsored retirement program for federal employees and members of the uniformed services, open to all Americans. T.S.P., which in total assets is the largest defined-contribution program in the country, includes automatic enrollment and matching contributions from the government. A number of states now offer retirement-savings plans for people whose employers don't provide 401(k)s, but none of these include matching contributions, which many experts believe are an important incentive for getting workers to set aside a portion of their own salaries.

Ghilarducci and Hassett think that only a federal program in which savings accounts of eligible workers are topped up with government money will significantly increase the participation and savings rates of low-income Americans. Their proposal is the basis for the Retirement Savings for Americans Act, a bill recently introduced by the U.S. senators John Hickenlooper and Thom Tillis and the U.S. representatives Terri Sewell and Lloyd Smucker. Two are Democrats; two are Republicans.

This past January, another bipartisan collaboration -- between Alicia Munnell, who was an economist in the Clinton administration and who now serves as the director of Boston College's Center for Retirement Research, and Andrew Biggs, a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative think tank -- published a paper calling for a reduction or an end to the 401(k) tax benefit.

Their research showed that it had not led to more participation in the program nor had it significantly increased the amount that Americans in the aggregate were saving for retirement. It was mostly just a giveaway to upper-income investors and a costly one at that. They estimated that it deprived the Treasury of almost $200 billion in revenue annually. They proposed reducing or even ending the tax-deferred status of 401(k)s and using the added revenue to shore up Social Security.

When I spoke to Biggs, he emphasized that he was not against 401(k)s. On balance, he thinks that they have worked well, and he also says that some of the criticism aimed at them is no longer valid. For instance, the do-it-yourself aspect is overstated: Most plans, for instance, now offer target-date funds, which automatically adjust your asset allocation depending on your age and goals, freeing you from having to continuously readjust your portfolio yourself. He acknowledges that rescinding the tax preferences could be tricky politically: The people who have chiefly benefited from them are also the people who write checks to campaigns. But he is confident that Americans can ultimately be persuaded to give up the tax advantages. ''If we say to people, 'Look, we can slash your Social Security benefits or increase your Social Security taxes, or we can reduce this useless subsidy that goes to rich people who don't need the money' -- well, that's a little more compelling.''

Hassett told me that his work with Ghilarducci does not represent any softening of his faith in the free market. Quite the opposite: He sees government intervention to boost retirement savings as a necessary step to preserving American capitalism. Hassett has been concerned for some time that the country is drifting toward socialism -- the subject of his most recent book -- and part of the reason is that too many Americans are economically marginalized and have come to feel that the system doesn't work to their benefit.

''They feel disconnected, and they are disconnected,'' Hassett says. Having the government help them save for retirement would be prudent. ''It would give them more of a stake in the success of the free-enterprise system,'' he says. ''I think it's important for long-run political stability that everybody gets a stake.''

Jen Forbus is not economically marginalized, but many in her community struggle. Lorain, a city of about 65,000 on the shore of Lake Erie, has never recovered from the loss of a Ford assembly plant and two steel plants. Around 28 percent of Lorain's residents now live in poverty. By the grim standards of her area, Forbus is doing well. ''I'm definitely privileged,'' she says. Even so, she knows that despite her diligent saving and careful budgeting, there is a good chance that she will not be able to retire at 65. She dreads the prospect of having to remain in the labor market as an elderly person. ''Something like waitressing -- past a certain age, that's really difficult,'' she says. And she admits that she finds it jarring that even for someone like her, retirement may be an unachievable objective. ''I do feel our system fails too many people,'' she says.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/08/magazine/401k-retirement-crisis.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/08/magazine/401k-retirement-crisis.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY HANNAH WHITAKER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

PROP STYLIST: NOEMI BONAZZI

JITALIA17/GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page MM15, MM16, MM17, MM18, MM19, MM20, MM21.

**Load-Date:** May 12, 2024

**End of Document**



[***In Trump Criminal Trial, Angling for Jurors Ever So Carefully***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BSB-PHP1-DXY4-X0PP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 11, 2024 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 16

**Length:** 1647 words

**Byline:** By Jesse McKinley, Kate Christobek and Maggie Haberman

**Body**

Prosecutors in Donald J. Trump's Manhattan trial may prefer jurors who watch MSNBC and are highly educated. Defense lawyers may favor police officers and sanitation workers.

On April 15, several hundred New Yorkers will file into a Manhattan courtroom to be scrutinized by prosecutors and defense attorneys, probed and prodded for signs that they could sway -- or stymie -- the first criminal trial of a former American president.

Lawyers representing the State of New York and Donald J. Trump will help select the 12 people who will decide the former president's fate.

The lawyers will try to divine unspoken political biases, opinions about law enforcement and other hidden agendas. The potential jurors, who could face public anger and threats if they are chosen, will be asked about their education, occupations, families and news sources.

The questions will drill slowly deeper: Potential jurors, all from one of the state's most liberal counties, will be asked to reveal whether they volunteered for or against Mr. Trump. Perhaps most critically, they will be asked whether their feelings would interfere with their ability to be fair.

Seating the members of the jury and several alternates could take two weeks or more, and the choices may be as pivotal as any evidence presented in court.

''It's the most important part,'' said Arthur Aidala, a defense attorney whose firm has had many high-profile clients, including Rudy Giuliani, Mr. Trump's former lawyer. ''And the hardest part too.''

Mr. Trump faces several trials, but other cases are mired in delays. The 12 jurors in Manhattan who will decide whether he falsified business records to hide an affair with a porn star will bear unblinking scrutiny.

For conservatives, the trial is a chance to expose what they see as an abuse of prosecutorial power and a plot led by Democrats to derail Mr. Trump. For liberals, it could be the only test of the judicial system's power over the former president before the election this fall.

The stakes of jury selection are particularly high for Mr. Trump's team, which is aware of the former president's poor standing among many in New York County -- Manhattan, as most people know it -- which overwhelmingly voted for President Biden in 2020.

Mr. Trump's legal team sees the case as winnable, although some believe a full acquittal is less likely than the prospect of finding jurors willing to cause a mistrial by holding out against a unanimous guilty verdict, according to two people with direct knowledge of the discussions.

Mr. Trump's lawyers want a jury that includes younger Black men and white ***working-class*** men, particularly public employees like police officers, firefighters and sanitation workers. Those who have had bad experiences with the legal system will also be prized by the defense, which has cast the case as politically motivated.

Polls have shown that voters who haven't graduated from college tend to favor Republicans. So prosecutors, conversely, will probably be looking for more educated voters from Democratic neighborhoods, fishing for those who consume news from sources like MSNBC, known for its outspoken liberal hosts, and who are fond of late-night comedians like Stephen Colbert, who hosted a presidential panel with Mr. Biden on March 28.

Each potential juror will answer a uniform set of questions, and lawyers can ask follow-ups. Some queries may be designed to uncover biases against -- or allegiances to -- Mr. Trump, such as whether jurors have any feelings or opinions about how he is being treated in this case, or whether they believe a former president can be criminally charged in state court.

Each side will be able to remove a limited number of jurors without explanation, a so-called peremptory challenge. They can also ask for jurors to be removed ''for cause'' by providing specific reasons they believe a juror cannot be fair and impartial.

Those disqualifications are critical.

''It's always most important to know who your worst jurors are going to be,'' said Renato Stabile, an attorney who does jury consulting. ''It's jury deselection, not jury selection. Because you can only control who you are getting rid of.''

Unlike most trials, where many potential jurors are loath to serve, some may be actively trying to get seated in this case. Michael Farkas, a defense attorney, said that those who seem to be angling for the jury ''are the people who are most likely to have a partisan agenda.''

Some may not be completely forthcoming.

''Getting 12 jurors you think you actually know is difficult enough in a regular case,'' said Mr. Farkas. ''In a case like this, both parties can pretty much rest assured that they are going to have people on the jury that aren't being completely honest about how they feel.''

Mr. Aidala was blunter about potential jurors.

''They lie,'' he said, adding, ''People want to be on that jury because they think they're going to write a book or they're going to be on '20/20' or '48 Hours' or one of those things.''

Prosecutors are aware of the perils of trying famous defendants, and Mr. Trump is globally famous.

''People know who he is,'' said Joshua Steinglass, a senior trial counsel with Mr. Bragg's office, at a Feb. 15 hearing on jury selection. ''They're going to have an opinion one way or the other. They can like him or dislike him. They can still be fair jurors so long as that is not going to affect their abilities to fairly judge the evidence.''

In Justice Juan M. Merchan's decision issued last week expanding a gag order on Mr. Trump, he suggested that the former president's fame could influence deliberations.

''The conventional 'David vs. Goliath' roles are no longer in play as demonstrated by the singular power defendant's words have on countless others,'' the justice wrote.

Justice Merchan could wield significant influence. In courtrooms, jurors often look to judges for guidance. By repeatedly attacking Justice Merchan, Mr. Trump could risk punishment, and jurors could find themselves sympathetic to the judge trying to contain him.

The case itself is relatively straightforward: Mr. Trump faces nearly three dozen felony counts of falsifying business records related to a hush-money payment made to Stormy Daniels, a porn actress, to buy her silence in the waning days of the 2016 presidential campaign.

At first blush, Mr. Trump's jury pool appears to be unfriendly: 70 percent of Manhattan's 1.1 million registered voters are Democrats. Many know the defendant well, since he once called New York his home and made his name in its tabloid newspapers. Juries and judges in Manhattan have already found Mr. Trump liable for committing sexual abuse, defaming his accuser and, most recently, for wildly inflating his net worth to obtain better loan terms.

Valerie Hans, a professor of law at Cornell University who has studied jury behavior, said that pretrial publicity typically favored prosecutors, but that dynamic could be altered by Mr. Trump's divisive behavior.

''Trump has not ceded the pretrial publicity to the prosecution in this case at all,'' said Ms. Hans, noting that Mr. Trump had repeatedly referred to case as a ''witch hunt,'' a view that his supporters echo.

''It can help shape how people look at the evidence that's presented at trial from the very start,'' she said, adding, ''People are more likely to agree with things they have heard many times before.''

Mr. Trump seems well aware of the public relations battle he is waging in his hometown. The presumptive Republican nominee, who faces three other indictments, has repeatedly called for a crackdown on crime. He recently attended the wake of a slain New York City police officer, where he said that the country needed to ''get back to law and order.''

He has attacked Justice Merchan again and again and said the justice system is rigged against him.

The judge has moved to defend the citizens who may decide the former president's fate. New York State does not allow juries to operate in full anonymity, but in early March Justice Merchan ordered prospective jurors' identities to be shielded from the public, while effectively barring Mr. Trump from exposing them. The former president will not have access even to their addresses.

Lawyers for both sides, however, will know the jurors' names. They will scour potential jurors' social media accounts as well as their voter registration and voting histories, which will show whether they voted but not for whom.

Earlier this year, the federal jurors who found Mr. Trump liable for defaming the writer E. Jean Carroll and ordered him to pay her $83.3 million were completely anonymous. Judge Lewis A. Kaplan encouraged them to stay that way.

''My advice to you is that you never disclose that you were on this jury,'' Judge Kaplan told them at the end of the trial. ''And I won't say anything more about it.''

Jurors in the criminal trial will also be subject to an intense media spotlight, with scores of reporters packing the courtroom and a constant barrage of commentary from social media and traditional news outlets.

And, of course, they will have to reckon with Mr. Trump, who will sit in the court for weeks just feet away from them. In the defamation trial, he was fixated on the jurors from the moment they walked into the courtroom. He pivoted to study them as they answered biographical questions and frequently talked to his lawyers.

But his participation may have been a double-edged sword. For prospective jurors, it provided their first glimpse of Mr. Trump's pique at being a defendant.

Judge Kaplan read a summary of the case to them, including the established finding that Mr. Trump had sexually assaulted Ms. Carroll. Later, Judge Kaplan asked the prospective jurors whether any believed that the court system was treating the former president unfairly.

Mr. Trump raised his hand.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/10/nyregion/trump-jury-hush-money-trial.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/10/nyregion/trump-jury-hush-money-trial.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Former president Donald J. Trump leaving the State Supreme Court in Manhattan after a hearing on his criminal case last month. Left, the jury box at the court. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEFFERSON SIEGEL FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A16.

**Load-Date:** April 11, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Parisians Vote to Triple Parking Fees for Big S.U.V.s and Other Hefty Cars***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B89-92S1-DXY4-X01V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 5, 2024 Monday 23:05 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; europe

**Length:** 1013 words

**Highlight:** The city authorities say that large cars pollute more and are dangerous for pedestrians. Opponents say the mayor is on a crusade against motorists.

**Body**

The city authorities say that large cars pollute more and are dangerous for pedestrians. Opponents say the mayor is on a crusade against motorists.

Voters in Paris have approved an effort to drastically increase parking fees for large sport utility vehicles and other heavy cars, the latest move by Mayor Anne Hidalgo to reshape the French capital with environmentally conscious and pedestrian-friendly policies.

The new parking fees are expected to be approved in May by the Paris City Council, where Ms. Hidalgo’s Socialist Party and Green allies have a majority. The new fees are then expected to come into effect in September, Ms. Hidalgo said.

Some car owners have complained that they are being shut out of the capital, but Ms. Hidalgo was unrepentant at a news conference on Sunday night. “Parisians made a clear choice,” she said, adding that, “We are very proud of this result.”

Still, turnout was extremely low. While some 54.5 percent of Parisians voted in favor of the measure, only about 5.7 percent of eligible voters went to the polls.

Although much of the public debate was focused on S.U.V.s, or sport utility vehicles, the new fees will apply to all cars that weigh more than 1.6 metric tons if they have traditional combustion engines or are hybrids, or more than two metric tons if they are electric.

People with those vehicles will have to pay 18 euros, a little more than $19, for the first hour of public parking in central Paris, and 12 euros in the French capital’s outer neighborhoods — triple the normal rate. For additional hours, [*prices rise sharply*](https://cdn.paris.fr/paris/2023/12/13/original-46c9e6194d1f7bd8b6c8a03c01ace093.png), so drivers of S.U.V.-like vehicles will end up paying more than $240 for six hours of parking in central Paris, instead of around $80 for regular cars.

But there are several exemptions, so the measure will mostly apply to outside visitors.

Paris residents who park in their neighborhood will not be affected. Neither will taxis or other professional vehicles, or people who use larger vehicles because of a disability.

The city authorities had argued that big S.U.V.s and other large cars emit more greenhouse gases than average cars and are more dangerous for pedestrians because of their bulkiness, citing a report that suggests that pedestrians are twice as likely to be killed in a collision with an S.U.V. than with a standard vehicle.

The referendum on parking fees was the second time in recent months that Ms. Hidalgo had sought direct popular approval for policies that are intended to make the city more appealing to pedestrians and cyclists.

In April, Parisians [*voted to ban*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/03/world/europe/paris-electric-scooters-ban.html?searchResultPosition=2) rental electric scooters from the streets of the French capital, a measure that [*went into effect*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/01/world/europe/paris-escooter-ban.html?searchResultPosition=1) in September after complaints that they were essentially taking over the sidewalks.

As mayor since 2014, Ms. Hidalgo has [*pushed to make the capital less car-centric*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/05/world/europe/paris-anne-hildago-green-city-climate-change.html?searchResultPosition=6), closing off roads along some Seine River banks to motorized vehicles and [*significantly expanding the number of bicycle lanes*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/02/world/europe/paris-bicyles-france.html?searchResultPosition=2).

Paris is served by a dense network of subways and buses, although the Olympic Games this summer, which are expected to attract millions of visitors, could seriously test the capital’s transportation.

The city authorities have [*said before*](https://www.paris.fr/pages/plus-ou-moins-de-suv-les-parisiens-et-parisiennes-sont-invites-a-voter-le-4-fevrier-25381) the vote on Sunday that while the number of car owners and cars in the capital had steadily decreased over the past decade, the average car size had increased.

The city cited a [*2020 report*](https://www.wwf.fr/sites/default/files/doc-2020-10/20201005_Etude_L-impact-ecrasant-des-SUV-sur-le-climat_WWF-France.pdf) by the World Wide Fund for Nature that said that the trend toward bigger cars was threatening [*France’s climate goals*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/03/world/europe/france-emissions-court.html?searchResultPosition=6).

David Belliard, the deputy mayor in charge of transportation in Paris, said the referendum was proof that despite pushing for “unpopular” measures like higher parking fees, “when you encourage debate, when you try to explain, you end up with decisions that are in favor of the climate, of the environment, and of health.”

S.U.V.s have grown increasingly popular around the world, a trend that experts say is [*a roadblock toward efforts to fight climate change*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/03/climate/suv-sales-global-climate.html?searchResultPosition=3) because they tend to be less fuel-efficient than smaller cars.

The International Energy Agency, the world’s leading energy agency, [*said in an analysis*](https://www.iea.org/commentaries/as-their-sales-continue-to-rise-suvs-global-co2-emissions-are-nearing-1-billion-tonnes) last year that carbon dioxide emissions from S.U.V.s worldwide had reached nearly one billion metric tons in 2022, despite the growing popularity of electric models.

But Ms. Hidalgo’s opponents — motorist groups, and her centrist and right-wing political opponents on the City Council — complained that the debate was skewed.

On Sunday, voters were asked if they were “against the creation of a specific parking rate for heavy, cumbersome, polluting private cars?”

“Given how biased the question was, the result is a snub for the mayor,” said Philippe Nozière, the president of [*40 Million Motorists*](https://www.40millionsdautomobilistes.com/), a motorist lobbying group.

Mr. Nozière said the new fees would unfairly affect tourists, residents of the capital’s suburbs and Parisian families. Sport utility vehicles and similar crossover cars have only become more popular because of increasing safety norms, he said.

“Ms. Hidalgo doesn’t want any more cars in Paris,” Mr. Nozière said. “In that case, she should just come out and say it.”

The referendum showed a [*clear divide in Paris*](https://www.lemonde.fr/les-decodeurs/article/2024/02/05/votation-sur-les-suv-a-paris-le-scrutin-illustre-le-clivage-ouest-est_6214859_4355770.html) between the capital’s wealthier western neighborhoods, which mostly voted against the new parking fees, and the city’s more ***working-class*** and socially diverse eastern ones, which mostly voted in favor.

Mr. Belliard, the deputy mayor, said that roughly 10 to 15 percent of the cars that currently circulate in Paris would be affected by the increased parking fees. He acknowledged that some recently manufactured S.U.V.s were less polluting than smaller, older cars. But he argued that automakers should be encouraged to use fewer resources, not more.

“If you build bigger, heavier vehicles, you need more materials and more energy than to build lighter ones,” he said. “You have to look at the issue in its entirety.”

PHOTO: Traffic around the Arc de Triomphe in Paris. New parking fees aimed at S.U.V.s are expected to be approved in May and take effect in September. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHEL EULER/ASSOCIATED PRESS) This article appeared in print on page A4.

**Load-Date:** February 5, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Leah Remini Lists Her Los Angeles Home a Third Time; exclusive***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69HF-YK61-JBG3-60PH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 30, 2023 Monday 22:38 EST

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**Section:** REALESTATE

**Length:** 593 words

**Byline:** Debra Kamin

**Highlight:** Ms. Remini, the actress now known as an outspoken critic against the Church of Scientology, is asking for $12.5 million for the six-bedroom house she bought 20 years ago.

**Body**

Ms. Remini, the actress now known as an outspoken critic against the Church of Scientology, is asking for $12.5 million for the six-bedroom house she bought 20 years ago.

The actress Leah Remini has listed her home in the picturesque Studio City neighborhood of Los Angeles — and is doing so at a price cut.

Ms. Remini bought the six-bedroom, nine-bath property in 2003 for $3.75 million and first listed it on the market in September 2022 for $12,995,000. She received an offer just 10 days later, but ended up not selling. Now, she’s slashed half a million dollars off the price for the property, which stretches more than 10,000 square feet on a manicured and gated 1.58-acre lot, asking $12,499,000.

The home is in the neighborhood of Fryman Canyon, one of Los Angeles’s most prestigious and star-studded corners. Neighbors in this pocket of Hollywood, where idyllic residential blocks are lined with sycamore trees and graceful Tudor Revival style houses, include George and Amal Clooney, Lucy Liu and Bruno Mars.

The home was built in 2001 and is an amalgam of architectural styles with Mediterranean and English influences, plus a vine-covered lower level and a Spanish tile roof. Its grounds include a dance studio and a swimming pool flanked by mature trees and a stone hardscape for lounging; inside, the primary bedroom has a fireplace and views of the San Gabriel mountains while the entranceway opens into a handsome quarter-turn staircase that opens into a mezzanine. Much of the décor is stark monochrome; in the kitchen, white ceiling-height cabinets wrap around a gray center island topped by black pendant lights. The room is anchored by a bay window.

Ms. Remini, 53, bought the home at the height of her stardom as Carrie Heffernan, the lovable ***working-class*** antihero of CBS’s hit sitcom “The King of Queens,” which ran for nine seasons. A decade after moving in, in 2013, she famously quit the Church of Scientology, and two years later released a memoir on the exit, “Troublemaker: Surviving Hollywood and Scientology,” which was a New York Times best seller. She followed up the book with a documentary on A&amp;E, “Leah Remini: Scientology and the Aftermath,” for which she won two prime-time Emmys.

She has since become one of the most outspoken critics in the entertainment industry against the organization, whose members in Hollywood include John Travolta, Tom Cruise, Elisabeth Moss and the now convicted rapist Danny Masterson. In August, Ms. Remini [*filed a lawsuit against the Church of Scientology*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/04/us/leah-remini-scientology-lawsuit.html#:~:text=After%20reporting%20an%20abuse%20allegation,since%202007%2C%20the%20lawsuit%20said.), in which she said that in the decade since breaking from the church, she had faced a “mob-style assault” of harassment and intimidation. The church [*released a public statement*](https://www.scientologynews.org/statements/2023/statement-3-august.html?utm_source=redirect&amp;utm_term=statement) that described Ms. Remini as “a horrible person,” referred to her lawsuit as “frivolous” and said she has spread “hate and falsehoods for a decade.”

This is the third time Ms. Remini has listed the home this year; she previously decided to sell in January and then again in February, but later removed the listing both times. Representatives for Ms. Remini declined to speculate on the reason.

PHOTOS: Top left, Leah Remini, who has put her house in the Studio City section of Los Angeles, top center, back on the market. Top right, ceiling-height cabinets in the kitchen wrapping around a gray center island topped by black pendant lights. Left, the house’s entranceway. Above, a swimming pool flanked by mature trees. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY RICHARD SHOTWELL/INVISION, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS; SHADE DEGGES/THE FRIDMAN GROUP) This article appeared in print on page RE6.

**Load-Date:** November 10, 2023

**End of Document**



[***A Love Song to His Roots; nonfiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BCG-P801-DXY4-X1BP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 20, 2024 Tuesday 21:56 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 1107 words

**Byline:** Fintan O’Toole

**Highlight:** In “Remembering Peasants,” the historian Patrick Joyce presents a stirring elegy for a vanishing culture.

**Body**

In “Remembering Peasants,” the historian Patrick Joyce presents a stirring elegy for a vanishing culture.

REMEMBERING PEASANTS: A Personal History of a Vanished World, by Patrick Joyce

In 1970, when John Lennon wanted to denounce the bourgeoisie in his angry song “***Working Class*** Hero,” he delivered the ultimate insult: “You’re still [expletive] peasants as far as I can see.”

In French (paysan, paysanne), the word simply means “a country person.” Yet almost all its synonyms are contemptuous: boor, bumpkin, churl, clodhopper, hillbilly, hayseed, hick, oaf, rube, yokel.

Most of the people who have lived on this planet since the invention of agriculture have been peasants. The word “human” is related to the Latin “humus,” meaning earth or soil. And yet the full humanity of those who survive by working the land has been routinely denied.

The cultivators, it is often assumed, are dreadfully uncultivated. And this alleged lack of sophistication has made them fair game for every kind of depredation. The food they produce has been expropriated by their overlords, by marauding armies and by totalitarian states. They have been conscripted as cannon fodder; entangled in debt and dependency as sharecroppers and serfs; starved, sometimes deliberately, in famines and prisons; forcibly converted to their masters’ religions; herded onto collective farms and slaughtered mercilessly when they revolt.

In “Remembering Peasants: A Personal History of a Vanished World” his moving and sensitive rumination on the historic fate of these earthbound people, Patrick Joyce quotes Ignazio Silone’s summation, in his novel “Fontamara,” of the hierarchy of existence as seen by the peasants of his native village in rural Italy. “At the head of everything is God.” Then came the landowner, Prince Torlonia, followed by the prince’s guards and then by his dogs. Below the dogs was “nothing at all.” And under nothing at all were the cafoni, the poor peasants.

If peasants have been at the end of the line for power and respect, for thousands of years, they are now part of a great ending. Joyce’s study is an elegy for a way of life, and a way of understanding the world, that is “part of a past we have now lost, lost in less than a single lifetime, lost with barely a sign of its loss in a present that is obsessed with itself.”

He writes of Europe, but the same processes are at work everywhere. Around the world, a great driver of migration within and between countries is the desire to escape the peasant life.

Joyce, as he acknowledges frequently, is far from the first to note the epoch-making nature of this recent shift. In “The Age of Extremes,” published in 1994, the great social historian Eric Hobsbawm wrote that “the most dramatic and far-reaching social change” of the second half of the 20th century, “and the one which cuts us off forever from the world of the past, is the death of the peasantry.”

Joyce is himself a distinguished academic historian and emeritus professor of history at the University of Manchester. But what gives “Remembering Peasants” its distinctiveness and its depth is the import of that word “personal” in his subtitle. Its poignancy is intimate.

“As the London-born child of Irish rural immigrant parents, now a man of 78 years of age,” Joyce writes, “I am a sort of relict of what we have lost. A relict that will in turn pretty soon be gone.”

He examined the world of his father, who was born a poor peasant in County Mayo, in his wonderfully evocative memoir-history “Going to My Father’s House,” published in 2021, which captures in close-up the mental landscape that “Remembering Peasants” frames as a wide shot. In that earlier book, he described his task as “pleading on behalf of the dead and their unheard stories.” “On behalf of” because very few of the countless millions who have eked a living from the land left enduring accounts of their own lives.

“This,” Joyce wrote, “is a world of a very ancient form of silence, peasant silence, something enmeshed in cultures that are largely oral in nature.” In this sense, Joyce is as much a necromancer, summoning the dead and bidding them speak, as he is a conventional historian.

He is also a kind of pilgrim. In “Remembering Peasants,” as in his memoir, he embraces the idea of homage, a word that, as he put it in “Going to My Father’s House,” “involves the show of public respect.”

Respect is not romanticization — Joyce is all too aware that the idealization of the peasantry from the 19th century onward as the embodiment of the nation’s “blood and soil” is just another form of expropriation. What he seeks to explore is, rather, the cultural richness that these generations harvested, always against the odds, from the barren soil of oppression and contempt.

Drawing on the historical and anthropological records of the rural Ireland of his parents but also those of Poland and Italy, Joyce lures us into the collective mentalities of the European peasantry. He conjures their sense of time as cyclical and reversible. He reveals their very different understanding of nature. “The wild as our sublime,” he writes, “makes no sense to the peasant.” (Joyce cites a Polish peasant interviewed in the 1960s who said, “I like it where the plain is; when I was in America I saw a mountain, and this was an awful view.”)

Much of Joyce’s method is to meditate on old photographs to draw out the importance of bodies, physical objects, interior spaces, religion and ritual. He cites Susan Sontag: “Photography is an elegiac art, a twilight art.” “Remembering Peasants” is itself imbued with the diffuse and melancholy glow of a sinking sun.

Joyce shows how the supreme value of the peasant is generational survival: The great task is to hand on to the child the land the peasant has inherited, making one’s own existence a kind of interlude between past and future. His beautifully written book is equally in-between, haunted by the ghosts of the dead but also full of the warmth of human sympathy. Returning to the little farm where his father was born, he thinks of “the throng of the invisible departed that once populated the hillside.” His achievement is to leave them a little more visible, a little less silent.

REMEMBERING PEASANTS: A Personal History of a Vanished World | By Patrick Joyce | Scribner | 400 pp. | $30

Fintan O’Toole needs a bio. tkt kt tkt kt kt ktot ktk tk tkt kt kt kt tk tkt kt kt tk tktkt kt tkt kt tkt kt tkt kt kt tkt kt tkt kt tkt kt tkt kt tkt kt tkt kt kt tkt kt tkt kt kt

PHOTO: “The Gleaners,” an 1857 oil painting by Jean-François Millet. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MUSEE D’ORSAY, VIA BRIDGEMAN IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page BR13.

**Load-Date:** March 8, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Unjustly Convicted Man Gets $25 Million***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B35-FS61-JBG3-60YS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 12, 2024 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 13

**Length:** 874 words

**Byline:** By Michael Levenson

**Body**

The city of Concord, N.C., acknowledged that ''significant errors in judgment and willful misconduct'' led to the wrongful conviction of Ronnie Long, 68, on rape and burglary charges.

A man who spent 44 years in prison after a jury in North Carolina wrongfully convicted him of raping a woman in 1976 has settled a lawsuit against state and local law enforcement officials for $25 million.

The settlement included a public apology to the man, Ronnie Long, 68, from the city of Concord, N.C., which acknowledged that ''significant errors in judgment and willful misconduct'' by previous city employees led to his wrongful conviction and imprisonment.

''We are deeply remorseful for the past wrongs that caused tremendous harm to Mr. Long, his family, friends and our community,'' the Concord City Council said in a statement announcing the settlement on Tuesday.

''Mr. Long suffered the extraordinary loss of his freedom and a substantial portion of his life because of this conviction,'' the statement said. ''He wrongly served 44 years, 3 months and 17 days in prison for a crime he did not commit. While there are no measures to fully restore to Mr. Long and his family all that was taken from them, through this agreement we are doing everything in our power to right the past wrongs and take responsibility.''

Mr. Long had insisted on the public apology, along with the monetary settlement, which includes $22 million from the city and $3 million from the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation, one of his lawyers, Jamie T. Lau, said on Wednesday.

''One of the biggest things for him, even through those 44 years, was to clear not only his name, but his family's name, to make it known that he was not involved in the assault that led to his conviction and to make it known that he came from a good, ***working-class*** family in Concord,'' said Mr. Lau, a supervising attorney at the Duke Law School Wrongful Convictions Clinic, which represented Mr. Long.

Mr. Long was a 21-year-old cement mason with a 2-year-old son when he was convicted on Oct. 1, 1976, of breaking into a home in Concord, about 25 miles northeast of Charlotte, and raping a 54-year-old woman earlier that year. He was sentenced to two concurrent life sentences even though no physical evidence linked him to the crime, his lawyers said.

Mr. Long's lawyers said the Concord police had been under pressure to close the case in part because the victim's late husband had been an executive at a local textile company, Cannon Mills, which had offered a $10,000 reward for information leading to an arrest.

The victim had identified Mr. Long as her attacker, but only after the police brought her into a courtroom in a wig and glasses to watch as Mr. Long faced a bogus charge of trespassing in a city park, according to court documents, a process that his lawyers said was highly suggestive.

Mr. Long, who is Black, has dark skin, and the victim, who was white, had previously described her attacker as a ''yellow- or really light-skinned Black male,'' Mr. Long's lawyers said.

The police hid evidence from Mr. Long's trial lawyers that would have undercut the courtroom identification, according to a lawsuit that Mr. Long filed against the city in 2021. That evidence included hair and more than 40 fingerprints found at the crime scene that did not match Mr. Long's, the lawsuit said.

Before the trial, the Cabarrus County sheriff, the Concord police chief and some of his officers also personally vetted the jury rolls to weed out ''undesirables,'' according to Mr. Long's lawsuit. As a result, there were only four Black people in the pool of 99 prospective jurors that Mr. Long's trial team reviewed, the lawsuit said. None were seated.

Three members of the all-white jury worked for Cannon Mills, and a fourth was married to a Cannon Mills employee, Mr. Long's lawsuit said.

Mr. Long ''was targeted by police, the police manufactured a jury pool to ensure his conviction and, when the evidence indicated they had the wrong person, they just lied about it or made it disappear,'' Mr. Lau said.

In August 2020, days after a federal appeals court ruled that Mr. Long's due process rights had been violated at his trial, a judge dismissed Mr. Long's conviction on rape and burglary charges.

Mr. Long, who had spent more than 40 years trying to prove his innocence, was released from the Albemarle Correctional Institution in New London, N.C.

In December 2020, Gov. Roy Cooper of North Carolina, a Democrat, granted Mr. Long a pardon. The pardon qualified Mr. Long to receive $750,000 from the state, which he used to buy a house with his wife, Ashley Long, whom he had met and married while in prison, Mr. Lau said.

The two are now planning to celebrate their 10th wedding anniversary, said Sonya Pfeiffer, one of Mr. Long's lawyers. While the settlement will help them financially, ''what it doesn't give him is any of the life he lost,'' Ms. Pfeiffer said, including time with his parents, who died while he was in prison.

''He wanted to repair what had been done to him and repair that legacy that had been damaged and ripped from the family,'' she said. The settlement, she added, ''is a critical step to healing and a start to restoring the name.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/11/us/ronnie-long-settlement-wrongful-conviction.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/11/us/ronnie-long-settlement-wrongful-conviction.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A13.

**Load-Date:** January 12, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Former U.K. Tech Mogul Faces the Trial of His Life***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BK7-C7T1-DXY4-X00T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 18, 2024 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1398 words

**Byline:** By Michael J. de la Merced

**Body**

A criminal trial is set to begin for Mr. Lynch, the founder of the software company Autonomy, which was sold to Hewlett-Packard in 2011 and later accused of being a fraud.

Every morning in his townhouse in the tony San Francisco neighborhood of Pacific Heights, the man once referred to as Britain's Bill Gates gets to work.

That man, Mike Lynch, checks in with his investment firm, Invoke Capital, on its recent performance. He speaks with researchers in Cambridge, England, whom he funds personally, about the ways artificial intelligence could be used to help those with hearing difficulties. He receives updates on the heritage Red Poll cattle and other livestock at his farm in Suffolk, in the east of England.

Eventually, Mr. Lynch, 58, turns to his most important task: defending himself against 16 criminal counts of conspiracy and fraud. If convicted, he will face up to 20 years behind bars.

The trial begins on Monday in San Francisco, where federal prosecutors -- who extradited Mr. Lynch from Britain in May and placed him under house arrest -- have accused the former tech mogul of defrauding Hewlett-Packard of billions when he sold HP his software company, Autonomy, for $11 billion in 2011.

In 2012, HP announced an $8.8 billion write-down and blamed it on ''serious accounting improprieties'' at Autonomy. Stunned investors called it one of the worst acquisitions in history. Mr. Lynch has since waged a series of complex, overlapping legal battles in the United States and Britain.

In 2022, a London judge in a civil case found Mr. Lynch and Sushovan Hussain, Autonomy's former finance chief, liable for defrauding HP. The judge said the case was ''amongst the longest and most complex in English legal history,'' with the trial running for more than three months, the presentation of tens of thousands of documents and, in the end, a ruling that ran to well over 1,000 pages.

Mr. Lynch contests HP's claims and plans to appeal the ruling. His lawyers called it ''a case study in buyer's remorse,'' and point the finger at HP's executives for mismanaging Autonomy. Hearings were held last month to decide on damages, with HP seeking some $4 billion and Mr. Lynch arguing that he owed nothing.

Mr. Lynch's legal travails also serve as a reminder of the decline of Hewlett-Packard, a onetime titan of the U.S. technology industry. The former Silicon Valley giant has since split up, and has long been overshadowed by younger leviathans like Alphabet, Apple and Microsoft.

For his upcoming criminal trial, Mr. Lynch's odds do not look good. The judge, Charles Breyer of the Northern District of California, has dismissed some of the evidence Mr. Lynch's lawyers tried to introduce which they say showed that HP mismanaged Autonomy after acquiring the company. Judge Breyer also oversaw the trial of Mr. Hussain, who was convicted in 2018 of charges similar to those Mr. Lynch now faces. Mr. Hussain was recently released from a federal prison in Pennsylvania.

Last year, Mr. Lynch lost a bid to avoid extradition despite lobbying the British government, which had approved his transfer to the United States on the same day as the judgment against him in the civil case brought by HP.

Last month, he sued the Serious Fraud Office, Britain's securities regulator, over its handling of data requests by the United States government. The lawsuit, a last-ditch bid to delay the U.S. criminal trial, was settled earlier this month.

Mr. Lynch still wields considerable resources to defend himself in the San Francisco courtroom. ''Mike Lynch has faith that he will be vindicated when he finally gets a chance to tell his story to a jury,'' Reid Weingarten, one of several prominent white-collar defense lawyers representing Mr. Lynch in the United States, said in a statement. ''We look forward to this opportunity to tell Mike Lynch's story and allow him to put this unfortunate chapter behind him.''

Since his extradition, Mr. Lynch has lived under 24-hour surveillance and court-mandated private security, a drastic fall for a man once considered one of Britain's biggest tech success stories.

Born into a ***working-class*** family outside of London, he attended private school on a scholarship and graduated from Cambridge before founding Autonomy in 1996. The company helped clients analyze unstructured information in order to unearth hidden insights about their businesses.

By 2011, Autonomy had become one of Britain's most prominent technology companies, with its home base of Cambridge sometimes called ''Silicon Fen.''

''He certainly raised the profile of Cambridge technology,'' said Tony Quested, the editor of Business Weekly, a technology trade publication based in Cambridge. ''There wasn't that much around at the time.''

Mr. Lynch became a celebrity in British tech circles. He was a member of the Royal Society, one of the country's top scientific associations; an adviser to David Cameron, the prime minister at the time; and sat on the board of the BBC.

HP, then led by Léo Apotheker, a former chief of the German software giant SAP, hit upon the notion of buying Autonomy to transform itself from an aging hardware provider to a higher-margin software company. HP agreed to buy Autonomy in mid-2011 for some 60 percent more than its market value.

Things soured quickly.

Mr. Apotheker was out as chief executive a month after the deal was announced, as investors and analysts revolted against both the high price of the Autonomy acquisition and a plan to spin off HP's personal computer division (which was born from another major takeover, of Compaq.)

He was replaced by Meg Whitman, the former eBay chief who sat on HP's board. Within HP, Autonomy's star quickly dimmed amid rapidly declining sales. Mr. Lynch, who clashed with Ms. Whitman, was fired in May 2012.

Later that year, HP said it had been duped by Autonomy, misled by improprieties including the backdating of contracts and the use of hardware sales to bolster revenue, particularly at the end of a quarter. The multibillion-dollar write-down marked the beginning of Mr. Lynch's legal travails, which will culminate this month in another long and complex trial.

Over the years, Mr. Lynch has denied the characterization that the company was riddled with fraud. He has blamed Ms. Whitman, now the United States ambassador to Kenya, and other senior executives who clashed with him, for Autonomy's disintegration. His lawyers have argued in court filings that HP executives, for example, knew about the hardware sales and hadn't raised them as an issue.

They have pointed to internal emails showing the shifting calculations of Autonomy's worth, at one point putting it at more than $11 billion. They have also noted that accountants for EY, the global accounting and consulting firm previously known as Ernst & Young, who were working for HP had not believed the Autonomy takeover price was inflated because of accounting irregularities.

U.S. federal prosecutors argued in court documents that Mr. Lynch, long known as a hard-charging boss, relished being tough and maintaining control. (In one filing, government lawyers described an internal sales video at Autonomy in which he portrayed himself as a Mafia don, and noted that he had named conference rooms after James Bond movie villains.) Witness depositions have included Ms. Whitman and Catherine Lesjak, HP's former chief financial officer.

The prosecutors have sought to introduce tens of thousands of exhibits and a 44-person witness list, and they estimate that the trial could last until the end of May.

Mr. Lynch's freedom, and his legacy, are at stake.

He has sought to foster a reputation as a public intellectual by giving interviews on the subject of technology, but has kept a low profile since his extradition. His last published piece was in April, when he encouraged British policymakers to embrace A.I. start-ups.

Autonomy is now part of the Canadian software company OpenText. Mr. Lynch's investment firm, Invoke, has made crucial early investments in companies like the cybersecurity provider Darktrace.

But associations with Mr. Lynch can be fraught. In December, Darktrace shareholders rejected a nominee for the board proposed by Invoke. And in the company's financial filings, Darktrace has described ''Autonomy related matters'' as a risk ''from both a reputational and a legal perspective.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/16/business/dealbook/lynch-hp-autonomy-trial.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/16/business/dealbook/lynch-hp-autonomy-trial.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Mike Lynch, former chief executive of Autonomy, leaving his extradition hearing in London in 2021. Autonomy was sold to HP in 2011. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HOLLIE ADAMS/BLOOMBERG NEWS) (B2) This article appeared in print on page B1, B2.

**Load-Date:** March 18, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Man Reaches $25 Million Settlement After 44 Years of Wrongful Imprisonment***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B30-PYP1-JBG3-60G2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 11, 2024 Thursday 23:05 EST

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 871 words

**Highlight:** The city of Concord, N.C., acknowledged that “significant errors in judgment and willful misconduct” led to the wrongful conviction of Ronnie Long, 68, on rape and burglary charges.

**Body**

The city of Concord, N.C., acknowledged that “significant errors in judgment and willful misconduct” led to the wrongful conviction of Ronnie Long, 68, on rape and burglary charges.

A man who spent 44 years in prison after a jury in North Carolina wrongfully convicted him of raping a woman in 1976 has settled a lawsuit against state and local law enforcement officials for $25 million.

The settlement included a public apology to the man, Ronnie Long, 68, from the city of Concord, N.C., which acknowledged that “significant errors in judgment and willful misconduct” by previous city employees led to his wrongful conviction and imprisonment.

“We are deeply remorseful for the past wrongs that caused tremendous harm to Mr. Long, his family, friends and our community,” the Concord City Council said in [*a statement*](https://concordnc.gov/Services/Community/News/ID/249/City-of-Concord-Reaches-Settlement-with-Ronnie-Long) announcing the settlement on Tuesday.

“Mr. Long suffered the extraordinary loss of his freedom and a substantial portion of his life because of this conviction,” the statement said. “He wrongly served 44 years, 3 months and 17 days in prison for a crime he did not commit. While there are no measures to fully restore to Mr. Long and his family all that was taken from them, through this agreement we are doing everything in our power to right the past wrongs and take responsibility.”

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“One of the biggest things for him, even through those 44 years, was to clear not only his name, but his family’s name, to make it known that he was not involved in the assault that led to his conviction and to make it known that he came from a good, ***working-class*** family in Concord,” said Mr. Lau, a supervising attorney at the Duke Law School Wrongful Convictions Clinic, which represented Mr. Long.

Mr. Long was a 21-year-old cement mason with a 2-year-old son when he was convicted on Oct. 1, 1976, of breaking into a home in Concord, about 25 miles northeast of Charlotte, and raping a 54-year-old woman earlier that year. He was sentenced to two concurrent life sentences even though no physical evidence linked him to the crime, his lawyers said.

Mr. Long’s lawyers said the Concord police had been under pressure to close the case in part because the victim’s late husband had been an executive at a local textile company, Cannon Mills, which had offered a $10,000 reward for information leading to an arrest.

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In December 2020, Gov. Roy Cooper of North Carolina, a Democrat, [*granted Mr. Long a pardon*](https://files.nc.gov/governor/documents/files/Long-POI-Order.pdf). The pardon qualified Mr. Long to receive $750,000 from the state, which he used to buy a house with his wife, Ashley Long, whom he had met and married while in prison, Mr. Lau said.

The two are now planning to celebrate their 10th wedding anniversary, said Sonya Pfeiffer, one of Mr. Long’s lawyers. While the settlement will help them financially, “what it doesn’t give him is any of the life he lost,” Ms. Pfeiffer said, including time with his parents, who died while he was in prison.

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This article appeared in print on page A13.

**Load-Date:** January 11, 2024

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[***Last Exit Before Trump: New Hampshire***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B59-HX81-JBG3-603M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 22, 2024 Monday 10:55 EST

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**Section:** UPSHOT

**Length:** 916 words

**Highlight:** Tuesday’s primary election will probably decide whether there will be a race at all.

**Body**

Tuesday’s primary election will probably decide whether there will be a race at all.

Let’s be blunt about the stakes of the New Hampshire primary on Tuesday.

If Donald J. Trump wins decisively, as the polls suggest, he will be on track to win the Republican nomination without a serious contest. The race will be all but over.

The backdrop is simple: Mr. Trump holds a dominant, 50-plus-point lead in the polls with just seven weeks to go until the heart of the primary season, when the preponderance of delegates will be awarded. His position has only improved since Iowa, with national polls now routinely showing him with over 70 percent of the vote.

Even skeptical Republican officials are consolidating behind the party’s front-runner. Ron DeSantis’s decision to [*suspend his campaign*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/21/us/politics/desantis-drops-out.html) and endorse Mr. Trump is only the latest example.

The polling by state isn’t much better for Nikki Haley, the only remaining opponent for Mr. Trump. He leads Ms. Haley by at least 30 points in all of the states after New Hampshire until Super Tuesday. So without a monumental shift in the race, he will secure the nomination in short order.

New Hampshire is the only state where we can entertain — however unlikely — the possibility that the race could be shaken up by enough to put additional states into play.

Why is New Hampshire the only real opportunity?

It’s the only state where the polls are even close. On average, Ms. Haley trails Mr. Trump [*by about 15 points*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/polls/president-primary-r/2024/new-hampshire/) in New Hampshire polls, 49 percent to 34 percent. That’s a comfortable lead for Mr. Trump, but there have occasionally been polls showing a single-digit race. It’s close enough to contemplate a Trump loss.

There is no other state where Mr. Trump leads the latest (often outdated) polls by less than 30 points. Not even Ms. Haley’s home state, South Carolina, appears competitive.

New Hampshire is about as good as it gets for Haley. Her appeal is almost exclusively confined to moderate and college-educated voters, and New Hampshire is an excellent state for a moderate Republican. The state ranks eighth in four-year college attainment, and independent voters are allowed to participate in the primary. It has a moderate Republican governor [*who has endorsed*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/12/us/politics/nikki-haley-chris-sununu-nh.html) Ms. Haley, not Mr. Trump. And in presidential primaries the state usually backs moderate candidates — think John McCain and Mitt Romney. While Mr. Trump [*won with 35 percent*](https://www.nytimes.com/elections/2016/results/primaries/new-hampshire) in 2016, the moderate-establishment candidates combined to amass 49 percent of the vote — more than in any other primary state in 2016 except for Vermont and Ohio, which was John Kasich’s home state.

If she can’t win in New Hampshire, there is no reason to think she can win elsewhere.

It’s the only state that can create the perception of a newly competitive race. I’m not 100 percent sure whether New Hampshire is actually the No. 1 opportunity for a Haley victory. Maybe Vermont is a better one — though a [*recent poll*](https://scholars.unh.edu/survey_center_polls/777/) says no — or the District of Columbia. What I’m sure about, however, is that none of those other chances could be treated as a “game changer” that could rekindle a tiny glimmer of hope for the potential opposition to Mr. Trump.

The first-in-the-nation New Hampshire primary receives tremendous media coverage, and it would only be amplified if Ms. Haley posted an upset victory. It’s early enough in the primary season that the state scoreboard would read “Trump 1, Haley 1” at the end of the night. In March, a win in a state like Vermont will not receive anywhere near as much media coverage. By then, a Haley win would also be drowned out by other Trump victories, perhaps even on the same night — or, if not, just a few days later with another primary result. New Hampshire, in contrast, will set the conversation for a month. There isn’t another election with both Ms. Haley and Mr. Trump on the ballot until South Carolina, on Feb. 24.

Beyond New Hampshire

It’s important to emphasize that Mr. Trump would be an overwhelming favorite to win the nomination even if he lost New Hampshire. Ms. Haley is a classic factional candidate with narrow appeal to moderate and highly educated voters. It’s technically possible that New Hampshire will offer her an opportunity to broaden her appeal. But it’s not remotely likely that a conservative, populist, ***working-class*** party will swerve 50 points against a well-known former president toward the moderate, establishment candidate of highly educated voters over the next 45 days. Even if Ms. Haley won New Hampshire, she might still be the underdog in every other state.

And conversely, the race might remain contested in some sense, even if Mr. Trump wins New Hampshire decisively. Ms. Haley would presumably go on to South Carolina, where Mr. Trump leads by 30 points. But without New Hampshire to put the political wind at her back, there’s no reason to think she would be able to overcome this kind of staggering deficit. Instead, New Hampshire could put Mr. Trump on track for a 50-state sweep.

With a Trump win on Tuesday, the race would begin to have some of the characteristics of the Democratic primary. Yes, the front-runner faces a challenger. But no, it would not be realistic to believe the front-runner could be defeated by the usual means of campaigning on the trail and winning primary elections — with the obligatory caveat that Mr. Trump’s legal challenges might eventually offer a separate and novel way for him to lose down the line.

PHOTO: Newport, N.H., last week. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CJ Gunther/EPA, via Shutterstock FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** January 22, 2024

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[***Was the 401(k) a Mistake?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C04-83H1-JBG3-60Y1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 8, 2024 Wednesday 15:48 EST

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**Section:** MAGAZINE

**Length:** 4677 words

**Byline:** Michael Steinberger

**Highlight:** How an obscure, 45-year-old tax change transformed retirement and left so many Americans out in the cold.

**Body**

Jen Forbus turned 50 this year. She is in good health and says her life has only gotten better as she has grown older. Forbus resides in Lorain, Ohio, not far from Cleveland; she is single and has no children, but her parents and sisters are nearby. She works, remotely, as an editorial supervisor for an educational publishing company, a job that she loves. She is on track to pay off her mortgage in the next 10 years, and having recently made her last car payment, she is otherwise debt-free. By almost any measure, Forbus is middle class.

Still, she worries about her future. Forbus would like to stop working when she is 65. She has no big retirement dreams — she is not planning to move to Florida or to take extravagant vacations. She hopes to spend her later years enjoying family and friends and pursuing different hobbies. But she knows that she hasn’t set aside enough money to ensure that she can realize even this modest ambition.

A former high school teacher, Forbus says she has around $200,000 in total savings. She earns a high five-figure salary and contributes 9 percent of it to the 401(k) plan that she has through her employer. The company also makes a matching contribution that is equivalent to 5 percent of her salary. A widely accepted rule of thumb among personal-finance experts is that your retirement income needs to be close to 80 percent of what you earned before retiring if you hope to maintain your lifestyle. Forbus figures that she can retire comfortably on around $1 million, although if her house is paid off, she might be able to get by with a bit less. She is not factoring Social Security benefits into her calculations. “I feel like it’s too uncertain and not something I can depend on,” she says.

But even if the stock market delivers blockbuster returns over the next 15 years, her goal is going to be difficult to reach — and this assumes that she doesn’t have a catastrophic setback, like losing her job or suffering a debilitating illness.

She also knows that markets don’t always go up. During the 2008 global financial crisis, her 401(k) lost a third of its value, which was a scarring experience. From the extensive research that she has done, Forbus has become a fairly savvy investor; she’s familiar with all of the major funds and has 60 percent of her money in stocks and the rest in fixed income, which is generally the recommended ratio for people who are some years away from retiring. Still, Forbus would prefer that her retirement prospects weren’t so dependent on her own investing acumen. “It makes me very nervous,” she concedes. She and her friends speak with envy of the pensions that their parents and grandparents had. “I wish that were an option for us,” she says.

The sentiment is understandable. With pensions, otherwise known as defined-benefit plans, your employer invests on your behalf, and you are promised a fixed monthly income upon retirement. With 401(k)s, which are named after a section of the tax code, you choose from investment options that your company gives you, and there is no guarantee of what you will get back, only limits on what you can put in. This is why they are known as defined-contribution plans. Pensions still exist but mainly for unionized jobs. In the private sector, they have largely been replaced by 401(k)s, which came along in the early 1980s. Generally, contributions to 401(k)s are pretax dollars — you pay income tax when you withdraw the money — and these savings vehicles have been a bonanza for a lot of Americans.

Not all companies offer 401(k)s, however, and millions of private-sector employees lack access to workplace retirement plans. Availability is just one problem; contributing is another. Many people who have 401(k)s put little if any money into their accounts. With Americans now aging out of the work force in record numbers — according to the Alliance for Lifetime Income, a nonprofit founded by a group of financial-services companies, 4.1 million people will turn 65 this year, part of what the [*AARP and others have called the “silver tsunami”*](https://www.aarp.org/retirement/planning-for-retirement/info-2024/peak-boomer-readiness.html) — the holes in the retirement system are becoming starkly apparent. U.S. Census Bureau data indicates that in [*2017 49 percent of Americans ages 55 to 66 had “no personal retirement savings.”*](https://www.aarp.org/retirement/planning-for-retirement/info-2024/peak-boomer-readiness.html)

The savings shortfall is no surprise to Teresa Ghilarducci, an economist at the New School in New York. She has long predicted that the shift to 401(k)s would leave vast numbers of Americans without enough money to retire on, reducing many of them to poverty or forcing them to continue working into their late 60s and beyond. That so many people still do not have 401(k)s or find themselves, like Jen Forbus, in such tenuous circumstances when they do, is proof that what she refers to as this “40-year experiment with do-it-yourself pensions” has been “an utter failure.”

It certainly appears to be failing a large segment of the working population, and while Ghilarducci has been making that case for years, more and more people are now coming around to her view. Her latest book, “Work, Retire, Repeat: The Uncertainty of Retirement in the New Economy,” which was published in March, is drawing a lot of attention: She has been interviewed on [*NPR*](https://www.aarp.org/retirement/planning-for-retirement/info-2024/peak-boomer-readiness.html) and [*C-SPAN*](https://www.aarp.org/retirement/planning-for-retirement/info-2024/peak-boomer-readiness.html) and has [*testified on Capitol Hill.*](https://www.aarp.org/retirement/planning-for-retirement/info-2024/peak-boomer-readiness.html)

It is no longer just fellow progressives who are receptive to her message. Ghilarducci used to be an object of scorn on the right, once drawing the megaphonic wrath of Rush Limbaugh. Today, though, even some conservatives admit that her assessment of the retirement system is basically correct. Indeed, Kevin Hassett, who was a senior economic adviser to President Trump, teamed up with Ghilarducci not long ago to devise a plan that would help low- and middle-income Americans save more for retirement. Their proposal is the basis for legislation currently before Congress.

And Ghilarducci recently found her critique being echoed by one of the most powerful figures on Wall Street. In [*his annual letter to investors, Larry Fink*](https://www.aarp.org/retirement/planning-for-retirement/info-2024/peak-boomer-readiness.html), the chairman and chief executive of BlackRock, one of the world’s largest asset-management companies, wrote that the United States was facing a retirement crisis due in no small part to self-directed retirement financing. Fink said that for most Americans, replacing defined-benefit plans with defined-contribution plans had been “a shift from financial certainty to financial uncertainty” and suggested that it was time to abandon the “you’re on your own” approach.

While that isn’t likely to happen anytime soon, it seems fair to ask whether the country as a whole has been well served by the 401(k) revolution. The main beneficiaries have been higher-income workers; instead of making an economically secure retirement possible for more people, 401(k)s have arguably become another driver of the inequality that is a defining feature of American life.

When it comes to generating wealth, 401(k)s have been an extraordinary success. The Investment Company Institute, a financial-industry trade group, calculates that the roughly 700,000 401(k) plans now in existence hold more than $7 trillion in assets. But the gains have gone primarily to those who were already at or near the top. According to the Federal Reserve, the value of the median retirement-saving account for households in the 90th to 100th income percentile has more than quintupled during the last 30 years and is currently more than $500,000. In one sense, it is not surprising that the affluent have profited to this degree from 401(k)s: The more money you can invest, the more money you stand to make.

In 2024, annual pretax contributions for employees are capped at $23,000, but with an employer match and possibly also an after-tax contribution (which is permitted under some plans), the maximum can reach $69,000. Workers 50 and over are also allowed to kick in an additional $7,500, potentially pushing the total to $76,500. Needless to say, only a sliver of the U.S. work force can contribute anything like that to their 401(k)s.

The withdrawal rules have evolved in a way that also favors high earners. You are generally not supposed to begin taking money from a 401(k) before you are 59\xC2; doing so could incur a 10 percent penalty (on top of the income-tax hit). What’s more, you can now put off withdrawing money until age 73; previously, you had to begin drawing down 401(k)s by 70\xC2. Those extra years are an added tax benefit for retirees who are in no rush to tap their 401(k)s.

People in lower-income brackets may have also made money from 401(k)s but hardly enough to retire on with Social Security. In 2022, the median retirement account for households in the 20th through 39th percentile held just $20,000. For this segment of the working population, 401(k)s sometimes end up serving a very different purpose. They become a source of emergency funds, not retirement income. But then, for many of these people, retirement seems like an impossibility.

Laura Gendreau directs a program called Stand by Me, a joint venture between the United Way of Delaware and the state government that provides free financial counseling. She says that when she asks clients if they are putting aside any money for retirement, they often look at her in disbelief: “They say, ‘How do you expect me to save for retirement when I’m living paycheck to paycheck?’” She and her colleagues try to identify expenditures that can be eliminated or reduced so that people can start saving at least a small portion of what they earn. But she says that some clients are having such a hard time just getting by that they can’t fathom being able to retire. Sometimes it does not even occur to them to look into whether their employers offer 401(k)s. “They have no idea,” Gendreau says.

Ghilarducci has been hearing this sort of thing for years. Her career in academia began around the time that 401(k)s first emerged, and from the start, she regarded these savings plans with skepticism. For one thing, she feared that a lot of people would never have access to them. But she also felt that 401(k)s were unsuitable for lower-income Americans, who often struggled to save money or who might not have either the time or the knowledge to manage their own investments. In her judgment, the offloading of retirement risk onto workers was worse than just an economic misstep — it represented a betrayal of the social contract.

Ghilarducci, who is 66, has the unusual distinction of being a high school dropout with a Ph.D. in economics. She also has firsthand experience of economic hardship, and her ***working-class*** roots have shaped her worldview. She was raised by a single mother in Roseville, Calif., and money was always tight. Despite a turbulent home life, she excelled academically and was able to take advantage of a program that allowed California students with strong grades and test scores to attend schools within the California university system without charge.

After being accepted at the University of California, San Diego, she stopped going to high school — it bored her — and never graduated. A year later, she transferred to the University of California, Berkeley. Neither university knew that she had not completed high school. “They didn’t ask, and I didn’t tell,” she says with a laugh. She majored in economics at Berkeley and also obtained her doctorate there. She then taught at the University of Notre Dame for 25 years (she joined the faculty of the New School in 2008). During that time, she acquired a national reputation for her expertise on retirement.

In 2008, Ghilarducci proposed replacing 401(k)s with “guaranteed retirement accounts,” a program that would combine mandatory individual and employer contributions with tax credits and that would guarantee at least a 3 percent annual return, adjusted for inflation. Her plan drew the wrath of voices on the right — the conservative pundit James Pethokoukis called her “the most dangerous woman in America.”

But her timing proved to be apt: That year, the global financial crisis imperiled the retirement plans of millions of Americans. Ghilarducci suggested that if the government was going to bail out the banks, it also had an obligation to help people whose 401(k)s had tanked. Her idea inflamed the right: Rush Limbaugh attacked her during his daily radio show, which brought her a wave of hate mail.

Her hostility to 401(k)s is partly anchored in a belief that when it comes to retirement, the country was on a better path in the past. In the 1950s and 1960s, many Americans could count on pensions and Social Security to provide them with a decent retirement. It was a different era, of course — back then, men (and it was almost always men) often spent their entire careers with the same companies. And even at their peak, pensions were not available to everyone; only around half of all employees ever had one. Still, in Ghilarducci’s view, it was a time when the United States put more emphasis on the interests of ***working-class*** Americans, including ensuring that they could retire with some degree of economic security.

She portrays the move to defined contribution retirement plans as part of the sharp rightward turn that the United States took under President Ronald Reagan, when the notion of individual responsibility became economic dogma — what the Yale University political scientist Jacob Hacker has called “the great risk shift.” The downside of this shift was laid bare by the great recession. Many older Americans lost their savings and were forced to scavenge for work.

This was the subject of the journalist Jessica Bruder’s book “Nomadland,” for which Ghilarducci was interviewed and that was the basis for the Oscar-winning film of the same title. To Ghilarducci, the portraits in “Nomadland” — of lives upended, of the indignity of being old and having to scramble for food and shelter — presaged the insecure future that awaited millions of other older Americans. And Ghilarducci believes that with record numbers of people now reaching retirement age, that grim future is arriving.

Her new book makes a powerful case for why all working people deserve a comfortable, dignified retirement and why, for so many Americans, the current retirement system is incapable of providing that. Her nationwide book tour has had the feel of a victory lap, although the vindication she can plausibly claim is no cause for celebration. “It’s the pinnacle of my career because what I told people would happen is happening,” she says. “So it’s a big told-you-so, and that told-you-so is on the backs of around 40 million middle-class workers who will be poor or near-poor elders.”

Ghilarducci finds it outrageous that Americans who don’t have enough money set aside for retirement are now being told that the solution to their financial woes is to just keep working. Forcing senior citizens to stay on the job is cruel, she says, and especially so if it involves physically demanding labor. She has observed that older workers often have “a shame hunch” — their body language suggests embarrassment. They are spending their last years in quiet humiliation.

To Ghilarducci, all of this represents a retreat from the ideals that fueled America’s prosperity and made the United States a beacon of opportunity. As she writes in her book, “A signature achievement of the postwar period — the democratization of who has control over the pace and content of their time after a lifetime of work — is being reversed.”

Back in the 1960s and 1970s, many companies, in addition to providing their employees with pensions, offered tax-deferred profit-sharing programs, which were available mostly to executives. But there was a lot of murkiness surrounding these defined-contribution plans — and a lot of concern that the I.R.S. might eventually ban them. When Congress passed the Revenue Act of 1978, it included an addition to the Internal Revenue Code that was intended to provide greater clarity about how these plans were to be structured and who could participate. The provision, which took effect in 1980, was called Section 401(k). According to a 2014 Bloomberg article, the staff members who drafted it thought it was a minor regulatory tweak, of no particular consequence. One former senior congressional aide was quoted as saying it was “an insignificant provision in a very large bill. It took on a life of its own afterwards.”

That’s because Ted Benna saw something in that new section of the Internal Revenue Code that had eluded the people who wrote it. Benna, a retirement-benefits consultant, was in his suburban Philadelphia office on a Saturday afternoon in 1979, trying to figure out how to devise a deferred-compensation plan for one of his firm’s clients, a local bank. At the time, the top marginal tax rate was 70 percent, and the bank wanted to see if there was a way to award bonuses to its executives that could limit their tax bill.

As Benna read the provisions of section 401(k), a solution dawned on him: The language seemed to indicate that he could create a plan in which the bonuses were put in a tax-deferred retirement plan. There was a catch, though. Under the terms of 401(k), this could be done only if rank-and-file employees participated in the plan. Benna knew that getting them to agree to set aside some of their pay would not be easy, so he came up with a sweetener — he proposed that the bank would partly match the contributions of its employees.

The bank balked at Benna’s proposal; it was concerned that regulators would rule the scheme illegal. Benna’s own firm decided to implement the idea, however, and it proved wildly popular with the company’s 50 or so employees. Benna and his colleagues called the plan “cash-op,” but the name never caught on, and instead came to be known as the 401(k). The new savings vehicle eventually did run into government resistance, when the Reagan administration, concerned about the lost tax revenues, tried to eliminate 401(k)s in 1986 — this notwithstanding the fact that 401(k)s, with their promise of individual empowerment, seemed emblematic of the so-called Reagan Revolution. But by then it was too late. A number of companies were already offering 401(k)s to their employees, and the financial industry, eyeing a lucrative new revenue stream, threw its lobbying muscle behind these investment plans.

Benna is 82 now, and I recently met with him in York, Pa. (He was there visiting family; he lives near Williamsport, Pa.) He is still working. He told me that his religious faith had compelled him to put off his own retirement. “The Creator didn’t create us to spend 30 years doing nothing,” he said. A tall, unassuming man, Benna suggested that we meet at the Cracker Barrel in York. There, over iced tea and coffee, we talked about the trillion-dollar business that resulted from his close reading of section 401(k). Benna had been quoted in the past voicing some misgivings about these savings plans. He told the magazine Smart Money in 2011, for instance, that he had given rise to a “monster.”

But he explained to me that the remorse he expressed had nothing to do with 401(k)s themselves, which he said had helped convert millions of Americans from “spenders into savers.” Rather, what he regretted was the complexity of many plans — he thought a lot of employees were overwhelmed by all the investment options — and the fact that the financial-services industry profited from them to the degree that it did. Benna said that the advent of the 401(k) turned the mutual-fund industry into the colossus that it is today and that too many fund managers charged what he considers unjustifiably high fees. “Over the life of an investment, it is a real hit — it is gigantic,” he says.

Yet Benna rejects the idea that 401(k)s took the country in the wrong direction. He contends that traditional pensions were doomed with or without 401(k)s. He recalls visiting Bethlehem Steel in the 1980s to talk about 401(k)s. “I told them that they had to start helping their employees save for retirement, and their H.R. person said, ‘Our employees don’t need to do that because we take care of them for life.’ And what happened to that?” (Bethlehem Steel filed for bankruptcy in 2001, and the government had to fulfill its pension obligations.) Likewise, he doesn’t think it is true that 401(k)s have really only benefited the well-off. He mentioned his brother-in-law, who lived in York and worked as a supervisor at Caterpillar, the construction-equipment manufacturer. When Caterpillar announced in 1996 that it was relocating its York plant to Illinois, he chose to take early retirement rather than uproot his family. “He told me that was only possible because of his 401(k),” Benna said. But he conceded that too many people are being let down by the retirement system and that something needs to be done to help them save for their later years.

Benna is one of a number of experts who believe that mandates will ultimately be needed to improve retirement financing — that the voluntary approach, in which companies decide whether they want to sponsor 401(k)s and employees decide whether they wish to participate, is leaving too many gaps. He thinks all companies above a certain size should have to offer employees 401(k)s or alternative retirement-savings options. (Starting next year, employers that establish new 401(k) plans will be required to automatically enroll workers in those plans. There is still no obligation, however, to actually provide the plans themselves.)

Other countries go further. Australia’s Superannuation Guarantee requires companies to contribute the equivalent of 11 percent of an employee’s monthly pay to an investment account that is controlled by the worker, who can also put in additional money. The “Super,” as it is known, includes full-time and part-time workers and has proved to be enormously successful. With its relatively small population — just 27 million — Australia now has the world’s fourth-highest per capita contributions to a pension system, and almost 80 percent of its work force is covered. BlackRock’s Larry Fink says that “Australia’s experience with Supers could be a good model for American policymakers to study and build on.”

The desire to give less affluent Americans the chance to build a decent nest egg is one that is shared across ideological lines. That in itself is a big change from, say, the debate about health care reform, which bitterly divided liberals and conservatives. (It is worth recalling that the Affordable Care Act was enacted in 2010 without a single Republican vote.) In fact, concern about the retirement-savings shortfall has become a rare source of bipartisan cooperation in Washington, and it has also yielded some unlikely alliances.

A few years ago, Kevin Hassett, who was chairman of the White House’s Council of Economic Advisers for a portion of Donald Trump’s presidency, became familiar with Ghilarducci’s work and sent her, unsolicited, the draft of a paper he was writing about the retirement-savings gap. She replied enthusiastically, and he suggested that she write the paper with him. Their partnership eventually yielded a plan for helping lower- and middle-income Americans save for retirement.

The idea they hatched was to make the Thrift Savings Plan, a government-sponsored retirement program for federal employees and members of the uniformed services, open to all Americans. T.S.P., which in total assets is the largest defined-contribution program in the country, includes automatic enrollment and matching contributions from the government. A number of states now offer retirement-savings plans for people whose employers don’t provide 401(k)s, but none of these include matching contributions, which many experts believe are an important incentive for getting workers to set aside a portion of their own salaries.

Ghilarducci and Hassett think that only a federal program in which savings accounts of eligible workers are topped up with government money will significantly increase the participation and savings rates of low-income Americans. Their proposal is the basis for the Retirement Savings for Americans Act, a bill recently introduced by the U.S. senators John Hickenlooper and Thom Tillis and the U.S. representatives Terri Sewell and Lloyd Smucker. Two are Democrats; two are Republicans.

This past January, another bipartisan collaboration — between Alicia Munnell, who was an economist in the Clinton administration and who now serves as the director of Boston College’s Center for Retirement Research, and Andrew Biggs, a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative think tank — published a paper calling for a reduction or an end to the 401(k) tax benefit.

Their research showed that it had not led to more participation in the program nor had it significantly increased the amount that Americans in the aggregate were saving for retirement. It was mostly just a giveaway to upper-income investors and a costly one at that. They estimated that it deprived the Treasury of almost $200 billion in revenue annually. They proposed reducing or even ending the tax-deferred status of 401(k)s and using the added revenue to shore up Social Security.

When I spoke to Biggs, he emphasized that he was not against 401(k)s. On balance, he thinks that they have worked well, and he also says that some of the criticism aimed at them is no longer valid. For instance, the do-it-yourself aspect is overstated: Most plans, for instance, now offer target-date funds, which automatically adjust your asset allocation depending on your age and goals, freeing you from having to continuously readjust your portfolio yourself. He acknowledges that rescinding the tax preferences could be tricky politically: The people who have chiefly benefited from them are also the people who write checks to campaigns. But he is confident that Americans can ultimately be persuaded to give up the tax advantages. “If we say to people, ‘Look, we can slash your Social Security benefits or increase your Social Security taxes, or we can reduce this useless subsidy that goes to rich people who don’t need the money’ — well, that’s a little more compelling.”

Hassett told me that his work with Ghilarducci does not represent any softening of his faith in the free market. Quite the opposite: He sees government intervention to boost retirement savings as a necessary step to preserving American capitalism. Hassett has been concerned for some time that the country is drifting toward socialism — the subject of his most recent book — and part of the reason is that too many Americans are economically marginalized and have come to feel that the system doesn’t work to their benefit.

“They feel disconnected, and they are disconnected,” Hassett says. Having the government help them save for retirement would be prudent. “It would give them more of a stake in the success of the free-enterprise system,” he says. “I think it’s important for long-run political stability that everybody gets a stake.”

Jen Forbus is not economically marginalized, but many in her community struggle. Lorain, a city of about 65,000 on the shore of Lake Erie, has never recovered from the loss of a Ford assembly plant and two steel plants. Around 28 percent of Lorain’s residents now live in poverty. By the grim standards of her area, Forbus is doing well. “I’m definitely privileged,” she says. Even so, she knows that despite her diligent saving and careful budgeting, there is a good chance that she will not be able to retire at 65. She dreads the prospect of having to remain in the labor market as an elderly person. “Something like waitressing — past a certain age, that’s really difficult,” she says. And she admits that she finds it jarring that even for someone like her, retirement may be an unachievable objective. “I do feel our system fails too many people,” she says.

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY HANNAH WHITAKER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; PROP STYLIST: NOEMI BONAZZI; JITALIA17/GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page MM15, MM16, MM17, MM18, MM19, MM20, MM21.

**Load-Date:** October 2, 2024

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[***North Carolina’s Race for Governor: Expensive, Closely Watched and Probably Tight***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BG8-9MV1-JBG3-63DP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 4, 2024 Monday 01:44 EST

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 1282 words

**Byline:** Eduardo Medina Eduardo Medina is a Times reporter covering the South. An Alabama native, he is now based in Durham, N.C.

**Highlight:** The leading candidates — Josh Stein, the Democratic attorney general, and Mark Robinson, the Republican lieutenant governor — could not be more different.

**Body**

The leading candidates — Josh Stein, the Democratic attorney general, and Mark Robinson, the Republican lieutenant governor — could not be more different.

One of the country’s most closely watched elections this year will be in North Carolina, where the race for governor will be a test of Democratic strength in a state whose narrowly divided electorate includes a crush of newcomers.

After the primaries on Tuesday, North Carolinians will likely have two sharply contrasting candidates to choose from: the mild-mannered state attorney general, Josh Stein, a Democrat whose political rise has followed a traditional path, and Lt. Gov. Mark Robinson, a firebrand Republican who catapulted into politics after [*comments he made*](https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2130434130495684) defending gun rights in 2018 went viral.

“If you went to a candidate factory and said, ‘Create me the two most different candidates possible,’ I don’t think you could do any better,” said Christopher A. Cooper, a political science professor at Western Carolina University. “They’re just radically different in demeanor, in ideology.”

Both men would break ground if elected: Mr. Robinson, 55, would be the first Black governor of North Carolina if elected, while Mr. Stein, 57, would be the state’s first Jewish governor.

The race will be closely watched in part because of the potential national implications: Both candidates are planning to portray each other in politically extreme terms, which could boost turnout not only for their elections, but also for the presidential race in the hotly contested state.

Mr. Stein, like the current term-limited Democratic governor, Roy Cooper, has tried to avoid culture war issues. Mr. Robinson appears eager to dive into many of them, [*disparaging*](https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2130434130495684) L.G.B.T.Q. people, [*posting comments*](https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2130434130495684) that were widely perceived as antisemitic and [*calling*](https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2130434130495684) Michelle Obama a man. He has also [*quoted*](https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2130434130495684) Adolf Hitler on Facebook and embraced former President Donald J. Trump’s false claims about election fraud in 2020.

Mr. Stein supports access to abortion and has been endorsed by abortion rights groups, which are mobilized after the Republicans used their new supermajority in the legislature last year to [*ban most abortions*](https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2130434130495684) after 12 weeks of pregnancy. Mr. Robinson supports a so-called heartbeat law, which would ban the procedure after about six weeks of pregnancy, when many women have yet to realize they are pregnant.

His campaign spokesman said that Mr. Robinson supports exceptions for rape, incest or when the life of the mother is in danger, but he did not specify at how many weeks those protections would apply.

Mr. Robinson has dismissed the criticisms, casting them as smear jobs orchestrated by liberals and the news media. He has also insisted to reporters that he has never been antisemitic, pointing to a trip he took last fall to Israel and outreach he has made to Jewish organizations as evidence.

Even as Democrats have won seven of the last eight elections for governor in North Carolina, they have consistently lost federal races: The only Democrat that the state has picked for president in almost 50 years was Barack Obama in 2008.

At a rally in Greensboro on Saturday, Mr. Trump said that Mr. Robinson — who worked in furniture manufacturing before turning to politics — had his “complete and total endorsement.” Polls have consistently shown Mr. Robinson far ahead of his Republican primary rivals, Dale Folwell, the state treasurer, and Bill Graham, a personal injury and wrongful death lawyer.

Mr. Stein is leading four other Democratic primary candidates in polling, including Michael Morgan, a former North Carolina Supreme Court justice.

Mr. Robinson has painted Mr. Stein as a boring, Biden-aligned political insider who is out of touch with the general public.

Mr. Stein has pointed to Mr. Robinson’s numerous statements around culture war topics as evidence that the lieutenant governor is focused on polarizing social issues instead of challenges that most voters care about, like improving education.

With North Carolina being a key swing state this year, the race will likely draw millions of dollars in fund-raising, especially if [*polls*](https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2130434130495684) continue to show the candidates neck and neck.

Michael Bitzer, a political science professor at Catawba College in Salisbury, N.C., said that outside the presidential election, the North Carolina governor’s race will probably be the most expensive and most divisive in the country. And Mr. Robinson, he added, could drive much of that attention.

“Robinson is very much willing to say what he thinks, and at times he kind of tries to tiptoe around his past comments,” Mr. Bitzer said. “But he is very much in the vein of Trump-style politics and the fact of resentment — an ‘us versus them’ mentality.”

Mr. Trump won the state in 2020 by 1.3 percentage points, while Mr. Cooper beat his Republican opponent that year by more than 4 percentage points. Mr. Stein’s victory for attorney general in 2020 was more tenuous, with 50.1 percent of the vote, a margin of 13,000 votes.

Still, Democrats are counting on Mr. Robinson’s past comments and polarizing approach to motivate voters who want to defeat him.

The question that some Republicans have is whether Mr. Robinson’s style will be too extreme for swing voters, who make up between 3 and 5 percent of the electorate. They could include many of the several hundred thousand people who have [*moved to North Carolina*](https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2130434130495684) since 2020, many of whom settled in the suburbs and exurbs of Charlotte and Raleigh, the state’s largest cities. President Biden won the counties that contain those cities but lost many of the surrounding areas.

Jonathan Felts, a Republican strategist running a super PAC supporting Mr. Robinson’s campaign, said that the candidate’s image as a “conservative fighter” and political outsider would appeal to the ***working-class*** Trump base that dominates conservative North Carolina, much of which is rural.

Morgan Jackson, a Democratic strategist who advises both Mr. Stein and Mr. Cooper, said that residents have historically shown they like a balance in their government, with a Democratic governor who will keep the Republican legislature in check.

Mr. Jackson said that Mr. Stein will let his experience speak for itself and will talk on the campaign trail about his work fighting the fentanyl crisis, putting child predators in jail and keeping communities safer.

Both Mr. Stein and Mr. Robinson have prioritized education issues in their campaigns.

Some Republicans, like Mr. Robinson’s rivals in the party’s primary, have worried that Mr. Robinson’s rhetoric could cost conservatives the executive mansion.

Paul Shumaker, a Republican consultant in the state and chief strategist for Mr. Graham, said that he believes Mr. Robinson “will become a liability” for Mr. Trump. In a memo that Mr. Shumaker sent to other consultants this year, he wrote that Mr. Robinson would “create a toxic red tide for Republicans” that could have repercussions down the ballot.

At the 2024 Conservative Political Action Conference, Mr. Robinson [*spoke*](https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2130434130495684) about how his name was always mentioned “in conjunction with social issues.”

“According to them, I hate everybody,” he said, before adding that what he was doing was not about hate. “We should be operating because of what we love.”

Mr. Stein recently told [*The News &amp; Observer*](https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2130434130495684) that Mr. Robinson’s beliefs were not those that “a leader of a thriving, growing, diverse state can hold.”

PHOTOS: From far left, North Carolina’s governor race is likely to narrow to Josh Stein, the Democratic state attorney general, and Lt. Gov. Mark Robinson, a firebrand Republican. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY VEASEY CONWAY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; KARL B DEBLAKER/ASSOCIATED PRESS) This article appeared in print on page A15.

**Load-Date:** March 6, 2024

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[***Mike Lynch, Former U.K. Tech Mogul, Faces the Trial of His Life***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BJT-T7W1-JBG3-61X6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 16, 2024 Saturday 22:45 EST

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**Section:** BUSINESS; dealbook

**Length:** 1424 words

**Byline:** Michael J. de la Merced Michael de la Merced joined The Times as a reporter in 2006, covering Wall Street and finance. Among his main coverage areas are mergers and acquisitions, bankruptcies and the private equity industry.

**Highlight:** A criminal trial is set to begin for Mr. Lynch, the founder of the software company Autonomy, which was sold to Hewlett-Packard in 2011 and later accused of being a fraud.

**Body**

A criminal trial is set to begin for Mr. Lynch, the founder of the software company Autonomy, which was sold to Hewlett-Packard in 2011 and later accused of being a fraud.

Every morning in his townhouse in the tony San Francisco neighborhood of Pacific Heights, the man once referred to as Britain’s Bill Gates gets to work.

That man, Mike Lynch, checks in with his investment firm, Invoke Capital, on its recent performance. He speaks with researchers in Cambridge, England, whom he funds personally, about the ways artificial intelligence could be used to help those with hearing difficulties. He receives updates on the heritage Red Poll cattle and other livestock at his farm in Suffolk, in the east of England.

Eventually, Mr. Lynch, 58, turns to his most important task: defending himself against 16 criminal counts of conspiracy and fraud. If convicted, he will face up to 20 years behind bars.

The trial begins on Monday in San Francisco, where federal prosecutors — who extradited Mr. Lynch from Britain in May and placed him under house arrest — have accused the former tech mogul of defrauding Hewlett-Packard of billions when he [*sold HP his software company, Autonomy, for $11 billion*](https://archive.nytimes.com/dealbook.nytimes.com/2011/08/18/hewlett-packard-said-to-be-near-10-billion-deal-and-p-c-spinoff/) in 2011.

In 2012, HP announced an [*$8.8 billion write-down*](https://archive.nytimes.com/dealbook.nytimes.com/2011/08/18/hewlett-packard-said-to-be-near-10-billion-deal-and-p-c-spinoff/) and blamed it on “serious accounting improprieties” at Autonomy. Stunned investors called it one of the [*worst acquisitions in history*](https://archive.nytimes.com/dealbook.nytimes.com/2011/08/18/hewlett-packard-said-to-be-near-10-billion-deal-and-p-c-spinoff/). Mr. Lynch has since waged a series of complex, overlapping legal battles in the United States and Britain.

In 2022, a London judge in [*a civil case*](https://archive.nytimes.com/dealbook.nytimes.com/2011/08/18/hewlett-packard-said-to-be-near-10-billion-deal-and-p-c-spinoff/) found Mr. Lynch and Sushovan Hussain, Autonomy’s former finance chief, liable for defrauding HP. The judge said the case was “amongst the longest and most complex in English legal history,” with the trial running for more than three months, the presentation of tens of thousands of documents and, in the end, a ruling that ran to well over 1,000 pages.

Mr. Lynch contests HP’s claims and plans to appeal the ruling. His lawyers called it “a case study in buyer’s remorse,” and point the finger at HP’s executives for mismanaging Autonomy. Hearings were held last month to decide on damages, with HP seeking some $4 billion and Mr. Lynch arguing that he owed nothing.

Mr. Lynch’s legal travails also serve as a reminder of the decline of Hewlett-Packard, a onetime titan of the U.S. technology industry. The former Silicon Valley giant has since split up, and has long been overshadowed by younger leviathans like Alphabet, Apple and Microsoft.

For his upcoming criminal trial, Mr. Lynch’s odds do not look good. The judge, Charles Breyer of the Northern District of California, has dismissed some of the evidence Mr. Lynch’s lawyers tried to introduce which they say showed that HP mismanaged Autonomy after acquiring the company. Judge Breyer also oversaw the trial of Mr. Hussain, who was [*convicted in 2018*](https://archive.nytimes.com/dealbook.nytimes.com/2011/08/18/hewlett-packard-said-to-be-near-10-billion-deal-and-p-c-spinoff/) of charges similar to those Mr. Lynch now faces. Mr. Hussain was recently released from a federal prison in Pennsylvania.

Last year, Mr. Lynch lost a bid to avoid extradition despite lobbying the British government, which had approved his transfer to the United States on the same day as the judgment against him in the civil case brought by HP.

Last month, he sued the Serious Fraud Office, Britain’s securities regulator, over its handling of data requests by the United States government. The lawsuit, a last-ditch bid to delay the U.S. criminal trial, [*was settled*](https://archive.nytimes.com/dealbook.nytimes.com/2011/08/18/hewlett-packard-said-to-be-near-10-billion-deal-and-p-c-spinoff/) earlier this month.

Mr. Lynch still wields considerable resources to defend himself in the San Francisco courtroom. “Mike Lynch has faith that he will be vindicated when he finally gets a chance to tell his story to a jury,” Reid Weingarten, one of several prominent white-collar defense lawyers representing Mr. Lynch in the United States, said in a statement. “We look forward to this opportunity to tell Mike Lynch’s story and allow him to put this unfortunate chapter behind him.”

Since his extradition, Mr. Lynch has lived under 24-hour surveillance and court-mandated private security, a drastic fall for a man once considered one of Britain’s biggest tech success stories.

Born into a ***working-class*** family outside of London, he attended private school on a scholarship and graduated from Cambridge before founding Autonomy in 1996. The company helped clients analyze unstructured information in order to unearth hidden insights about their businesses.

By 2011, Autonomy had become one of Britain’s most prominent technology companies, with its home base of Cambridge sometimes called “Silicon Fen.”

“He certainly raised the profile of Cambridge technology,” said Tony Quested, the editor of Business Weekly, a technology trade publication based in Cambridge. “There wasn’t that much around at the time.”

Mr. Lynch became a celebrity in British tech circles. He was a member of the Royal Society, one of the country’s top scientific associations; an adviser to David Cameron, the prime minister at the time; and sat on the board of the BBC.

HP, then led by Léo Apotheker, a former chief of the German software giant SAP, hit upon the notion of buying Autonomy to transform itself from an aging hardware provider to a higher-margin software company. HP [*agreed to buy Autonomy*](https://archive.nytimes.com/dealbook.nytimes.com/2011/08/18/hewlett-packard-said-to-be-near-10-billion-deal-and-p-c-spinoff/) in mid-2011 for some 60 percent more than its market value.

Things soured quickly.

Mr. Apotheker was out as chief executive a month after the deal was announced, as investors and analysts revolted against both the high price of the Autonomy acquisition and a plan to spin off HP’s personal computer division (which was born from another major takeover, of [*Compaq*](https://archive.nytimes.com/dealbook.nytimes.com/2011/08/18/hewlett-packard-said-to-be-near-10-billion-deal-and-p-c-spinoff/).)

He was replaced by Meg Whitman, the former eBay chief who sat on HP’s board. Within HP, Autonomy’s star quickly dimmed amid rapidly declining sales. Mr. Lynch, who clashed with Ms. Whitman, was fired in May 2012.

Later that year, HP said it had been duped by Autonomy, misled by improprieties including the backdating of contracts and the use of hardware sales to bolster revenue, particularly at the end of a quarter. The multibillion-dollar write-down marked the beginning of Mr. Lynch’s legal travails, which will culminate this month in another long and complex trial.

Over the years, Mr. Lynch has denied the characterization that the company was riddled with fraud. He has [*blamed*](https://archive.nytimes.com/dealbook.nytimes.com/2011/08/18/hewlett-packard-said-to-be-near-10-billion-deal-and-p-c-spinoff/) Ms. Whitman, now the United States ambassador to Kenya, and other senior executives who clashed with him, for Autonomy’s disintegration. His lawyers have argued in court filings that HP executives, for example, knew about the hardware sales and hadn’t raised them as an issue.

They have pointed to internal emails showing the shifting calculations of Autonomy’s worth, at one point putting it at more than $11 billion. They have also noted that accountants for EY, the global accounting and consulting firm previously known as Ernst &amp; Young, who were working for HP had not believed the Autonomy takeover price was inflated because of accounting irregularities.

U.S. federal prosecutors argued in court documents that Mr. Lynch, long known as a hard-charging boss, relished being tough and maintaining control. (In one filing, government lawyers described an internal sales video at Autonomy in which he portrayed himself as a Mafia don, and noted that he had named conference rooms after James Bond movie villains.) Witness depositions have included Ms. Whitman and Catherine Lesjak, HP’s former chief financial officer.

The prosecutors have sought to introduce tens of thousands of exhibits and a 44-person witness list, and they estimate that the trial could last until the end of May.

Mr. Lynch’s freedom, and his legacy, are at stake.

He has sought to foster a reputation as a public intellectual by giving interviews on the subject of technology, but has kept a low profile since his extradition. His last published piece was in April, when he encouraged British policymakers to [*embrace A.I. start-ups*](https://archive.nytimes.com/dealbook.nytimes.com/2011/08/18/hewlett-packard-said-to-be-near-10-billion-deal-and-p-c-spinoff/).

Autonomy is now part of the Canadian software company OpenText. Mr. Lynch’s investment firm, Invoke, has made crucial early investments in companies like the cybersecurity provider Darktrace.

But associations with Mr. Lynch can be fraught. In December, Darktrace shareholders rejected a nominee for the board proposed by Invoke. And in the company’s [*financial filings*](https://archive.nytimes.com/dealbook.nytimes.com/2011/08/18/hewlett-packard-said-to-be-near-10-billion-deal-and-p-c-spinoff/), Darktrace has described “Autonomy related matters” as a risk “from both a reputational and a legal perspective.”

PHOTO: Mike Lynch, former chief executive of Autonomy, leaving his extradition hearing in London in 2021. Autonomy was sold to HP in 2011. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HOLLIE ADAMS/BLOOMBERG NEWS) (B2) This article appeared in print on page B1, B2.

**Load-Date:** March 17, 2024

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[***I Followed the Lives of 3,290 Teenagers. This Is What I Learned About Religion and Education.; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650R-3PM1-JBG3-600T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 15, 2022 Tuesday 23:15 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1674 words

**Byline:** Ilana M. Horwitz

**Highlight:** Boys from ***working-class*** families benefit from the social capital that religious belief can provide.

**Body**

American men are [*dropping out of college*](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2021/10/08/the-male-college-crisis-is-not-just-in-enrollment-but-completion/) in alarming numbers. A slew of articles over the past year depict a generation of men who feel [*lost*](https://www.wsj.com/articles/college-university-fall-higher-education-men-women-enrollment-admissions-back-to-school-11630948233), [*detached*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/02/08/andrew-yang-boys-are-not-all-right/) and [*lacking in male role models*](https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2021/09/young-men-college-decline-gender-gap-higher-education/620066/). This sense of despair is especially acute among ***working-class*** men, [*fewer than one in five*](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d20/tables/dt20_104.91.asp) of whom completes college.

Yet one group is defying the odds: boys from ***working-class*** families who grow up religious.

As a sociologist of education and religion, I followed the lives of 3,290 teenagers from 2003 to 2012 using survey and interview data from the [*National Study of Youth and Religion*](https://youthandreligion.nd.edu/), and then linking those data to the [*National Student Clearinghouse*](https://www.studentclearinghouse.org/) in 2016. I studied the relationship between teenagers’ religious upbringing and its influence on their education: their school grades, which colleges they attend and how much higher education they complete. My research focused on Christian denominations because they are the [*most prevalent*](https://www.pewforum.org/2021/12/14/about-three-in-ten-u-s-adults-are-now-religiously-unaffiliated/) in the United States.

I found that what religion offers teenagers varies by social class. Those raised by professional-class parents, for example, do not experience much in the way of an educational advantage from being religious. In some ways, religion even constrains teenagers’ educational opportunities (especially girls’) by shaping their academic ambitions after graduation; they are less likely to consider a selective college as they prioritize life goals such as parenthood, altruism and service to God rather than a prestigious career.

However, teenage boys from ***working-class*** families, regardless of race, who were regularly involved in their church and strongly believed in God were twice as likely to earn bachelor’s degrees as moderately religious or nonreligious boys.

[*Religious boys are not any smarter*](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0146167219879122), so why are they doing better in school? The answer lies in how religious belief and religious involvement can buffer ***working-class*** Americans — males in particular — from despair.

Many in the [*American intelligentsia*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/10/opinion/sunday/religion-meritocracy-god.html) — the elite-university-educated population who constitute the professional and managerial class — do not hold the institution of religion in [*high regard*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/10/opinion/sunday/religion-meritocracy-god.html). When these elites criticize religion, they often do so on the grounds that faith (in their eyes) is [*irrational and not evidence-based*](https://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2013/01/22/is-atheism-a-religion/atheism-should-end-religion-not-replace-it).

But one can agree with the liberal critique of conservatism’s moral and political goals while still acknowledging that religion orders the lives of millions of Americans — and that it might offer social benefits.

A boy I’ll call John (all names have been changed to protect participants’ privacy under ethical research guidelines) was a typical example of the kind of ***working-class*** teenager I’ve been studying. He lived an hour outside Jackson, Miss. His father owned an auto-repair shop and his mother worked as a bookkeeper and substitute teacher. His days were filled with playing football, fishing and hunting with his grandparents, riding four-wheelers with friends and mowing the occasional lawn to earn pocket money.

John aspired to attend college, but given his parents’ occupations, income (the equivalent of $53,000 today) and education (both had earned vocational certificates), the odds were not in his favor.

Still, he reached a milestone that has become largely [*out of reach*](https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2021/09/young-men-college-decline-gender-gap-higher-education/620066/)for young men like him: He earned his associate degree. And his faith and involvement in church played a large part in that.

Children with college-educated parents have many [*advantages*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7758/9781610447515) that make their academic trajectories easier. They tend to live in neighborhoods with a [*strong social infrastructure*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/557044/palaces-for-the-people-by-eric-klinenberg/), including safe outdoor spaces. They have more familial and geographic stability, which means they rarely need to transfer between schools, disrupting their educations and severing social ties.

Children from wealthier families also benefit from a network of connections and opportunities that many poorer children lack. College-educated parents tend to work in professional organizations and have robust [*social networks from college*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2015/09/23/why-are-working-class-kids-less-likely-to-get-elite-jobs-they-study-too-hard-at-college/) where they meet other members of the professional class. All these social ties — from the neighborhood, the workplace, and college — provide a web of support for upper-middle-class families, which sociologists refer to as “[*social capital*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/2780243?seq=1#_blank).”

But ***working-class*** families like John’s do not have the same [*opportunities to develop social capital*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/alienated-america-timothy-p-carney?variant=32130059501602). The workplace used to be a central social institution for ***working-class*** families, but in the gig economy it is nearly impossible to feel a sense of stability, acquire health insurance or develop relationships with colleagues.

The lack of social capital — along with systemic problems and inequities — has contributed to the unraveling of the lives of millions of ***working-class*** Americans, especially men. Since the early 2000s, just as the kids in my study were entering adolescence, there has been a drastic rise in the number of ***working-class*** men dying “[*deaths of despair*](https://press.princeton.edu/books/hardcover/9780691190785/deaths-of-despair-and-the-future-of-capitalism)” from opioids, alcohol poisoning and suicide.

But despair doesn’t die: It gets transmitted to children. Most of the ***working-class*** kids in my study — especially boys — seemed to look out in the world and feel despair physically, cognitively and emotionally. I found that most of the ***working-class*** boys in the study had dropped out of the educational system by their mid-20s and seemed on track to repeat the cycle of despair.

But not John. He and dozens of other boys in the study had a support system that insulated them from the hopelessness so many of their peers described. Through his teenage years, John regularly attended his local evangelical church and was active in its youth group. There were organized social activities like rafting and weekly gatherings at the minister’s house to talk about what was going on in their lives.

Being involved with his church reinforced biblical teachings, leading John to think of Christ as the person he most wanted to emulate (most teenagers answer by referring to an actor, an athlete or a family member). By [*observing*](https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev.psych.54.101601.145118) how his [*parents*](https://press.princeton.edu/books/hardcover/9780691194967/religious-parenting) and others in his religious community behaved, John [*learned to see God*](https://press.princeton.edu/books/hardcover/9780691164465/how-god-becomes-real) as someone he “can talk to and tell personal things to.”

The academic advantage of religious ***working-class*** children [*begins in middle and high school*](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2020.102426) with the [*grades they earn*](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0049089X20300247?via%3Dihub). Among those raised in the ***working class***, 21 percent of religious teenagers brought home report cards filled with A’s, compared with 9 percent of their less-religious peers. [*Grades*](https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7306z0zf) are also the strongest predictor of getting into and completing college, and religious boys are more than twice as likely to earn grades that help them be competitive for college admissions and scholarships.

Religious girls from ***working-class*** families also see educational benefits compared with less religious girls, but there are other factors that help them be academically successful outside of religion. Girls are socialized to be conscientious and compliant, have an easier time developing social ties with family members and peers, and are less prone to get caught up in risky behaviors.

Why does religion give boys like John an academic advantage? Because it offers them the social capital that affluent teenagers can get elsewhere. Religious communities keep families rooted to a place and help kids develop [*trusting relationships*](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1468-5906.00177) with youth ministers and friends’ parents who share a common outlook on life. Collectively, these adults encourage teenagers to [*follow the rules*](https://doi.org/10.2307/1387172) and [*avoid antisocial behaviors*](https://open.bu.edu/handle/2144/13).

Although John cited peer pressure as the most stressful problem facing teenagers, he avoided falling into a pattern of drug and alcohol abuse that often derails kids from academic success. The research for my book focused on Christians, but I’ve found that religious communities are a [*source of social capital*](https://theconversation.com/is-social-distancing-unraveling-the-bonds-that-keep-society-together-166057) for Jewish people as well.

Theological belief on its own is not enough to influence how children behave. Adolescents must believe and belong to be buffered against emotional, cognitive or behavioral despair. I found that religion offers something that other extracurricular activities such as sports can’t: It prompts kids to behave in extremely [*conscientious and cooperative*](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1088868309352322) ways because they [*believe that God is both encouraging and evaluating them*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/104442/when-god-talks-back-by-t-m-luhrmann/).

As John put it at the beginning of my study, when he was 16, religion “helps me in my problems or when I’m down.” When he was unsure of how to handle a situation, he looked to his minister and scripture for answers. John said he suspected that if he weren’t part of his weekly church youth group, he would have been “doing a lot of things wrong.”

Religion doesn’t just help boys from ***working-class*** families during their teenage years — it also deters them from falling into despair in adulthood. We can see this in the way John’s life unfolded. In his early 20s, John stopped reading the Bible and no longer participated in his church community. Other parts of his life also started to fall apart. He dropped out of college and got arrested for marijuana possession.

That was a wake-up call, and John decided to return to church. Within a few years, he managed to get his life back on track. John is now living with his grandmother, whom he cares for, and his girlfriend, whom he plans to propose to. He believes that God has called him to serve others by working in the medical field. He returned to community college and earned an A.A. while working as an E.M.T. and plans to become a paramedic or a nurse. He attributes much of this to his faith.

In his final interview with researchers at age 26, John said, “The most important things in life to me is my family and my relationship to God.”

Ilana M. Horwitz is an assistant professor of Jewish studies and sociology at Tulane University and the author of “God, Grades, and Graduation.”

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PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Arne Bellstorf FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 15, 2022

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[***In Trump's Eye, A Win's a Win. So Is a Defeat.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BT1-G6S1-DXY4-X083-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 14, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1789 words

**Byline:** By Ben Protess, Jonah E. Bromwich, Maggie Haberman and William K. Rashbaum

**Body**

Donald J. Trump and his lawyers realize his chances in the courtroom are dicey. He intends to make whatever transpires a political triumph.

The first criminal trial of Donald J. Trump will begin on Monday, and the 45th president thinks he can win -- no matter what the jury decides. Mr. Trump will aim to spin any outcome to his benefit and, if convicted, to become the first felon to win the White House.

Manhattan prosecutors, who have accused Mr. Trump of falsifying records to cover up a sex scandal, hold advantages that include a list of insider witnesses and a jury pool drawn from one of the country's most liberal counties. Mr. Trump and some aides and lawyers privately concede that a jury is unlikely to outright acquit him, according to people with knowledge of the discussions.

So Mr. Trump, the presumptive 2024 Republican nominee, is seeking to write his own reality, telling a story that he believes could pave his return to the White House. He has framed his failed efforts to delay the case as evidence he cannot receive a fair trial, casting himself as a political martyr under attack from the prosecution and the judge.

To pull off an acquittal, he is considering testifying to personally persuade jurors of his innocence.

It would be a rare and risky move for most defendants. But Mr. Trump is putting his own stamp on the role, attacking the district attorney who brought the case, Alvin L. Bragg, with all the power of his bully pulpit. That behavior and its aftershocks are expected to continue throughout a weekslong trial.

Mr. Trump, 77, is deploying the same tactics that made him the singular political figure of the last decade. Since announcing his first presidential candidacy, he has bulldozed through American life, flattening political and cultural norms as he goes. He stunned the world as the insurgent victor in the 2016 election, was twice impeached as president and pushed democracy to the brink as the incumbent who refused to concede his 2020 election loss.

Now, with jury selection starting on Monday, Mr. Trump will become the first former U.S. president to stand trial on criminal charges. Win or lose, he will be the first presidential candidate whose political fate, before being decided by millions of voters, will be shaped by 12 people in a jury box.

The 34 felonies Mr. Trump is facing, which could carry a four-year prison sentence, have struck a nerve with the former president. While Mr. Trump has spent years reveling in the glow of the White House and his sunny South Florida estate, the trial will be held in a dingy county courtroom. When the former president is there -- he is required to be in court, but can ask to be excused -- he will be transported back to the borough and tabloid atmosphere where he made his name.

He established himself as one of the loudest voices in a loud city, gossiping about his love affairs and broadcasting his political opinions. That bombastic style, and his time on ''The Apprentice'' television show, gave him an immediate following when he became a candidate in 2015. He repeatedly condemned Muslims, insulted a prominent female journalist and a reporter with a physical disability and glorified political violence by saying he would pay the legal fees of supporters who assaulted protesters at his rallies.

''He's been able to create the age of Trump by becoming the fist smashing into America's sacred institutions,'' the historian Douglas Brinkley said.

He added that while many Democrats hoped the trial would put an end to that, ''Trump understands media culture well enough to really believe that 'as long as other people are talking about me, I win.'''

In the courtroom, however, it has been quite some time since Mr. Trump won a major victory. In this year's first two months alone, he lost a pair of civil trials in spectacular fashion, leading to an $83 million defamation judgment and a $454 million fraud penalty. In both cases, he took the stand. Both times it went poorly.

The losses hit his wallet and his ego. But they never threatened his freedom, unlike his four criminal cases unfolding in cities up and down the East Coast.

Whether those cases could imperil or aid his presidential campaign is an open question. Of the four, which include charges that he mishandled classified documents and tried to subvert democracy, the sex scandal cover-up case in Manhattan is viewed within Mr. Trump's campaign as the least damaging. A conviction in any case would not prevent him from taking office.

Still, the Manhattan prosecution presents distinctive threats: For now, it is the only case on track to conclude before Election Day, as Mr. Trump has managed to bog down the others in delays and appeals. And even if Mr. Trump wins back the White House, he could not pardon himself for the Manhattan charges, as he could in the two federal cases he's facing.

The Manhattan case is also replete with mortifying personal details for Mr. Trump and his family: There's the porn star who said she had sex with him, the former Trump fixer who paid her off and the tabloid publisher who helped him bury all manner of scurrilous stories.

To adapt his candidacy to the trial, he will essentially bring his presidential campaign to the courthouse. One person familiar with his preliminary plans described weekend events held in strategically important states near New York, including Pennsylvania, where he is holding a rally this weekend. He will conduct radio and television interviews from Trump Tower, where he is expected to stay during the trial, which will be in session every weekday except Wednesday.

Mr. Trump and the Republican Party have made the trial a staple of his campaign fund-raising. One email sent on Friday had the subject line ''72 hours until all hell breaks loose!'' -- ominous language evocative of his social media posts before a pro-Trump mob swarmed the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

Mr. Trump has not since summoned a similar uprising. But the spectacle of the trial is expected to spill into the streets of Lower Manhattan, where protesters, both those who love and defend Mr. Trump and those who hate and want him convicted, will gather behind police barricades as traffic grinds to a halt.

Stephen K. Bannon, the right-wing media host who is Mr. Trump's former White House chief strategist, will have episodes of his ''War Room'' show recorded outside the courthouse. The area will be crawling with police officers and the U.S. Secret Service, and, for a few weeks, the general disruption will alter the flow of life on the city's downtown streets.

The atmosphere will be less raucous and more tense inside the courtroom, under the watchful eye of the presiding trial judge, Juan M. Merchan, who is known for his strict control of proceedings. There, while the Secret Service and much of the press corps remain glued to Mr. Trump's every move, prosecutors from the Manhattan district attorney's office will tell the story that they hope will lead the jury to convict Mr. Trump.

Mr. Bragg, the district attorney who has bet his career on the case's outcome, argues that the payment was Mr. Trump's original act of election interference. His prosecutors will tell jurors that during the 2016 campaign, Mr. Trump repeatedly tried to kill damaging stories, regardless of whether they were true, and coordinated hush-money payments to three different people who were hawking embarrassing information.

The 34 felony charges of falsifying business records, though, directly relate to only one of those episodes, involving the porn star Stormy Daniels, who said she and Mr. Trump had sex in 2006. When Ms. Daniels looked to sell her story a decade later, Mr. Trump sought to keep it under wraps.

At Mr. Trump's direction, prosecutors will say, the former fixer, Michael D. Cohen, paid Ms. Daniels $130,000 to keep quiet. After Mr. Trump won the election, the new president reimbursed Mr. Cohen, and his company disguised the purpose of the payments in corporate records, stating they were for a ''legal expense.''

In response, Mr. Trump has falsely claimed that Mr. Bragg is following orders from President Biden to prosecute him. He has assailed Mr. Bragg, who is Black and a Democrat, as a ''racist'' and sought to change the conversation by blaming the district attorney for violent crime in New York City -- even though murders and shootings have gone down during Mr. Bragg's tenure.

At Mr. Bragg's request, Justice Merchan recently imposed a gag order on Mr. Trump, barring him from attacking witnesses, prosecutors and jurors. After Mr. Trump took aim at Justice Merchan's daughter, a Democratic political consultant, the judge expanded the gag order to include his own family.

Mr. Trump has pressed the judge to step aside, citing his daughter's career. Justice Merchan has already rejected one such request, noting that a judicial ethics panel concluded last year that he had no real conflict.

The former president has also taken aim at some of Mr. Bragg's key witnesses, hurling threats and social media screeds in their direction. Mr. Cohen, in particular, has felt the brunt of the attacks from Mr. Trump, who has sued him, called him a ''rat'' and referred to him as ''death.'' Their confrontation in the courtroom, where Mr. Cohen will be the star witness, is expected to be the climactic moment of the trial.

But if Mr. Trump were to take the stand, Mr. Cohen would be quickly overshadowed. The former president is likely to delay a final decision until he knows whether the judge will restrict prosecutors' efforts to cross-examine him, and until he can assess the performance of his former fixer.

The jurors will be assessing Mr. Cohen, too. If even one does not believe his testimony, the trial could end with a hung jury, a clear victory for the former president. Todd Blanche, the lawyer leading the case, has told Mr. Trump in recent weeks that he can win the trial, people with knowledge of the discussion said.

The case could be won or lost during jury selection, in the next two weeks. The expectation is that many potential jurors will be Manhattan Democrats with animus for Mr. Trump. The former president's lawyers are hoping to spot sympathizers and will focus on younger Black men and white ***working-class*** men.

But Mr. Trump may struggle even with sympathetic jurors if he chooses to testify. At the civil fraud trial, the judge -- who decided that case instead of a jury -- was not impressed.

He ''rarely responded to the questions asked, and he frequently interjected long, irrelevant speeches,'' the judge wrote in his decision, adding, ''His refusal to answer the questions directly, or in some cases, at all, severely compromised his credibility.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/13/nyregion/as-trial-looms-trump-plays-to-a-jury-of-millions.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/13/nyregion/as-trial-looms-trump-plays-to-a-jury-of-millions.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: In a Manhattan court on Monday, Donald J. Trump will become the first former U.S. president to stand trial on criminal charges. (POOL PHOTO BY BRENDAN MCDERMID)

Mr. Trump has falsely claimed that President Biden ordered Alvin L. Bragg to prosecute him. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVE SANDERS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A20) This article appeared in print on page A1, A20.

**Load-Date:** April 14, 2024

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[***An Unlikely Friendship Catapults Vance to the Running Mate List***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BX1-2X51-JBG3-638K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 28, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1832 words

**Byline:** By Sharon LaFraniere

**Body**

It was just 43 days before the 2022 Republican primary in Ohio, and former President Donald J. Trump had yet to throw his weight behind a Senate candidate. J.D. Vance, a political novice competing in a packed field, had a huge problem.

He had publicly called Mr. Trump ''loathsome'' and an ''idiot.'' Once, he described him as ''cultural heroin.''

Then came an unexpected lifeline. ''Enough with the lies being told about this guy,'' Donald Trump Jr., the former president's son, wrote on Twitter, assuring his followers that Mr. Vance had become a fan of his father. A month later, encouraged by his son, the elder Mr. Trump endorsed Mr. Vance.

Today, Mr. Vance is one of the former president's most reliable allies and a leader of a band of Republicans pushing Senate Republicans to the right. And his star has only continued to rise: Mr. Vance is on the list of Mr. Trump's possible running mates, according to two people familiar with the discussions.

In no small part, Mr. Vance owes his quick ascent into the Trump orbit to his unlikely friendship and ideological kinship with the former president's oldest son. They text or talk nearly daily and try to meet up if they are in the same city, according to people who know them both. They are a social-media tag team, often reposting each other's messages.

Although he has stressed that the choice of a running mate is his father's decision alone, Mr. Trump has said he would be happy with Mr. Vance on the G.O.P. ticket.

The friendship is among the MAGA movement's more unusual pairings. Mr. Vance, 39, is a self-made man who had a fatherless childhood. Mr. Trump, 46, has been at the right hand of his billionaire father his whole life.

Mr. Vance is wonky and well-spoken, a Yale Law School graduate and memoirist regarded as an intellectual standard-bearer for Trumpism. The former president's son is sarcastic and foul-mouthed, a sharper reader of people than of policy papers and a political weather vane for his father.

But the men share right-wing, nationalist politics and a vision for how the Republican Party should root out vestiges of old elites. In some ways, they represent the ego and id of the MAGA movement and, some Republican strategists argue, its next wave of insurgency.

Kevin D. Roberts, the president of the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank, said that for voters seeking a next-generation leader, there was virtually ''no one like Senator Vance.'' Those same voters look up to Donald Trump Jr., he said. ''They know both men.''

Mr. Vance declined to be interviewed for this article. The younger Mr. Trump said in a statement: ''In the world of politics you make a lot of acquaintances, but there are very few actual friends. J.D. has become a close friend of mine, and I'm a big supporter of everything he's been doing policywise to put America First in the Senate.''

As the former president narrows his list of running mates, with his eldest son as an informal adviser, personal loyalty is surely a factor. Mr. Trump has insisted that his former vice president, Mike Pence, betrayed him by refusing to allow him and his allies to manipulate the results of the 2020 election in his favor.

Mr. Vance has made clear that he is no Mr. Pence. He has claimed that the 2020 election was blighted by widespread fraud, an allegation that has been repeatedly and thoroughly debunked.

He told ABC News this February that had he been vice president in January 2021, he would have allowed Congress to consider fraudulent slates of pro-Trump electors before certifying the election, a scheme meant to disrupt the transfer of power after Joseph R. Biden Jr. won the presidency.

Mr. Vance's allegiance to the former president is relatively new, but friends say it is deep. In his memoir, Mr. Vance wrote that his upbringing taught him to value ''loyalty, honor and toughness.''

The former president helped him edge out his primary opponents, when he could have stood aside. The senator ''is an intensely, personally loyal guy,'' said Luke Thompson, a close friend who ran the super PAC that backed Mr. Vance's campaign.

Striking contrasts

It is hard to overstate the gap in backgrounds between Mr. Vance and Donald Trump Jr. Mr. Vance grew up in Middletown, Ohio, a steel mill town, and moved six times in as many years before his grandmother took him in as a teenager.

Mr. Vance's name tracks his childhood upheaval. He was born James Donald Bowman, after his father, Donald Bowman, who surrendered him for adoption when he was 6. His mother, who battled drug addiction for years, renamed him James David Hamel, erasing his father's names and substituting the surname of his stepfather, one in a string of fast-disappearing father figures. Mr. Vance later adopted his grandmother's surname.

Mr. Vance wrote that his mother once threatened to crash their car and kill them both. He watched as she was driven away in handcuffs in the back of a police car. ''I have never felt so lonely,'' he wrote in his book, ''Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis.''

Mr. Trump's home was a luxury apartment at the top of a Manhattan tower with his father's name on it. In his memoir, ''Triggered: How the Left Thrives on Hate and Wants to Silence Us,'' he recounted how his mother, Ivana Trump, tried to order a glass of chardonnay at a Taco Bell when dropping him off at boarding school in a small Pennsylvania town. News of the incident spread to his new schoolmates.

''Really awesome, Mom. Thanks,'' he wrote.

Politically, they were also far apart, even as late as 2017. Mr. Trump was one of his father's most tireless cheerleaders in his first run for president, echoing his father's hard-line rhetoric and relishing every opportunity to slam liberals.

Mr. Vance was a former Marine, a venture capitalist and a conservative Republican who was appalled by candidate Trump. In early 2016, he texted a former Yale roommate that he feared Mr. Trump could be ''America's Hitler.'' Publicly, he said that Mr. Trump's policy proposals ''range from immoral to absurd.''

He voted for an independent candidate for president.

Walking it back, with help

After Mr. Trump's victory, pundits celebrated Mr. Vance's book as a key to understanding the discontent of white ***working-class*** voters who had swung the election. Mr. Vance became an overnight media celebrity.

In those days, he held up former President Barack Obama, who also grew up fatherless, as a role model. Mr. Obama was someone ''whose history looked something like mine but whose future contained something I wanted,'' he wrote in a New York Times opinion essay in January 2017.

But Mr. Vance's memoir also reveals his pragmatic approach to self-advancement. He wanted to finish college faster, so he doubled his course load. Because the parents of ''rich kids'' in his hometown were either lawyers or doctors, he wrote, he went to law school. To get Y, do X.

In a Time magazine interview shortly after he announced his Senate run in July 2021, Mr. Vance acknowledged a similar calculus in his conversion from a Never Trumper to a Trump admirer. Mr. Trump is ''the leader of this movement,'' he said then, ''and if I actually care about these people and the things I say I care about, I need to just suck it up and support him.''

Mr. Vance deleted his anti-Trump tweets. He became a regular figure on Tucker Carlson's show on Fox News, of which the former president was an avid viewer. He hired an adviser to Donald Trump Jr. to help run his campaign. He began working through intermediaries to lobby the former president for an endorsement.

One of the first was Charlie Kirk, a young activist who had carried Donald Trump Jr.'s bags and booked his flights during the 2016 campaign. Mr. Kirk's group, Turning Point U.S.A., had since built up an impressive following of Republican conservatives.

In early 2021, Mr. Kirk texted an adviser to Donald Trump Jr. about Mr. Vance's political promise, according to a person familiar with the exchange. Mr. Trump's response was encouraging: He had read ''Hillbilly Elegy,'' he said, and he loved it.

That March, Mr. Vance made a pilgrimage to Mar-a-Lago, the former president's private club in Palm Beach, Fla., to seek his endorsement. Donald Trump Jr. also attended the meeting, as did Peter Thiel, the Silicon Valley billionaire who was bankrolling Mr. Vance's campaign.

Mr. Vance did not get what he wanted, but he left hopeful that the elder Mr. Trump would at least keep an eye on his race. Mr. Vance was good-looking, the former president later noted, according to people familiar with Mr. Trump's reaction, but his opponents were clobbering Mr. Vance with his previous anti-Trump remarks.

Donald Trump Jr. was not put off by Mr. Vance's U-turn. ''Guess who else didn't like Trump in 2016? Everybody,'' he said later. Mr. Vance was at least ''consistent and intellectually honest'' about why, he said.

A fighter for Trump in the Senate

People close to both men said their friendship blossomed after Mr. Vance joined the Senate in January 2023. Since then, the public signs of their mutual appreciation have been frequent. Mr. Trump often praises Mr. Vance on social media and on his podcast on Rumble, a right-leaning social media site. (Mr. Vance's venture capital firm has invested in the platform.)

''We need every GOP Senator to be @JDVance1,'' Mr. Trump wrote last December.

Indeed, Mr. Vance is both an energetic, vocal ally to the former president, and one of the leaders of a bloc of roughly a dozen Republican senators who have tried to push the Senate in a more isolationist and Trumpist direction, often clashing with Senator Mitch McConnell, the minority leader.

Mr. Vance worked hard, though unsuccessfully, to stop a $60 billion aid package for Ukraine's war against Russia's invasion. For 10 months, he has blocked Biden administration nominees to top Justice Department posts to protest Mr. Trump's felony indictment on charges of mishandling classified documents.

He has also said that should the former president be elected again, he should fire ''every single midlevel bureaucrat'' and ''replace them with our people.'' If stopped by legal orders, he should dare judges to enforce them, he said.

David Frum, a Trump critic and a former speechwriter for President George W. Bush who has known Mr. Vance for years, described the senator as an intelligent man with an extraordinary life story who has ''sunk to the depths of political degradation.''

But his stances have been applauded by Mr. Trump, who said a willingness to push political boundaries would be a key attribute for his father's running mate.

While he was not the only one who could fit that bill, ''I'd love to see a J.D. Vance,'' the younger Mr. Trump told Newsmax in January. ''You actually need a fighter.''

Ryan Mac contributed reporting. Kitty Bennett and Susan C. Beachy contributed research.Ryan Mac contributed reporting. Kitty Bennett and Susan C. Beachy contributed research.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/27/us/politics/jd-vance-trump-vp.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/27/us/politics/jd-vance-trump-vp.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Senator J.D. Vance has established himself as a reliable ally for former President Donald J. Trump, who endorsed him for his 2022 race in Ohio. At right, Mr. Vance on a bus tour through the Midwest. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MADDIE MCGARVEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

BRIAN KAISER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

ANDREW SPEAR FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Mr. Vance, who was once a Never Trumper, owes his quick ascent into the Trump orbit to his unexpected relationship and ideological kinship with the former president's oldest son, Donald Trump Jr., above. At left, the elder Mr. Trump with Mr. Vance during a campaign rally in Vandalia, Ohio, last month. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY GAELEN MORSE/REUTERS

JEFF DEAN/ASSOCIATED PRESS)

Mr. Vance's memoir about growing up in Middletown, Ohio, above, said that his upbringing taught him to value loyalty. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MADDIE MCGARVEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A18) This article appeared in print on page A1, A18.

**Load-Date:** April 28, 2024

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[***Young South African Voters Discuss Their Discontent***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C4C-B0V1-JBG3-63HT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 28, 2024 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 2676 words

**Byline:** By Lynsey Chutel and Joao Silva

**Body**

At the dawn of South Africa's democracy after the fall of the racist apartheid government, millions lined up before sunrise to cast their ballots in the country's first free and fair election in 1994.

Thirty years later, democracy has lost its luster for a new generation.

South Africa is now heading into a pivotal election on Wednesday, in which voters will determine which party -- or alliance -- will pick the president. But voter turnout has been dropping consistently in recent years. It fell to below 50 percent for the first time in the 2021 municipal elections, and analysts said that voter registration has not kept up with the growth of the voting-age population.

This downward curve has mirrored the support for South Africa's governing party, the African National Congress, or A.N.C., which was a liberation movement before becoming a political machine. Polls show the party may lose its outright majority for the first time since taking power in 1994 under the leadership of Nelson Mandela.

A new generation of voters do not have the lived experience of apartheid nor the emotional connection that their parents and grandparents had to the party. The A.N.C. as a governing party is all young people know, and they blame it for their joblessness, rampant crime and an economy blighted by electricity blackouts.

''Generational change or replacement has finally caught up with the A.N.C.,'' said Collette Schulz-Herzenberg, an associate professor in political science at Stellenbosch University in South Africa.

South Africa is no exception to global trends: Studies show that Gen Z and millennial voters in many countries have lost faith in the democratic process, even as they remain deeply concerned about issues like climate change and the economy.

But in South Africa, where the median age is 28, young people make up more than a quarter of registered voters in a population of 62 million, and are a crucial voting bloc. But only 4.4 million of the 11 million South Africans ages 20 to 29 have registered to vote in this election, according to statistics from South Africa's Independent Electoral Commission.

The commission staged national campaigns to persuade more young people to register, and data show an encouraging uptick in registration of 18- and 19-year-olds who will vote for the first time in this election, to 27 percent from 19 percent since the last election.

But we spoke with many young people across the country who told us that they would sit out the election -- a political rebuke to the A.N.C. and an indication that the country's many opposition parties had failed to woo them.

'We are raising a generation of dependent young people'

Athenkosi Fani, 27

His whole life, Athenkosi Fani has relied on the A.N.C. government, and he hates that feeling.

''I am made to depend on the system,'' he said, sitting in his dorm room at Nelson Mandela University in the coastal city of Gqeberha, formerly known as Port Elizabeth. ''We are raising a generation of dependent young people.''

Mr. Fani is a postgraduate student who has attended universities named for A.N.C. stalwarts, like Mr. Mandela and Walter Sisulu, but he said that staying in school was all that kept him from being yet another unemployed Black graduate.

He had a tragic childhood, worsened by the enduring poverty in Eastern Cape Province where he grew up. Mr. Fani's mother received a social grant for him when he was born. Social grants, or welfare payments, are a lifeline for more than a third of households in South Africa -- a state of affairs that A.N.C. politicians frequently remind voters about.

At age 11, Mr. Fani was placed in an orphanage when his mother could no longer care for him, and he became a ward of the state until 18. But he is gregarious and outspoken, and received a series of important boosts along his path.

To attend university, he relied on government financial aid. A provincial A.N.C. leader bought a laptop for him and paid for him to attend a monthlong traditional initiation for young men, an important rite of passage in the region. At his graduation in March, a member of the National Youth Development Agency attended, after it, too, funded him.

He has been an L.G.B.T.Q. activist since he was a teenager, and traveled to the United States to attend a Lion's Club conference for young leaders to promote democracy. He was briefly an A.N.C. volunteer. All these experiences made him an ideal ambassador for youth issues, but also deeply resentful.

He said that he grudgingly voted for the A.N.C. in the last election as a sign of gratitude. This time, he said, he is staying home on Election Day.

''I still do believe in democracy,'' he said, but added, ''I don't want any organization that gets to have so much power.''

'My vote isn't going to count'

Shaylin Davids, 23

Down deep, Shaylin Davids knows she's part of the problem.

''The crime rate would actually go down if they start employing people,'' said Ms. Davids, as she held court in her garage in Noordgesig, a township west of Johannesburg, with several friends. All are high school graduates, and all are unemployed.

Ms. Davids said she was good at school, but used her smarts to run drugs instead of attend university. An uncle she was close to was gunned down this past New Year's Eve.

Aspiring now to turn a page, she started a computer course at a community center this year, hoping that it would land her a job if an employer looked past the tattoos on her face and fingers.

Ms. Davids's grandmother told her that young people like her in her township actually had better prospects under apartheid. Ms. Davids is Coloured, the term still used for multiracial South Africans, who make up just over 8 percent of the population. Under apartheid, Coloured South Africans had better access than Black South Africans to jobs in factories and the trades.

Like many other Coloured South Africans, Ms. Davids feels left behind by a majority-Black government, and blames the A.N.C.'s affirmative action policies, which favored Black people, for reducing her job opportunities. This sentiment endures despite the reality that the unemployment rate for Black South Africans is 37 percent, compared with 23 percent for Coloured people in the country. But it has been enough to grow support for ethnically driven political parties.

Ms. Davids, though, is not interested in their slogans. She doesn't follow politics, but she does follow the news. She watched bits of the finance minister's budget speech in February, and concluded that he understood nothing about the cost-of-living crisis choking her neighborhood or how insufficient the social grant is.

Misinformation is rife, and she and her friends have heard rumors that if they registered, their votes would automatically go to the A.N.C. And even without that, she can't see how her vote would change the country.

''I don't want to vote because my vote isn't going to count,'' she said. ''At the end of the day, the ruling party is still going to be A.N.C. There's still no change.''

'It's not as good as it could be'

Aphelele Vavi, 22

High school was great for Aphelele Vavi. His teachers were ''superstars,'' he said; the cafeteria had great snacks; and it is where he discovered his love of audiovisual production, which he is now turning into a career.

Mr. Vavi spent his teens ensconced in the bubble of a Johannesburg private school, and the friends and connections he made continue to shape his network and his prospects.

He lives in Sandton, a cluster of wealthy suburbs in northern Johannesburg, the son of a prominent trade unionist -- making him part of the Black elite. But he was also exposed to the harsh realities of less-privileged South Africans, like his cousins, who still live in rural Eastern Cape Province.

He said of post-apartheid South Africa: ''It's been really good to me.''

A first-time voter, he hopes the electricity blackouts that have plagued the country for years are the issue that will get other young people to vote. Studying audiovisual production, Mr. Vavi loses hours of work in a blackout. It also means a loss of connection to his close circle of friends, and turns his mobile phone into what he called ''a very expensive brick.''

''As much as there's been definite improvements, it's not as good as it could be or should have been,'' he said.

Hanging on the walls of the Vavi home is a portrait of the family posed with former President Nelson Mandela. Mr. Vavi's father was once the leader of the country's most powerful union, the Congress of South African Trade Unions, an ally of the A.N.C., and knew Mr. Mandela personally. All the younger Mr. Vavi remembers of that moment is ''the hullabaloo of trying to find the bow tie'' that he is wearing in the photograph.

Still, Mr. Vavi said that he would not be voting for the A.N.C. He said that he had read all the parties' manifestoes, but the politician who stood out for him did so by making a joke on X, formerly Twitter. To Mr. Vavi, the quip transformed that politician, Mmusi Maimane of the recently launched Build One South Africa party, into a relatable guy. Mr. Vavi is savvy enough to know that Mr. Maimane's and other opposition parties won't unseat the A.N.C., but they could shake up the party of his parents.

''The hope is that because of how unlikely it is that the A.N.C. are going to be voted out, at least scare them into picking up their socks and doing better,'' he said.

'South Africa can come back'

Dylan Stoltz, 20

When Dylan Stoltz shared his dreams for South Africa with other young white South Africans, they laughed at him.

''They say you can't do anything in this land anymore,'' he said.

Mr. Stoltz's optimism seems at odds with his surroundings in Carletonville, a dying mining town 46 miles southwest of Johannesburg. After the end of apartheid and the collapse of mining, fortunes have changed for men like Mr. Stoltz.

His grandfather had a farm of 215 acres and a senior job in a gold mine. Mr. Stoltz works as a fuel attendant in an agricultural supply store, where he serves an increasingly diverse group of farmers.

His stepfather arranged a higher-paying job for him outside of Vancouver, Canada, where he plans to go next year to work in construction for a South African émigré.

''I don't want to leave South Africa permanently,'' Mr. Stoltz said.

Since 2000, the number of South Africans living abroad has nearly doubled to more than 914,000, according to census data. His plan is to work as hard as he can in Canada and make as much money as he can. Then, he'll return to Carletonville to start a business and marry his girlfriend, Lee Ann Botes.

Fresh out of high school, Ms. Botes is considering becoming an au pair. It would give her the opportunity to travel, and perhaps finally see the ocean. Still, she, too, plans to return.

''Doesn't matter how much the violence and crime can be, this is your home,'' she said.

Mr. Stoltz added, ''I think South Africa can come back to where it was a few years back.''

While some white South Africans may be nostalgic for the apartheid years, for Mr. Stoltz, South Africa's heyday was during the presidency of Mr. Mandela, when he believes there was racial unity. The closest he has come to this ideal in his own lifetime, he said, was when South Africa won the Rugby World Cup last year.

Mr. Stoltz said that he would vote for Siya Kolisi, the current captain of the national rugby team and the first Black player to lead it -- if only he were running.

So he's considering voting for the largest opposition party, the Democratic Alliance, or the Freedom Front Plus, once a minority Afrikaner party that has grown to become the fourth- largest in South Africa. His grandfather is a local councilor with the Freedom Front Plus.

'I'm still waiting for someone to impress me'

Matema Mathiba, 30

As a sales representative for a global brewery company, Matema Mathiba spends her days driving around South Africa's northernmost Limpopo Province.

Ms. Mathiba spent much of her childhood in the provincial capital, Polokwane, once an agricultural center that has seen a mushrooming of large homes built by a new cohort of Black professionals. With the end of apartheid, the Mathiba family's fortunes grew to provide a house with a bedroom for each of the three sisters, who all have college degrees.

In the struggling economy under President Cyril Ramaphosa, Polokwane is less expensive than living in Johannesburg, Ms. Maiba said, sipping a lemonade in a recently opened chain restaurant. The city is also an A.N.C. stronghold, with the party. taking 75 percent of the votes in the last election.

In the past, Ms. Mathiba had voted for the A.N.C. because, she said, ''the devil you know is better.''

This election, though, she remains undecided. She is losing patience with the A.N.C., comparing the party to a 30-year-old, like herself, who should by now have a clear direction.

''A 30-year-old is an adult,'' she said.

Ms. Mathiba's church congregation of young Black professionals is her community, she says, and seeing television news footage of the A.N.C.'s tactic of campaigning in churches left a bitter taste.

''We can see through it, but can the older people?'' she asked.

With a degree in development planning, Ms. Mathiba actively participates in South Africa's hard-won democracy, reading bills and commenting online. She understands the stakes of policy-making, but as part of the social media generation, she wants to know her leaders more personally.

That she knows nothing about Mr. Ramaphosa's family unsettles her. She took notice when Julius Malema, the firebrand leader of the Economic Freedom Fighters, an opposition party, posted something personal about his children online. But she does not agree with his policy on open borders, she said.

Data show that a quarter of South African voters will make their decisions just days before the vote. So will Ms. Mathiba.

''I'm still waiting for someone to impress me,'' she said.

'When it's time to do the action, they can't'

Shanel Pillay, 24

As a girl, Shanel Pillay loved to go to the library. It's where she studied, hung out with friends and met the boy who would become her fiancé.

Today, Ms. Pillay says she would not risk the 10-minute walk to the library. Like many Indian South Africans living in Phoenix, a majority-Indian community founded by Gandhi when he lived in South Africa, Ms. Pillay feels that Phoenix has become unsafe. So has the surrounding city of Durban, on South Africa's east coast. Crime keeps her indoors, producing TikTok videos to pass the time.

Ms. Pillay vividly remembers hiding in her home for several days in 2021, when Durban was gripped by deadly riots that pitted Black and Indian South Africans against each other. The violence highlighted how poor and ***working-class*** South Africans felt left behind by progress made since the end of apartheid.

Recently, parts of Phoenix have not had running water for weeks, she said.

Under apartheid policy, Indian South Africans received more economic benefits than other groups of color. Since the end of apartheid, Indians, who make up 2.7 percent of the population, have seized opportunities in education and skilled work.

Ms. Pillay wanted to become a teacher, but when she arrived at college, she picked what she hoped would be a more lucrative career: finance.

''I wanted to be successful,'' she said. ''Have my own house, have my own car, have a pool, although I can't swim.''

After her stepfather fell ill and lost his income during the coronavirus pandemic, Ms. Pillay dropped out of college. Home for two years, she took a short course in teaching, and soon found a job at a small private school. On the side, she works as a freelance makeup artist.

''As an individual in South Africa, you need to be independent,'' she said.

She sees no point in voting. Neither large parties nor the independent candidates vying for Phoenix's vote have wooed her.

''When it's time to do the action,'' she said, ''they can't.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/28/world/africa/south-africa-election-youth-vote.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/28/world/africa/south-africa-election-youth-vote.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Mr. Fani, a postgraduate student who has attended universities named for A.N.C. stalwarts, does not plan to vote.

Mr. Vavi with fellow sound engineering students. He plans to vote, but not for the A.N.C. -- the party supported by his father, a union leader.

Ms. Davids started taking a computer course in hopes of turning her life around. She feels left behind by the country's A.N.C.-led government.

Mr. Stoltz with his girlfriend, Lee Ann Botes, at a Mother's Day lunch. He plans to work in Canada and then return to start a business. (A6)

Ms. Mathiba at a church service. She is politically involved, reading bills and commenting online, but she wants to know her leaders more personally.

Ms. Pillay, a teacher, recording a TikTok video. She tends to stay indoors because she feels that her community is unsafe. She sees no point in voting. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOAO SILVA) (A7) This article appeared in print on page A6, A7.

**Load-Date:** May 28, 2024

**End of Document**



[***South Africa’s Young Democracy Leaves Its Young Voters Disillusioned***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C4B-VR31-DXY4-X4PS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 28, 2024 Tuesday 11:28 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; africa

**Length:** 2794 words

**Byline:** Lynsey Chutel and Joao Silva Lynsey Chutel covers South Africa and the countries that make up southern Africa from Johannesburg. Joao Silva is a Times photographer based in South Africa.

**Highlight:** We spoke to South Africans who grew up in the three decades since the country overthrew apartheid and held its first free election about their lives and plans to vote — or not — in this week&#39;s pivotal election.

**Body**

At the dawn of South Africa’s democracy after the fall of the racist apartheid government, millions lined up before sunrise to cast their ballots in the country’s first free and fair election in 1994.

Thirty years later, democracy has lost its luster for a new generation.

South Africa is now heading into a pivotal election [*on Wednesday*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/18/world/africa/south-africa-national-election.html), in which voters will determine which party — or alliance — will pick the president. But voter turnout has been dropping consistently in recent years. It fell to below 50 percent for the first time in the 2021 municipal elections, and analysts said that voter registration has not kept up with the growth of the voting-age population.

This downward curve has mirrored the support for South Africa’s governing party, the African National Congress, or A.N.C., which was a liberation movement before becoming a political machine. Polls show the party may lose its outright majority for the first time since taking power in 1994 under the leadership of Nelson Mandela.

A new generation of voters do not have the lived experience of apartheid nor the emotional connection that their parents and grandparents had to the party. The A.N.C. as a governing party is all young people know, and they blame it for their joblessness, rampant crime and an economy blighted by electricity blackouts.

“Generational change or replacement has finally caught up with the A.N.C.,” said Collette Schulz-Herzenberg, an associate professor in political science at Stellenbosch University in South Africa.

South Africa is no exception to global trends: Studies show that Gen Z and millennial voters in many countries have lost faith in the democratic process, even as they remain deeply concerned about issues like climate change and the economy.

But in South Africa, where the median age is 28, young people make up more than a quarter of registered voters in a population of 62 million, and are a crucial voting bloc. But only 4.4 million of the 11 million South Africans ages 20 to 29 have registered to vote in this election, [*according to statistics*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/18/world/africa/south-africa-national-election.html) from South Africa’s Independent Electoral Commission.

The commission staged national campaigns to persuade more young people to register, and data show an encouraging uptick in registration of 18- and 19-year-olds who will vote for the first time in this election, to 27 percent from 19 percent since the last election.

But we spoke with many young people across the country who told us that they would sit out the election — a political rebuke to the A.N.C. and an indication that the country’s many opposition parties had failed to woo them.

‘We are raising a generation of dependent young people’

Athenkosi Fani, 27

His whole life, Athenkosi Fani has relied on the A.N.C. government, and he hates that feeling.

“I am made to depend on the system,” he said, sitting in his dorm room at Nelson Mandela University in the coastal city of Gqeberha, formerly known as Port Elizabeth. “We are raising a generation of dependent young people.”

Mr. Fani is a postgraduate student who has attended universities named for A.N.C. stalwarts, like Mr. Mandela and Walter Sisulu, but he said that staying in school was all that kept him from being yet another unemployed Black graduate.

He had a tragic childhood, worsened by the enduring poverty in Eastern Cape Province where he grew up. Mr. Fani’s mother received a social grant for him when he was born. Social grants, or welfare payments, are a lifeline for more than a third of households in South Africa — a state of affairs that A.N.C. politicians frequently remind voters about.

At age 11, Mr. Fani was placed in an orphanage when his mother could no longer care for him, and he became a ward of the state until 18. But he is gregarious and outspoken, and received a series of important boosts along his path.

To attend university, he relied on government financial aid. A provincial A.N.C. leader bought a laptop for him and paid for him to attend a monthlong traditional initiation for young men, an important rite of passage in the region. At his graduation in March, a member of the National Youth Development Agency attended, after it, too, funded him.

He has been an L.G.B.T.Q. activist since he was a teenager, and traveled to the United States to attend a Lion’s Club conference for young leaders to promote democracy. He was briefly an A.N.C. volunteer. All these experiences made him an ideal ambassador for youth issues, but also deeply resentful.

He said that he grudgingly voted for the A.N.C. in the last election as a sign of gratitude. This time, he said, he is staying home on Election Day.

“I still do believe in democracy,” he said, but added, “I don’t want any organization that gets to have so much power.”

‘My vote isn’t going to count’

Shaylin Davids, 23

Down deep, Shaylin Davids knows she’s part of the problem.

“The crime rate would actually go down if they start employing people,” said Ms. Davids, as she held court in her garage in Noordgesig, a township west of Johannesburg, with several friends. All are high school graduates, and all are unemployed.

Ms. Davids said she was good at school, but used her smarts to run drugs instead of attend university. An uncle she was close to was gunned down this past New Year’s Eve.

Aspiring now to turn a page, she started a computer course at a community center this year, hoping that it would land her a job if an employer looked past the tattoos on her face and fingers.

Ms. Davids’s grandmother told her that young people like her in her township actually had better prospects under apartheid. Ms. Davids is Coloured, the term still used for multiracial South Africans, who make up just over 8 percent of the population. Under apartheid, Coloured South Africans had better access than Black South Africans to jobs in factories and the trades.

Like many other Coloured South Africans, Ms. Davids feels left behind by a majority-Black government, and blames the A.N.C.’s affirmative action policies, which favored Black people, for reducing her job opportunities. This sentiment endures despite the reality that the [*unemployment rate for Black South Africans is*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/18/world/africa/south-africa-national-election.html) 37 percent, compared with 23 percent for Coloured people in the country. But it has been enough to grow support for ethnically driven political parties.

Ms. Davids, though, is not interested in their slogans. She doesn’t follow politics, but she does follow the news. She watched bits of the finance minister’s budget speech in February, and concluded that he understood nothing about the cost-of-living crisis choking her neighborhood or how insufficient the social grant is.

Misinformation is rife, and she and her friends have heard rumors that if they registered, their votes would automatically go to the A.N.C. And even without that, she can’t see how her vote would change the country.

“I don’t want to vote because my vote isn’t going to count,” she said. “At the end of the day, the ruling party is still going to be A.N.C. There’s still no change.”

‘It’s not as good as it could be’

Aphelele Vavi, 22

High school was great for Aphelele Vavi. His teachers were “superstars,” he said; the cafeteria had great snacks; and it is where he discovered his love of audiovisual production, which he is now turning into a career.

Mr. Vavi spent his teens ensconced in the bubble of a Johannesburg private school, and the friends and connections he made continue to shape his network and his prospects.

He lives in Sandton, a cluster of wealthy suburbs in northern Johannesburg, the son of a prominent trade unionist — making him part of the Black elite. But he was also exposed to the harsh realities of less-privileged South Africans, like his cousins, who still live in rural Eastern Cape Province.

He said of post-apartheid South Africa: “It’s been really good to me.”

A first-time voter, he hopes the [*electricity blackouts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/18/world/africa/south-africa-national-election.html) that have plagued the country for years are the issue that will get other young people to vote. Studying audiovisual production, Mr. Vavi loses hours of work in a blackout. It also means a loss of connection to his close circle of friends, and turns his mobile phone into what he called “a very expensive brick.”

“As much as there’s been definite improvements, it’s not as good as it could be or should have been,” he said.

Hanging on the walls of the Vavi home is a portrait of the family posed with former President Nelson Mandela. Mr. Vavi’s father was once the leader of the country’s most powerful union, the Congress of South African Trade Unions, an ally of the A.N.C., and knew Mr. Mandela personally. All the younger Mr. Vavi remembers of that moment is “the hullabaloo of trying to find the bow tie” that he is wearing in the photograph.

Still, Mr. Vavi said that he would not be voting for the A.N.C. He said that he had read all the parties’ manifestoes, but the politician who stood out for him did so by making a joke on X, formerly Twitter. To Mr. Vavi, the quip transformed that politician, Mmusi Maimane of the recently launched Build One South Africa party, into a relatable guy. Mr. Vavi is savvy enough to know that Mr. Maimane’s and other opposition parties won’t unseat the A.N.C., but they could shake up the party of his parents.

“The hope is that because of how unlikely it is that the A.N.C. are going to be voted out, at least scare them into picking up their socks and doing better,” he said.

‘South Africa can come back’

Dylan Stoltz, 20

When Dylan Stoltz shared his dreams for South Africa with other young white South Africans, they laughed at him.

“They say you can’t do anything in this land anymore,” he said.

Mr. Stoltz’s optimism seems at odds with his surroundings in Carletonville, a dying mining town 46 miles southwest of Johannesburg. After the end of apartheid and the collapse of mining, fortunes have changed for men like Mr. Stoltz.

His grandfather had a farm of 215 acres and a senior job in a gold mine. Mr. Stoltz works as a fuel attendant in an agricultural supply store, where he serves an increasingly diverse group of farmers.

His stepfather arranged a higher-paying job for him outside of Vancouver, Canada, where he plans to go next year to work in construction for a South African émigré.

“I don’t want to leave South Africa permanently,” Mr. Stoltz said.

Since 2000, the number of South Africans living abroad has nearly doubled to more than 914,000, according to census data. His plan is to work as hard as he can in Canada and make as much money as he can. Then, he’ll return to Carletonville to start a business and marry his girlfriend, Lee Ann Botes.

Fresh out of high school, Ms. Botes is considering becoming an au pair. It would give her the opportunity to travel, and perhaps finally see the ocean. Still, she, too, plans to return.

“Doesn’t matter how much the violence and crime can be, this is your home,” she said.

Mr. Stoltz added, “I think South Africa can come back to where it was a few years back.”

While some white South Africans may be nostalgic for the apartheid years, for Mr. Stoltz, South Africa’s heyday was during the presidency of Mr. Mandela, when he believes there was racial unity. The closest he has come to this ideal in his own lifetime, he said, was when [*South Africa won the Rugby World Cup last year.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/18/world/africa/south-africa-national-election.html)

Mr. Stoltz said that he would vote for Siya Kolisi, the current captain of the national rugby team and the first Black player to lead it — if only he were running.

So he’s considering voting for the largest opposition party, the Democratic Alliance, or the Freedom Front Plus, once a minority Afrikaner party that has grown to become the fourth- largest in South Africa. His grandfather is a local councilor with the Freedom Front Plus.

‘I’m still waiting for someone to impress me’

Matema Mathiba, 30

As a sales representative for a global brewery company, Matema Mathiba spends her days driving around South Africa’s northernmost Limpopo Province.

Ms. Mathiba spent much of her childhood in the provincial capital, Polokwane, once an agricultural center that has seen a mushrooming of large homes built by a new cohort of Black professionals. With the end of apartheid, the Mathiba family’s fortunes grew to provide a house with a bedroom for each of the three sisters, who all have college degrees.

In the struggling economy under President Cyril Ramaphosa, Polokwane is less expensive than living in Johannesburg, Ms. Maiba said, sipping a lemonade in a recently opened chain restaurant. The city is also an A.N.C. stronghold, with the party. taking 75 percent of the votes in the last election.

In the past, Ms. Mathiba had voted for the A.N.C. because, she said, “the devil you know is better.”

This election, though, she remains undecided. She is losing patience with the A.N.C., comparing the party to a 30-year-old, like herself, who should by now have a clear direction.

“A 30-year-old is an adult,” she said.

Ms. Mathiba’s church congregation of young Black professionals is her community, she says, and seeing television news footage of the A.N.C.’s tactic of campaigning in churches left a bitter taste.

“We can see through it, but can the older people?” she asked.

With a degree in development planning, Ms. Mathiba actively participates in South Africa’s hard-won democracy, reading bills and commenting online. She understands the stakes of policy-making, but as part of the social media generation, she wants to know her leaders more personally.

That she knows nothing about Mr. Ramaphosa’s family unsettles her. She took notice when Julius Malema, the firebrand leader of the Economic Freedom Fighters, an opposition party, posted something personal about his children online. But she does not agree with his policy on open borders, she said.

Data show that a quarter of South African voters will make their decisions just days before the vote. So will Ms. Mathiba.

“I’m still waiting for someone to impress me,” she said.

‘When it’s time to do the action, they can’t’

Shanel Pillay, 24

As a girl, Shanel Pillay loved to go to the library. It’s where she studied, hung out with friends and met the boy who would become her fiancé.

Today, Ms. Pillay says she would not risk the 10-minute walk to the library. Like many Indian South Africans living in Phoenix, a majority-Indian community [*founded by Gandhi*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/18/world/africa/south-africa-national-election.html) when he lived in South Africa, Ms. Pillay feels that Phoenix has become unsafe. So has the surrounding city of Durban, on South Africa’s east coast. Crime keeps her indoors, producing TikTok videos to pass the time.

Ms. Pillay vividly remembers hiding in her home for several days in 2021, when Durban was [*gripped by deadly riots*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/18/world/africa/south-africa-national-election.html) that pitted Black and Indian South Africans against each other. The violence highlighted how poor and ***working-class*** South Africans felt left behind by progress made since the end of apartheid.

Recently, parts of Phoenix have not had running water for weeks, she said.

Under apartheid policy, Indian South Africans received more economic benefits than other groups of color. Since the end of apartheid, Indians, who make up 2.7 percent of the population, have seized opportunities in education and skilled work.

Ms. Pillay wanted to become a teacher, but when she arrived at college, she picked what she hoped would be a more lucrative career: finance.

“I wanted to be successful,” she said. “Have my own house, have my own car, have a pool, although I can’t swim.”

After her stepfather fell ill and lost his income during the coronavirus pandemic, Ms. Pillay dropped out of college. Home for two years, she took a short course in teaching, and soon found a job at a small private school. On the side, she works as a freelance makeup artist.

“As an individual in South Africa, you need to be independent,” she said.

She sees no point in voting. Neither large parties nor the independent candidates vying for Phoenix’s vote have wooed her.

“When it’s time to do the action,” she said, “they can’t.”

PHOTOS: Mr. Fani, a postgraduate student who has attended universities named for A.N.C. stalwarts, does not plan to vote.; Mr. Vavi with fellow sound engineering students. He plans to vote, but not for the A.N.C. — the party supported by his father, a union leader.; Ms. Davids started taking a computer course in hopes of turning her life around. She feels left behind by the country’s A.N.C.-led government.; Mr. Stoltz with his girlfriend, Lee Ann Botes, at a Mother’s Day lunch. He plans to work in Canada and then return to start a business. (A6); Ms. Mathiba at a church service. She is politically involved, reading bills and commenting online, but she wants to know her leaders more personally.; Ms. Pillay, a teacher, recording a TikTok video. She tends to stay indoors because she feels that her community is unsafe. She sees no point in voting. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOAO SILVA) (A7) This article appeared in print on page A6, A7.

**Load-Date:** May 28, 2024

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[***The Cure for What Ails Our Democracy; David Brooks***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BBK-5K01-DXY4-X098-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 15, 2024 Thursday 10:01 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1088 words

**Byline:** David Brooks David Brooks has been a columnist with The Times since 2003.&amp;#160;He is the author, most recently,&amp;#160; of &amp;#8220;How to Know a Person: The Art of Seeing Others Deeply and Being Deeply Seen.&amp;#8221;

**Highlight:** We have to get past the idea that political conflicts are fights between good and evil.

**Body**

America is economically thriving but politically dysfunctional. We have the material, technological and military resources to remain the world’s leading superpower, but the current Congress is unable to make decisions about basic issues, like how to fix the immigration system or what role we should play in the world.

What do we have to do to rectify this situation? Well, a lot of things, but one of them is this: More of us have to embrace an idea, a way of thinking that is fundamental to being a citizen in a democracy.

That idea is known as value pluralism. It’s most associated with the British philosopher Isaiah Berlin and is based on the premise that the world doesn’t fit neatly together. We all want to pursue a variety of goods, but unfortunately, these goods can be in tension with one another. For example, we may want to use government to make society more equal, but if we do, we’ll have to expand state power so much that it will impinge on some people’s freedom, which is a good we also believe in.

As Damon Linker, who teaches a course on Berlin and others at the University of Pennsylvania, [*noted*](https://damonlinker.substack.com/p/when-liberalism-was-at-its-best1) recently, these kinds of tensions are common in our political lives: loyalty to a particular community versus universal solidarity with all humankind; respect for authority versus individual autonomy; social progress versus social stability. I’d add that these kinds of tensions are rife within individuals as well: the desire to be enmeshed in community versus the desire to have the personal space to do what you want; the desire to stand out versus the desire to fit in; the cry for justice versus the cry for mercy.

If we choose one good, we are sacrificing a piece of another. The tragic fact about the human condition is that many choices involve loss. Day after day, the trick is figuring out what you are willing to sacrifice for the more important good.

Sure, there are some occasions when the struggle really is good versus evil: World War II, the civil rights movement, the Civil War. As Lincoln argued, if slavery is not wrong then nothing is wrong. But these occasions are rarer than we might think.

I think I detest Donald Trump as much as the next guy, but Trumpian populism does represent some very legitimate values: the fear of imperial overreach; the need to preserve social cohesion amid mass migration; the need to protect ***working-class*** wages from the pressures of globalization.

The struggle against Trump the man is a good-versus-bad struggle between democracy and narcissistic authoritarianism, but the struggle between liberalism and Trumpian populism is a wrestling match over how to balance legitimate concerns.

Berlin had a word for people who think there is one right solution to our problems and that therefore we must do whatever is necessary in order to impose it: monists. Berlin was born in pre-revolutionary Russia and came of age in the 1930s, when two monist philosophies were on the march, Marxism and fascism. They claimed to be all-explaining ideologies that promised an ultimate end to political problems.

Today, monism takes the form of those on the left or right who see all political conflicts as good and evil fights between the oppressors and the oppressed. The left describes these conflicts as the colonizer versus the colonized. The Trumpian right describes these conflicts as the coastal elites, globalists or cultural Marxists. But both sides hold up the illusion that we can solve our problems if we just crush the bad people.

We pluralists resist that kind of Manichaean moralism. We begin with the premise that most political factions in a democratic society are trying to pursue some good end. The right question is not who is good or evil. The right question is what balance do we need to strike in these circumstances?

In the 1980s, I thought the chief worry was economic sclerosis and that Reagan/Thatcher policies, including tax cuts, were the right response. Now I think the chief worry is inequality and social fragmentation, and I think the Biden policies, including tax increases, are the right response.

We pluralists believe that conflict is an eternal part of public life — we’re always going to be struggling over how to balance competing goods — but it is conflict of a limited sort, a debate among patriots, not a death match between the children of light and the children of darkness. In our view, Congress is supposed to be the place where these kinds of balances are struck, the place where different sorts of representatives meet to weigh interests and strike compromises. It’s not supposed to be a place where representatives destroy compromises so they can go on TV taking some ideologically pure stance.

Pluralism is a creed that induces humility (even among us pundits, who are resistant to the virtue). A pluralist never believes that he is in possession of the truth, and that all others live in error. The pluralist is slow to assert certainty, knowing that even those people who strenuously denounce him are probably partially right. “I am bored by reading people who are allies,” Berlin once confessed.

Berlin went to strenuous lengths to argue that pluralism is not relativism. It’s not the belief that we all get to have our own truth. It’s the belief that objective truths exist, but unfortunately, in political life, they don’t fit into one frictionless whole.

He was more interesting when writing about specific people — like Machiavelli or Churchill — than when writing about abstract ideas. That captures something deeply humanistic about his worldview: that at the center there is always the searcher, struggling with ironies and incongruities, always trying empathetically to understand other minds, always trying to keep his head while others are losing theirs.

Berlin argued that if there were a final set of solutions, “a final pattern in which society could be arranged,” then “liberty would become a sin.” But there are no final right answers to political questions, so history remains a conversation that has no end.

Many American voters reward politicians who offer them a holy war. If there were more pluralists, we’d elect more people interested in gradually and steadily making life better.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://damonlinker.substack.com/p/when-liberalism-was-at-its-best1) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://damonlinker.substack.com/p/when-liberalism-was-at-its-best1). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://damonlinker.substack.com/p/when-liberalism-was-at-its-best1).

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This article appeared in print on page A21.

**Load-Date:** February 16, 2024

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[***A Match Made in MAGA: How a Friendship Helped J.D. Vance Land on Trump’s V.P. List***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BWS-K4M1-DXY4-X0M7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 27, 2024 Saturday 13:17 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1964 words

**Byline:** Sharon LaFraniere Sharon LaFraniere is an investigative reporter currently focusing on Republican candidates in the 2024 presidential election.

**Highlight:** The Ohio senator and Donald Trump Jr. have bonded politically and personally. It’s a relationship that could factor into the former president’s search for a running mate.

**Body**

It was just 43 days before the 2022 Republican primary in Ohio, and former President Donald J. Trump had yet to throw his weight behind a Senate candidate. J.D. Vance, a political novice competing in a packed field, had a huge problem.

He had publicly called Mr. Trump “loathsome” and an “[*idiot.*](https://www.politico.com/news/2021/10/23/jd-vance-ohio-senate-trump-comments-516865)” Once, he described him as [*“cultural heroin.”*](https://www.politico.com/news/2021/10/23/jd-vance-ohio-senate-trump-comments-516865)

Then came an unexpected lifeline. “Enough with the lies being told about this guy,” Donald Trump Jr., the former president’s son, wrote on Twitter, assuring his followers that Mr. Vance had become a fan of his father. A month later, encouraged by his son, the elder Mr. Trump endorsed Mr. Vance.

Today, Mr. Vance is one of the former president’s most reliable allies and a leader of a band of Republicans pushing Senate Republicans to the right. And his star has only continued to rise: Mr. Vance is on the list of Mr. Trump’s possible running mates, according to two people familiar with the discussions.

In no small part, Mr. Vance owes his quick ascent into the Trump orbit to his unlikely friendship and ideological kinship with the former president’s oldest son. They text or talk nearly daily and try to meet up if they are in the same city, according to people who know them both. They are a social-media tag team, often reposting each other’s messages.

Although he has stressed that the choice of a running mate is his father’s decision alone, Mr. Trump has said he would be happy with Mr. Vance on the G.O.P. ticket.

The friendship is among the MAGA movement’s more unusual pairings. Mr. Vance, 39, is a self-made man who had a fatherless childhood. Mr. Trump, 46, has been at the right hand of his billionaire father his whole life.

Mr. Vance is wonky and well-spoken, a Yale Law School graduate and memoirist regarded as an intellectual standard-bearer for Trumpism. The former president’s son is sarcastic and foul-mouthed, a sharper reader of people than of policy papers and a political weather vane for his father.

But the men share right-wing, nationalist politics and a vision for how the Republican Party should root out vestiges of old elites. In some ways, they represent the ego and id of the MAGA movement and, some Republican strategists argue, its next wave of insurgency.

Kevin D. Roberts, the president of the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank, said that for voters seeking a next-generation leader, there was virtually “no one like Senator Vance.” Those same voters look up to Donald Trump Jr., he said. “They know both men.”

Mr. Vance declined to be interviewed for this article. The younger Mr. Trump said in a statement: “In the world of politics you make a lot of acquaintances, but there are very few actual friends. J.D. has become a close friend of mine, and I’m a big supporter of everything he’s been doing policywise to put America First in the Senate.”

As the former president narrows his list of running mates, with his eldest son as an informal adviser, personal loyalty is surely a factor. Mr. Trump has insisted that his former vice president, Mike Pence, betrayed him by refusing to allow him and his allies to manipulate the results of the 2020 election in his favor.

Mr. Vance has made clear that he is no Mr. Pence. He has claimed that the 2020 election was blighted by widespread fraud, an allegation that has been repeatedly and thoroughly debunked.

He told [*ABC News this February*](https://www.politico.com/news/2021/10/23/jd-vance-ohio-senate-trump-comments-516865) that had he been vice president in January 2021, he would have allowed Congress to consider fraudulent slates of pro-Trump electors before certifying the election, [*a scheme meant to disrupt the transfer of power*](https://www.politico.com/news/2021/10/23/jd-vance-ohio-senate-trump-comments-516865) after Joseph R. Biden Jr. won the presidency.

Mr. Vance’s allegiance to the former president is relatively new, but friends say it is deep. In his memoir, Mr. Vance wrote that his upbringing taught him to value “loyalty, honor and toughness.”

The former president helped him edge out his primary opponents, when he could have stood aside. The senator “is an intensely, personally loyal guy,” said Luke Thompson, a close friend who ran the super PAC that backed Mr. Vance’s campaign.

Striking contrasts

It is hard to overstate the gap in backgrounds between Mr. Vance and Donald Trump Jr. Mr. Vance grew up in Middletown, Ohio, a steel mill town, and moved six times in as many years before his grandmother took him in as a teenager.

Mr. Vance’s name tracks his childhood upheaval. He was born James Donald Bowman, after his father, Donald Bowman, who surrendered him for adoption when he was 6. His mother, who battled drug addiction for years, renamed him James David Hamel, erasing his father’s names and substituting the surname of his stepfather, one in a string of fast-disappearing father figures. Mr. Vance later adopted his grandmother’s surname.

Mr. Vance wrote that his mother once threatened to crash their car and kill them both. He watched as she was driven away in handcuffs in the back of a police car. “I have never felt so lonely,” he wrote in his book, “Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis.”

Mr. Trump’s home was a luxury apartment at the top of a Manhattan tower with his father’s name on it. In his memoir, “Triggered: How the Left Thrives on Hate and Wants to Silence Us,” he recounted how his mother, Ivana Trump, tried to order a glass of chardonnay at a Taco Bell when dropping him off at boarding school in a small Pennsylvania town. News of the incident spread to his new schoolmates.

“Really awesome, Mom. Thanks,” he wrote.

Politically, they were also far apart, even as late as 2017. Mr. Trump was one of his father’s most tireless cheerleaders in his first run for president, echoing his father’s hard-line rhetoric and relishing every opportunity to slam liberals.

Mr. Vance was a former Marine, a venture capitalist and a conservative Republican who was appalled by candidate Trump. In early 2016, he [*texted a former Yale roommate*](https://www.politico.com/news/2021/10/23/jd-vance-ohio-senate-trump-comments-516865) that he feared Mr. Trump could be “America’s Hitler.” Publicly, he said that Mr. Trump’s policy proposals “[*range from immoral to absurd*](https://www.politico.com/news/2021/10/23/jd-vance-ohio-senate-trump-comments-516865).”

He voted for an independent candidate for president.

Walking it back, with help

After Mr. Trump’s victory, pundits celebrated Mr. Vance’s book as a key to understanding the discontent of white ***working-class*** voters who had swung the election. Mr. Vance became an overnight media celebrity.

In those days, he held up former President Barack Obama, who also grew up fatherless, as a role model. Mr. Obama was someone “whose history looked something like mine but whose future contained something I wanted,” he wrote in [*a New York Times opinion essay*](https://www.politico.com/news/2021/10/23/jd-vance-ohio-senate-trump-comments-516865) in January 2017.

But Mr. Vance’s memoir also reveals his pragmatic approach to self-advancement. He wanted to finish college faster, so he doubled his course load. Because the parents of “rich kids” in his hometown were either lawyers or doctors, he wrote, he went to law school. To get Y, do X.

[*In a Time magazine interview*](https://www.politico.com/news/2021/10/23/jd-vance-ohio-senate-trump-comments-516865) shortly after he announced his Senate run in July 2021, Mr. Vance acknowledged a similar calculus in his conversion from a Never Trumper to a Trump admirer. Mr. Trump is “the leader of this movement,” he said then, “and if I actually care about these people and the things I say I care about, I need to just suck it up and support him.”

Mr. Vance deleted his anti-Trump tweets. He became a regular figure on Tucker Carlson’s show on Fox News, of which the former president was an avid viewer. He hired an adviser to Donald Trump Jr. to help run his campaign. He began working through intermediaries to lobby the former president for an endorsement.

One of the first was Charlie Kirk, a young activist who had carried Donald Trump Jr.’s bags and booked his flights during the 2016 campaign. Mr. Kirk’s group, Turning Point U.S.A., had since built up an impressive following of Republican conservatives.

In early 2021, Mr. Kirk texted an adviser to Donald Trump Jr. about Mr. Vance’s political promise, according to a person familiar with the exchange. Mr. Trump’s response was encouraging: He had read “Hillbilly Elegy,” he said, and he loved it.

That March, Mr. Vance made a pilgrimage to Mar-a-Lago, the former president’s private club in Palm Beach, Fla., to seek his endorsement. Donald Trump Jr. also attended the meeting, as did Peter Thiel, the Silicon Valley billionaire who was bankrolling Mr. Vance’s campaign.

Mr. Vance did not get what he wanted, but he left hopeful that the elder Mr. Trump would at least keep an eye on his race. Mr. Vance was good-looking, the former president later noted, according to people familiar with Mr. Trump’s reaction, but his opponents were clobbering Mr. Vance with his previous anti-Trump remarks.

Donald Trump Jr. was not put off by Mr. Vance’s U-turn. “Guess who else didn’t like Trump in 2016? Everybody,” he said later. Mr. Vance was at least “consistent and intellectually honest” about why, he said.

A fighter for Trump in the Senate

People close to both men said their friendship blossomed after Mr. Vance joined the Senate in January 2023. Since then, the public signs of their mutual appreciation have been frequent. Mr. Trump often praises Mr. Vance on social media and on [*his podcast on Rumble*](https://www.politico.com/news/2021/10/23/jd-vance-ohio-senate-trump-comments-516865), a right-leaning social media site. (Mr. Vance’s venture capital firm has invested in the platform.)

“We need every GOP Senator to be @JDVance1,” Mr. Trump wrote last December.

Indeed, Mr. Vance is both an energetic, vocal ally to the former president, and one of the leaders of a bloc of roughly a dozen Republican senators who have tried to push the Senate in a more isolationist and Trumpist direction, often clashing with Senator Mitch McConnell, the minority leader.

Mr. Vance worked hard, though unsuccessfully, to stop a $60 billion aid package for Ukraine’s war against Russia’s invasion. For 10 months, he has blocked Biden administration nominees to top Justice Department posts to protest Mr. Trump’s felony indictment on charges of mishandling classified documents.

He has also said that should the former president be elected again, he should fire “every single midlevel bureaucrat” and “replace them with our people.” If stopped by legal orders, he should dare judges to enforce them, he said.

David Frum, a Trump critic and a former speechwriter for President George W. Bush who [*has known Mr. Vance for years*](https://www.politico.com/news/2021/10/23/jd-vance-ohio-senate-trump-comments-516865), described the senator as an intelligent man with an extraordinary life story who has “sunk to the depths of political degradation.”

But his stances have been applauded by Mr. Trump, who said a willingness to push political boundaries would be a key attribute for his father’s running mate.

While he was not the only one who could fit that bill, “I’d love to see a J.D. Vance,” [*the younger Mr. Trump told Newsmax in January*](https://www.politico.com/news/2021/10/23/jd-vance-ohio-senate-trump-comments-516865). “You actually need a fighter.”

Ryan Mac contributed reporting. Kitty Bennett and Susan C. Beachy contributed research.

Ryan Mac contributed reporting. Kitty Bennett and Susan C. Beachy contributed research.

PHOTOS: Senator J.D. Vance has established himself as a reliable ally for former President Donald J. Trump, who endorsed him for his 2022 race in Ohio. At right, Mr. Vance on a bus tour through the Midwest. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MADDIE MCGARVEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; BRIAN KAISER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; ANDREW SPEAR FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Mr. Vance, who was once a Never Trumper, owes his quick ascent into the Trump orbit to his unexpected relationship and ideological kinship with the former president’s oldest son, Donald Trump Jr., above. At left, the elder Mr. Trump with Mr. Vance during a campaign rally in Vandalia, Ohio, last month. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY GAELEN MORSE/REUTERS; JEFF DEAN/ASSOCIATED PRESS); Mr. Vance’s memoir about growing up in Middletown, Ohio, above, said that his upbringing taught him to value loyalty. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MADDIE MCGARVEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A18) This article appeared in print on page A1, A18.

**Load-Date:** April 28, 2024

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[***Bedtime Stories for Grown-Ups***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BV9-1H51-JBG3-60NX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 20, 2024 Saturday 06:55 EST

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1867 words

**Byline:** Melissa Kirsch Melissa Kirsch is the deputy editor of Culture and Lifestyle at The Times and writes The Morning newsletter on Saturdays.

**Highlight:** For those past the age of a parental tuck-in, audiobooks might provide a soothing analogue.

**Body**

For those past the age of a parental tuck-in, audiobooks might provide a soothing analogue.

If I’m not working or around other people, more often than not, I want to be reading. The rise in availability of audiobooks has made this easier to achieve. One can read a physical book when stationary, then listen to an audiobook when driving, tidying up, walking or otherwise in motion. I like to get the same book in both formats for complete immersion: read the book over breakfast, switch to the audiobook on the stereo while getting ready for work, listen on headphones during my commute.

My fall-asleep routine always, inviolably, involves reading either a physical or Kindle book. It’s so effective a soporific that most nights I struggle to read for more than 10 minutes, which is both satisfying and maddening. I’ve tried falling asleep to audiobooks, but there’s something about it that’s too passive. It’s almost as if I need to be actively engaged in the pursuit of staying awake in order to fall asleep. Reading a physical book in bed, my eyes and hands and even bent knees against which the book is resting are all enlisted in the reading process, a warrior pose against sleep. But sleep always wins.

I came across this piece in The Times the other day, “[*Audiobooks to Lull You to Sleep*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html).” I was intrigued, even though I’d already established that such a practice was not for me. That phrasing, that promise “to lull you to sleep,” shifted the idea of the presleep audiobook for me. As children, we were sung lullabies, read bedtime stories. Once children outgrow these parental ministrations, they’re on their own. That intimacy of being read to and sung to and having their sleep treated as a precious creative project is finished. (“And not a moment too soon!” I hear exhausted parents cry.) But do we ever outgrow the desire to be lulled, whether by soothing voice or chamomile tea or sleep gummy? I don’t think so.

“Ever fallen asleep to an audiobook?” I asked in one of my group texts. “Duh, most nights,” my friend Natalie responded immediately. She’s partial to whodunits, nothing too complicated. My friend Chris said one of his most vivid reading experiences was of soothing himself to sleep with Stephen King’s “The Outsider” during a bout with Covid. “It was very trippy because I was only ever partially conscious,” he said. “It was like I was dreaming the book.”

Another friend had a list of rules for falling asleep to audiobooks: Choose a book you’ve read before so you’re not overly concerned with following the plot. Use one earbud to listen if you’re worried about keeping a partner awake. Set a sleep timer so you’re not awakened by a particularly animated scene. And the narrator can’t be too dynamic: The experience of Thandiwe Newton reading “War and Peace” was too theatrical for her.

Someone suggested that falling asleep to audiobooks might be hostile to the appreciation of literature. While in my ideal reading scenario I approach a book with intention and the full scope of my concentration, that setup is increasingly unrealistic. I asked Dion Graham, a narrator of audiobooks, including Colson Whitehead’s “Crook Manifesto” and David Grann’s “The Wager,” how he felt about the idea of people falling asleep to his voice. He sees it as a privilege of being an adult: “You get to have a bedtime story any time you want,” he said, adding, “You’re a grown-up, so nobody can tell you you have to go to bed. You can listen all night.”

Elisabeth Egan, who wrote the Times piece on audiobooks for sleep, compared falling asleep to an audiobook to falling asleep to a comforting movie, like “When Harry Met Sally.” I like the idea of art having many applications, of there not being one “right” way to engage with a book or a movie. There’s so much to worry about already.

For more

* Before there were audiobooks, there was reading aloud to each other. Here’s [*why adults should do it more*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html).

1. The pleasure of [*falling asleep with a book on your face*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html).
2. [*Want Jimmy Stewart to read you a bedtime story?*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html)Thanks to artificial intelligence, he can.
3. Wirecutter’s favorite [*sleep headphones*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html).
4. You don’t have to listen to them to get the benefits: [*seven books for better sleep*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html).

THE WEEK IN CULTURE

* “The Wiz” is back on Broadway, nearly 50 years after it debuted, with Wayne Brady in the role of the great and powerful Wiz. [*Read our review*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html).

1. Rachel Zegler, who played Maria in Steven Spielberg’s “West Side Story,” will star in a [*Broadway revival of “Romeo and Juliet,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html) Playbill reports. It will feature music by Jack Antonoff.
2. In “Patriots,” now on Broadway, the creator of “The Crown” turns his attention to another period of modern history: [*the rise of Vladimir Putin*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html).

* Dozens of theater, film and media stars [*turned out for the opening of “Suffs,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html) a new musical about women’s suffrage produced by Hillary Clinton and Malala Yousafzai.
* Taylor Swift released “The Tortured Poets Department.” [*It is a return to her specialty*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html), Lindsay Zoladz writes, “autobiographical and sometimes spiteful tales of heartbreak, full of detailed, referential lyrics. ”

1. Madison Malone Kircher spoke with students in a [*Swift-focused English course at Harvard*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html) about their reaction to the new album.

* More than two decades after they first dated, [*Nelly and Ashanti rekindled their romance*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html), became engaged and are having a baby.
* A complex web of rap beefs has emerged since Kendrick Lamar dissed Drake and J. Cole on a recent song. “Popcast,” a Times podcast, [*breaks down what’s going on*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html).
* “Dune: Part Two” is now available to rent online. For those who have seen it, the director Denis Villeneuve [*answers all the nerdy questions you might have*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html).

1. A retrospective of Ken Loach’s work at Film Forum in New York shows how his movies form [*a cinema of* ***working-class*** *superheroes*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html), Jeannette Catsoulis writes.
2. The activist entertainment company Participant, which produced socially conscious films like Al Gore’s “An Inconvenient Truth,” is [*shutting down after 20 years*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html).

* This week was the Salone del Mobile, Milan’s annual fair of furniture and interior design. T Magazine picked [*10 standouts from the show*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html).

1. The singer FKA Twigs will perform with the Martha Graham Dance Company. “This is really important for my spirit,” [*she said*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html).
2. More books were removed from American public schools [*in the first half of this school year*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html) than in the entire previous one, according to PEN America.

THE LATEST NEWS

* The House [*advanced legislation to aid Ukraine, Israel and other U.S. allies*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html), setting it up to pass the chamber today. More Democrats than Republicans voted to advance it.

1. Opening arguments are set for Monday in Donald Trump’s Manhattan criminal trial after [*the judge seated six alternate jurors*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html). Outside the courthouse, a man set himself on fire and [*died on Friday night*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html).
2. The Senate voted to [*extend a warrantless surveillance law*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html) that lets the government collect foreigners’ communications. The bill now heads to President Biden.
3. Workers at a Volkswagen plant in Tennessee voted overwhelmingly [*to join the United Automobile Workers union*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html), despite the South’s decades-long hostility to organized labor.
4. Environmental activists who once worked with Robert F. Kennedy Jr. urged him to [*end his independent presidential campaign*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html), warning that it would help re-elect Trump.
5. The University of Southern California said it would have [*no outside speakers at graduation this year*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html), after its decision to cancel its Muslim valedictorian’s speech stirred controversy.
6. The Biden administration [*banned oil drilling*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html) on 13 million acres of Alaskan wilderness.

CULTURE CALENDAR

“Challengers” (Friday): This latest movie from Luca Guadagnino, the director of “Call Me by Your Name,” depicts a love triangle that unfurls over more than decade. In 2006, two best friends and tennis players — Art and Patrick — fall for Tashi, another young player (Zendaya). Art and Patrick’s friendship breaks down, and their careers rise and fall.

P.S. I would be remiss not to mention Zendaya’s red carpet outfits. [*The Times’s Jessica Testa writes*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html) that Zendaya has become a “defining star of the modern movie press tour” for her impressively thematic looks. ([*See some of them in Vanity Fair*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html).)

RECIPE OF THE WEEK

Flourless Chocolate Cake

Whether you’re looking for a showstopping Passover dessert or just a rich, fudgy treat with coffee, Genevieve Ko’s classic [*flourless chocolate cake*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html) will fit the bill. Crackly on top and creamy in the center, this brownielike confection can be whisked together in one bowl, no electric mixer or egg-separating required. It calls for chocolate chips, which eliminates any chopping. But feel free to use whatever good dark chocolate you have on hand; a cocoa percentage of 70 to 78 percent gives it a nice bittersweet balance.

REAL ESTATE

The hunt: After spending decades in Arizona, a couple relocated to the San Francisco Bay Area, where they hoped to find a home with no stairs and enough space to host family. Which one did they choose? [*Play our game*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html).

What you get for $1.4 million: A four-bedroom ranch in Boise, Idaho; two acres in Kent, Conn.; and a [*Tudor Revival cottage in Biltmore Forest, N.C.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html), built in 1927.

LIVING

What is Highsnobiety? It’s a magazine — and [*a store, website, production agency and clothing line*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html).

Japan: The village of Yoshida is famous for its steel. To attract visitors, residents invite tourists to [*help them produce it*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html).

Beginners: The Times spoke with 150 artists, some planning retrospectives and others making their debuts, about [*the process of starting*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html).

ADVICE FROM WIRECUTTER

How to be less sedentary

If you’re anything like me and the millions of other people who have desk jobs, you do a lot of sitting around. But [*being less sedentary*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html) can do wonders for your well-being. Start by carving out small, intentional moments of movement throughout your day. While you don’t need anything new to do that, the right gear makes it much easier to build a habit. Wirecutter’s experts swear by tricks like buying a wobble board for your standing desk, keeping a Hula-Hoop (yes, a Hula-Hoop!) in your home office and using a fitness tracker to remind you to stand. No matter how you decide to get moving, take a lap — it’s good for you. — Annemarie Conte

For expert advice, independent reviews and deals, [*sign up for Wirecutter’s daily newsletter*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html), The Recommendation.

GAME OF THE WEEK

Philadelphia 76ers vs. New York Knicks, N.B.A. playoffs: The Knicks are a No. 2 seed in the East after their best regular season in over a decade. The team’s core — Jalen Brunson, Josh Hart and Donte DiVincenzo — were [*college teammates and close friends at Villanova*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html). Their style is tough, defensive, exhausting. Brunson, in particular, has emerged as a star: He scored 40 or more points in 11 games this season, good for second-most in the league. 6 p.m. Eastern today on ESPN

NOW TIME TO PLAY

Here is [*today’s Spelling Bee*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html). Yesterday’s pangrams were ironworking, nonworking and working.

[*Take the news quiz*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html) to see how well you followed this week’s headlines.

And here are [*today’s Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html), [*Wordle*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html), [*Sudoku*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html) and [*Connections*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html).

Thanks for spending part of your weekend with The Times. — Melissa

[*Sign up here to get this newsletter in your inbox*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html). Reach our team at [*themorning@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/books/review/audiobooks-to-fall-asleep.html).

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY María Jesús Contreras FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** April 20, 2024

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[***9 New Books We Recommend This Week; Editors’ choice***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69KJ-YWM1-JBG3-61KP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 9, 2023 Thursday 08:38 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 693 words

**Highlight:** Suggested reading from critics and editors at The New York Times.

**Body**

Suggested reading from critics and editors at The New York Times.

A couple of nights ago, I got to see the 2016 winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature doing his thing onstage — his thing being music, not books, since the laureate in question is Bob Dylan. But as it happens, there is an [*expansive new Dylan book*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/29/books/review/bob-dylan-mixing-up-the-medicine-mark-davidson-parker-fishel.html) on the shelves right now, which combs through his vast archives to offer a selection of letters, handwritten lyrics, old photos and other ephemera.

The Nobel committee isn’t alone in thinking that books and music play well together: Our recommended books this week include Mary Gabriel’s biography of Madonna, the eternally relevant pop star, and a memoir by Sly Stone, the luminous but elusive genius of funk and soul.

Also up, we recommend a reissue of seminal science fiction by the feminist writer Joanna Russ along with novels by K-Ming Chang and A.K. Blakemore. In nonfiction, our list includes a consideration of Japan’s war crime trials after World War II, a history of plagues and vaccines, an account of the assassination that shook the Belgian Congo early in its independence and a romp through the rise of the Marvel Cinematic Universe. Happy reading.

—Gregory Cowles

[*MADONNA:*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/08/books/review/madonna-a-rebel-life-mary-gabriel.html)

[*A Rebel Life*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/08/books/review/madonna-a-rebel-life-mary-gabriel.html)

Mary Gabriel

This detailed biography, by a Pulitzer finalist who has previously written about female painters and other subjects, makes a diligent case for the pop star’s cultural importance, defending her from detractors with a litany of broken records and crossed boundaries.

Little, Brown | $38

[*THANK YOU (FALETTINME BE MICE ELF AGIN):*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/03/books/review/thank-you-falettinme-be-mice-elf-agin-a-memoir-sly-stone-ben-greenman.html)

[*A Memoir*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/03/books/review/thank-you-falettinme-be-mice-elf-agin-a-memoir-sly-stone-ben-greenman.html)

Sly Stone with Ben Greenman

Stone, one of pop music’s truest geniuses and greatest mysteries, essentially disappeared four decades ago after recording several albums’ worth of incomparable, visionary songs. This memoir sprints through his experiences while giving a strong sense of his voice and sensibility.

AUWA | $30

[*MCU:*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/10/books/review/mcu-the-reign-of-marvel-studios.html)

[*The Reign of Marvel Studios*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/10/books/review/mcu-the-reign-of-marvel-studios.html)

Joanna Robinson, Dave Gonzales and Gavin Edwards

At once rah-rah and dishy, this inside look at the Incredible Hulk of the entertainment industry doubles as a guide to the last decade of Hollywood disruption. From corporate infighting to Chinese censorship, it’s all here.

Liveright | $35

[*FOREIGN BODIES:*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/20/books/review/simon-schama-foreign-bodies.html)

[*Pandemics, Vaccines, and the Health of Nations*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/20/books/review/simon-schama-foreign-bodies.html)

Simon Schama

Schama’s timely story of plagues weaves the histories of cholera and smallpox with a biography of the fascinating research scientist Waldemar Mordechai Wolff Haffkine, who deserves recognition as much for his humanity as his medical breakthroughs.

Ecco | $32.99

[*JOANNA RUSS:*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/08/books/review/joanna-russ-novels-stories.html)

[*Novels &amp; Stories*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/08/books/review/joanna-russ-novels-stories.html)

Edited by Nicole Rudick

A new collection showcases the essential works of Russ, a pioneer of feminist science fiction whose bold female characters swashbuckled across the multiverse. The book includes her best-known novel, “The Female Man,” which follows four women living in parallel worlds.

Library of America | $37.50

[*THE LUMUMBA PLOT:*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/17/books/review/the-lumumba-plot-stuart-a-reid.html)

[*The Secret History of the CIA and a Cold War Assassination*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/17/books/review/the-lumumba-plot-stuart-a-reid.html)

Stuart A. Reid

This engrossing look at the life and death of the former Belgian Congo’s prime minister explores the international panic that attended the chaotic early days of the country’s independence, when the army rebelled, the Belgians fought back and various ethnic groups sought sovereignty.

Knopf | $35

[*ORGAN MEATS*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/24/books/review/organ-meats-k-ming-chang.html)

K-Ming Chang

Chang’s second novel focuses on two ***working-class*** girls in an unnamed city who imagine themselves as stray dogs like the ones around their neighborhood, bound together in a shared “collar” until they grow up — and, necessarily, apart.

One World | Paperback, $18

[*THE GLUTTON*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/31/books/review/the-glutton-a-k-blakemore.html)

A.K. Blakemore

Blakemore’s novel reimagines the life of a sideshow performer in 18th-century France who had an insatiable appetite and could eat almost anything. Hunger amid gross inequality and poverty serves as a larger theme in the book.

Scribner | $28

[*JUDGMENT AT TOKYO:*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/21/books/review/judgment-at-tokyo-gary-j-bass.html)

[*World War II on Trial and the Making of Modern Asia*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/21/books/review/judgment-at-tokyo-gary-j-bass.html)

Gary J. Bass

Written by a veteran journalist and Princeton professor, this immersive look at the prosecution of Japanese war crimes offers an elegant account of a moment that shaped the politics of the region and of the Cold War to come.

Knopf | $46

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** November 10, 2023

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[***Ohio's Senior Senator Faces an Uphill Climb***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BMJ-39W1-DXY4-X055-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 24, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 16

**Length:** 1483 words

**Byline:** By Jonathan Weisman

**Body**

Ohio will almost certainly go for Donald Trump this November. The Democratic senator will need to defy the gravity of the presidential contest to win a fourth term.

Senator Sherrod Brown, Democrat of Ohio, has always had the luxury of running for election in remarkably good years for his party. He won his seat in 2006, during the backlash to the Iraq War, won re-election in 2012, the last time a Democrat carried the state, and did so again in 2018, amid a national reckoning of Donald J. Trump's presidency.

His campaign in 2024 will be different, and most likely the toughest of his career, with a Republican Party determined to win his seat and a Democratic president hanging off him like one of his trademark rumpled suits. In an election year when control of the Senate relies on the Democratic Party's ability to win every single competitive race, an enormous weight sits on the slumped shoulders of the famously disheveled 71-year-old.

''I fight for Ohioans,'' Mr. Brown said in an interview on Wednesday. ''There's a reason I win in a state that's a little more Republican.''

Mr. Brown's tousled hair and gravelly voice have spoken to ***working-class*** voters since he was elected Ohio's secretary of state in 1982. His arms may be clenched tightly around his chest, but he projects a casual confidence that he can win once again in firmly red Ohio, where he is the last Democrat holding statewide office.

But beneath that image is trouble. On Monday, he had just received an endorsement from the 100,000-strong Ohio State Building and Construction Trades Council, when a retired bricklayer, Jeff King, pulled him aside in a weathered union hall in Dayton.

Mr. Brown has had plenty of achievements to run on, Mr. King, who made the trip from his local in Cincinnati, told the senator. But, he asked, would workers in a blue-collar state that has twice handed Mr. Trump eight-percentage-point victories understand who should get the credit?

''That's the mission,'' Mr. Brown said, leaning in. ''They don't know enough.''

The party and its union allies have made the re-election of Ohio's senior senator their highest priority -- ''the very top,'' said Lee Saunders, the president of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees and the chairman of the A.F.L.-C.I.O.'s political committee.

The election could be breaking Mr. Brown's way. With Mr. Trump's endorsement -- and a nudge from a Democratic super PAC -- the Democrats' preferred Republican opponent, Bernie Moreno, easily prevailed in the Republican Senate primary on Tuesday, handing the incumbent a foil with staggering wealth, little political experience and the imprimatur of a former president who could prompt some voters to split their tickets.

The next day, the Biden administration announced an $8.5 billion deal to fund Intel Corporation's semiconductor manufacturing, much of it destined for Ohio, courtesy of legislation that Mr. Brown helped secure. Because of Mr. Brown, that law, the Chips and Science Act, requires so-called project labor agreements to be struck between management and union laborers before plant construction could begin. So 7,000 union tradesmen will be employed at the massive Intel complex outside of Columbus.

On that same Wednesday, the administration finalized stringent new car and truck emissions standards that should increase electric-vehicle manufacturing at the Stellantis Jeep complex in Toledo and automotive battery plants around Youngstown.

Finally, construction should begin around election time on a long-sought replacement for the Brent Spence Bridge, linking Cincinnati to its suburbs in Kentucky. That, too, was delivered in part by Mr. Brown.

Yet Republicans are supremely confident for a much simpler reason: political gravity. In March polling, Mr. Trump leads Mr. Biden in Ohio by as few as nine percentage points, and as many as 18. Mr. Brown will most likely run ahead of Mr. Biden in the state, Republicans say, but not by enough to win.

''We have an opportunity now to retire the old commie,'' Mr. Moreno proclaimed at his victory party on Tuesday, referring to Mr. Brown.

In an interview on Wednesday, Mr. Brown insisted that his toughest Senate race was his first, when he unseated Mike DeWine, who went on to win two terms as Ohio's governor.

And Mr. DeWine lent credence to that confidence on Monday night, pleading with voters in Columbus to cast their ballots for the candidate he thought could beat Mr. Brown, State Senator Matt Dolan.

''This is not going to be an easy race, folks,'' Mr. DeWine advised at the Hey Hey Bar & Grill in Columbus's German Village. ''I've run against this man.''

This year could be different.

''Nothing can save Sherrod Brown from the fact that he votes with Joe Biden 99 percent of the time,'' Mr. Moreno said.

Compared to Mr. Moreno, a political newcomer, Mr. Brown is a fixture in Ohio. ''People just know I stand up for them,'' he said.

Two years ago, Tim Ryan, who was then a U.S. representative, ran for the Senate as a blue-collar Democrat from the Mahoning Valley, cut from the mold of Mr. Brown. Though he ran what has almost universally been hailed as a textbook campaign, he lost to J.D. Vance by six percentage points.

But Mr. Ryan said he lacked something Mr. Brown has: a fixed identity across the state. To win in Ohio as a Democrat, he said, ''the one thing you need to do is have the name Sherrod Brown.''

This fight will be about Mr. Moreno trying to define Mr. Brown's policy agenda -- and the Democrat removing Mr. Biden's name from it. Mr. Brown talks up his action to save more than 1,460 pensions of union drivers in Ohio through the Butch Lewis Act, a pension provision named in memory of an Ohio Teamster and inserted into the enormous Covid relief law, the American Rescue Plan.

He tells audiences of his role in the huge law signed by Mr. Biden that extended veterans health care to former service members who were exposed to toxic ''burn pits'' in Iraq and Afghanistan. It was also named after an Ohioan, Sgt. First Class Heath Robinson, who died of lung cancer at 39.

He speaks effusively of the CHIPS Act, which ensures that the two new semiconductor plants being built in Ohio with federal money will employ union-trained workers.

But even he said he understood the road ahead, especially when Mr. Moreno was calling his record ''job-killing, Green New Deal radicalism.''

''They know the accomplishments,'' Mr. Brown said. ''They just don't really know who did it.''

The incumbent will almost certainly be able to match Republicans dollar for dollar and then some. Between the allegiances he has built in the labor movement and the corporate interests with business before the Senate Banking Committee, which he chairs, Mr. Brown has built a formidable war chest: $33.5 million raised since 2019, and $13.5 million cash on hand at the end of last month.

Mr. Moreno, after a brutal three-way primary, emerged with $2.4 million in cash, according to late February federal campaign finance records.

And Mr. Brown said beneath Ohio's pro-Trump tilt was a state less conservative than Republicans believe. Last August, Ohioans crushed a ballot measure engineered by Republicans to make it harder for future ballot measures to pass, a transparent effort to defeat a pending vote on abortion rights. Three months later, they enshrined the right to abortion in the state's Constitution, by 13 percentage points. On the same day, they voted to legalize marijuana -- by 14 points.

''That ought to scare them,'' Mr. Brown said of his Republican opponents. ''They need to figure out how to win those voters."

Just how much Mr. Brown can continue to outperform national Democrats is a subject of debate in Ohio. David Pepper, a former chairman of the Ohio Democratic Party, said the senator outperformed the rest of the Democratic ticket in 2018 by more than 10 percentage points, beating Republican James B. Renacci by 7 percentage points when Mr. DeWine was beating his Democratic opponent for governor, Richard Cordray, by 3.7 points.

''The question is, how much does Biden compete here?'' said David Pepper, a former chairman of the Ohio Democratic Party. ''If he competes hard, he keeps it in reach for Brown.''

At the Dayton union hall of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 82, it was impossible to find anyone not firmly in Mr. Brown's camp.

''As many pensions as he's saved, absolutely'' he's going to win, David Bruce, the president of the Dayton Building Trades Council, declared.

But beneath the bravado was an acknowledgment of the work ahead.

''That's our battle,'' the retired bricklayer, Mr. King, said, citing the stream of right-wing information consumed by many of his union brethren. ''We're called as union leaders to do a better job with our message. The problem is, we're bricklayers. We don't understand messages.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/22/us/politics/sherrod-brown-ohio.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/22/us/politics/sherrod-brown-ohio.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Senator Sherrod Brown in Dayton, Ohio. He will run against a Trump-backed rival in November. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MADDIE MCGARVEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A16.

**Load-Date:** March 24, 2024

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[***DeSantis, Haley and Politically Obtuse Plutocrats***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B1N-NFF1-JBG3-60D1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 5, 2024 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 18; PAUL KRUGMAN

**Length:** 910 words

**Byline:** By Paul Krugman

**Body**

All Wall Street wants is a good hypocrite -- someone who can convince the Republican base that he or she shares its extremism, but whose real priority is to enrich the 1 percent. Is that too much to ask?

Apparently, yes.

If you're not a politics groupie, you may find the drama surrounding Nikki Haley, the former governor of South Carolina, puzzling. Until recently, few would have considered her a significant contender for the Republican presidential nomination -- indeed, she arguably still isn't. But toward the end of last year, she suddenly attracted a lot of support from the big money. Among those endorsing her were Jamie Dimon, the head of JPMorgan Chase, a new business-oriented super PAC called Independents Moving the Needle and the Koch political network.

If this scramble sounds desperate, that's because it is. And it looks even more desperate after Haley's recent Civil War misadventures -- first failing to name slavery as a reason the war happened, then clumsily trying to walk back her omission.

But there is a logic behind this drama. What we're witnessing are the death throes of a political strategy that served America's plutocrats well for several decades but stopped working during the Obama years.

That political strategy was famously described by Thomas Frank in his diatribe ''What's the Matter With Kansas?,'' which drew criticism from some political scientists but nonetheless seemed to capture a key political dynamic: Wealthy political donors wanted policies, especially low taxes on high incomes, that were generally unpopular; but they could get these policies enacted by supporting politicians who won over ***working-class*** white voters by appealing to their social conservatism, then devoted their actual energy to right-wing economics.

Thus in 2004, Republicans mobilized socially conservative voters in part by organizing referendums banning gay marriage; then, having won re-election on social issues and the perception that he was strong on national security, President George W. Bush proceeded as if he had a mandate to privatize Social Security. (He didn't.)

This strategy didn't always succeed, but it worked pretty well for a long time -- until the G.O.P. establishment lost control of the base, which wanted genuine extremists, not business-friendly politicians who just played extremists on TV.

If I had to identify the moment it all went wrong, I'd point to a largely forgotten event: Eric Cantor's shocking June 2014 primary defeat by an obscure Tea Party challenger. Cantor, the House majority leader, was so deeply embedded in conservative economic ideology that he once marked Labor Day by celebrating ... business owners. By booting him, Republican primary voters in effect signaled that they no longer trusted that kind of figure.

And then, of course, the 1 percent-friendly establishment was unable to block the rise of Donald Trump who, whatever else you may say about him, is the real thing when it comes to extremism. But Trump was more a consequence than a cause of the Republican unraveling.

At the beginning of 2023, however, the big money thought it had found a way to resurrect the old strategy. Wall Street, in particular, believed that it had found its next George W. Bush in the form of Ron DeSantis, the Florida governor who was supposed to offer a Trump-like appeal to the Republican base while in reality being mainly a defender of elite privilege. The campaign contributions data reveal just how all-in Wall Street went for DeSantis. Even though his campaign is now in free fall, the financial industry has given far more to DeSantis in this election cycle than to anyone else, including President Biden.

But it was all wasted money. Part of the problem is that DeSantis turns out to be a terrible politician. At the start of 2023, betting markets considered him the Republican front-runner; now he's a punchline.

Beyond that, DeSantis wasn't playacting at being a cultural and social extremist. Who gets into a gratuitous fight with Disney or has his handpicked surgeon general crusade against Covid vaccines?

Hence the last-minute pivot to Haley. But the slavery contretemps reveals why this pivot has very little chance of succeeding.

Haley went off the rails basically because she was trying to avoid antagonizing the G.O.P. base, which hates anything that hints at social liberalism. A politician who admits that slavery caused the Civil War, or that climate change is a real threat, or that Covid vaccines are safe, just might be a little bit, you know, woke. Yet the big money doesn't want politicians who are genuine extremists. Haley failed to walk that tightrope; probably nobody could.

What's so striking to me is the political obtuseness of big money. Any moderately well-informed observer could have told big bankers that a MAGAfied Republican Party isn't going to nominate anyone who might make them comfortable. Someday, perhaps, reasonable people will once again have a role to play within the G.O.P. But that day is at least several election cycles away.

For now, rationality has a well-known Democratic bias. And throwing money at Nikki Haley won't change that.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/04/opinion/nikki-haley-ron-desantis.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/04/opinion/nikki-haley-ron-desantis.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A18.

**Load-Date:** January 5, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Paperback Row***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6908-DHG1-DXY4-X1XC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 20, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 24

**Length:** 411 words

**Byline:** By Shreya Chattopadhyay

**Body**

Dogs of Summer, by Andrea Abreu. Translated by Julia Sanches. (Astra House, 192 pp., $15.) This debut novel's 10-year-old narrator and her best friend, Isora, have never left their cloudy, mountainous, ***working-class*** neighborhood in northern Tenerife. As the heat of their relationship and the volcano that towers over them both ramp up, they wonder more and more about what lies outside their bounds.

Eliot After ''The Waste Land,'' by Robert Crawford. (Picador, 640 pp., $26.) This second installment in Crawford's two-part biography of T.S. Eliot uses recently released archives to trace the aftereffects of the famous poem and its author's despair at the chaos he saw as pervading modernity. Our reviewer called it ''the fullest account to date of how Eliot transmuted his messy life and private struggles into art.''

MY GOVERNMENT MEANS TO KILL ME, by Rasheed Newson. (Flatiron, 288 pp., $17.99.) Earl Singleton III, a.k.a. Trey, recounts two years of his life in this fictional annotated memoir. Gay, Black and until now sheltered, Trey leaves 1985 Indianapolis (trust fund and painful family tragedy included) at 17 to make it on his own. He steps off a Greyhound into a New York City awash in the AIDS crisis, where he finds love, danger, solidarity and maybe himself.

DEMOCRACY'S DATA: The Hidden Stories in the U.S. Census and How to Read Them, by Dan Bouk. (Picador, 384 pp., $20.) Bouk's deep dive into the country's once-a-decade population count animates what many might consider a boring formality. It plumbs the intentions of its progenitors, its changes and material impacts over time, and even the poetry it has inspired.

KILLERS OF A CERTAIN AGE, by Deanna Raybourn. (Berkley, 368 pp., $17.) The four elderly heroines of this riotous novel -- which our Thrillers columnist, Sarah Lyall, described as a ''mash-up of 'Killing Eve' and 'The Golden Girls''' -- have worked as elite assassins for 40 years. As they embark on a paid cruise to celebrate their retirement, they realize their bosses have one more secret target: them.

When They Tell You to Be Good, by Prince Shakur. (Tin House, 304 pp., $17.95.) Shakur's meditative memoir traces the stormy personal and political path that transformed him from a closeted Jamaican American kid in Cleveland into an experienced writer and organizer for causes like Standing Rock and Black Lives Matter, ''a journey steeped in staring death down and saving himself anyway, despite the chill of its reach.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/01/books/review/new-paperbacks.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/01/books/review/new-paperbacks.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS This article appeared in print on page BR24.

**Load-Date:** August 20, 2023

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[***Ron DeSantis, Nikki Haley and Politically Obtuse Plutocrats; Paul Krugman***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B1M-CW11-DXY4-X4N1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 4, 2024 Thursday 20:43 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 909 words

**Highlight:** The big money still doesn’t understand today’s G.O.P.

**Body**

All Wall Street wants is a good hypocrite — someone who can convince the Republican base that he or she shares its extremism, but whose real priority is to enrich the 1 percent. Is that too much to ask?

Apparently, yes.

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If this scramble sounds desperate, that’s because it is. And it looks even more desperate after Haley’s recent [*Civil War misadventures*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/29/opinion/nikki-haley-civil-war.html) — first failing to name slavery as a reason the war happened, then clumsily trying to walk back her omission.

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This article appeared in print on page A18.

**Load-Date:** January 4, 2024

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[***U.A.W. Leader Says He Sees ‘No Point’ in Meeting With Trump***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:698D-03B1-JBG3-604B-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 27, 2023 Wednesday 16:16 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 453 words

**Byline:** Neil Vigdor

**Highlight:** Shawn Fain, the president of the United Automobile Workers union, said he was opposed to meeting the former president during his visit to Michigan on Wednesday.

**Body**

Shawn Fain, the president of the United Automobile Workers union, said he was opposed to meeting the former president during his visit to Michigan on Wednesday.

The leader of the United Automobile Workers union ruled out meeting former President Donald J. Trump, the 2024 Republican front-runner, when he visits Michigan on Wednesday, casting him as an out-of-touch billionaire who has been hostile toward the industry’s workers, who are currently on strike.

When Shawn Fain, the U.A.W. president, was [*asked by CNN in an interview*](https://twitter.com/CNN/status/1706801528260939853) on Tuesday whether he would be open to such an audience with Mr. Trump, he said that there was no upside.

“I see no point in meeting with him because I don’t think the man has any bit of care about what our workers stand for, what the ***working class*** stands for,” Mr. Fain said. “He serves a billionaire class, and that’s what’s wrong with this country.”

His remarks came just hours after President Biden, at the invitation of Mr. Fain, [*joined a picket line outside a General Motors facility*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/09/26/us/biden-uaw-strike-detroit) in Belleville, Mich., near Detroit.

Mr. Trump’s campaign did not address Mr. Fain’s specific criticism on Wednesday, but contended that rank-and-file unions members did not uniformly share his views.

“The reality is that there’s a disconnect between the political leadership of some of the labor unions and the working middle-class employees that they purport to represent,” said Steven Cheung, a spokesman for the Trump campaign. “President Trump will be in Michigan talking with union workers and ensuring American jobs are protected.”

Mr. Fain stopped short of endorsing Mr. Biden’s re-election, but he had harsh words for Mr. Trump and his planned speech at a nonunion plant in Macomb County, Mich.

“I find a pathetic irony that the former president is going to hold a rally for union members at a nonunion business,” Mr. Fain said.

Mr. Fain said that Mr. Trump had blamed U.A.W. members and their contracts for the troubles of automakers during the 2008 recession. As a presidential candidate in 2015, he added, Mr. Trump supported moving jobs in the industry out of the Midwest, with fewer protections for union workers. Mr. Fain also asked why the former president did not show solidarity with General Motors workers in 2019, while Mr. Trump was in office, when they were on strike for 60 days.

“I didn’t see him hold a rally,” Mr. Fain said. “I didn’t see him stand up at the picket line, and I sure as hell didn’t hear him comment about it. He was missing in action.”

PHOTO: Shawn Fain, the U.A.W. president, left, was joined by President Biden on Tuesday during a picket outside a General Motors facility in Belleville, Mich. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Pete Marovich for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** September 27, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Race for Houston Mayor Heads to a Runoff***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69K8-W2K1-JBG3-64T9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 7, 2023 Tuesday 23:46 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 632 words

**Byline:** J. David Goodman

**Highlight:** In a field of more than a dozen candidates, two well-known Texas Democrats emerged: U.S. Representative Sheila Jackson Lee and State Senator John Whitmire.

**Body**

In a field of more than a dozen candidates, two well-known Texas Democrats emerged: U.S. Representative Sheila Jackson Lee and State Senator John Whitmire.

The race to become Houston’s mayor is heading for a runoff between two longtime Texas Democrats: United States Representative Sheila Jackson Lee and a veteran state senator, John Whitmire, according to The Associated Press. Each emerged from a field of more than a dozen candidates on Tuesday, but neither with a majority of the vote.

The runoff election to lead the nation’s fourth-largest city will be held on Dec. 9.

Both candidates are in their 70s and have been fixtures of Texas politics for many years. Mr. Whitmire, a prolific fund-raiser even from Republican donors, has long been considered a front-runner for the position, offering a moderate message aimed at courting a bipartisan coalition. The entrance this spring of Ms. Jackson Lee, a better-known figure, turned the race into a de facto two-person contest. Her wellspring of support came from Democrats, including many progressives, and from many of the city’s Black residents.

Still, many voters were unsatisfied with their choices, with about a third signaling before the vote, in an October poll [*by the Hobby School of Public Affairs at the University of Houston*](https://www.uh.edu/news-events/stories/2023/october-2023/10122023-hobby-election-survey.php), that they preferred one of the other candidates. More than 40 percent of respondents said they would never vote for Ms. Jackson Lee, compared with 15 percent who said they would never vote for Mr. Whitmire.

Crime has been the top issue in the race, as it has been in many cities. Even as Houston police officials have said that their statistics show recent declines, residents have expressed feelings of unease about the sharply elevated levels of crime that emerged during the pandemic.

Mr. Whitmire, 74, has focused on public safety, promising to bring in hundreds of Texas state troopers to make up for staff shortages at the Houston Police Department. Ms. Jackson Lee, 73, has highlighted her record in Washington, where she has served in Congress since 1995, delivering federal funding to the city’s police department but also underscoring the struggles of ***working-class*** Houston residents and her role in legislation like the Affordable Care Act.

Other top issues in the race have been homelessness, Houston’s chronic flooding and perennial concerns about road improvements and garbage collection. The city is facing a looming budget crisis that could force the next mayor to resort to large-scale municipal layoffs, [*according to the city’s comptroller*](https://www.houstonpublicmedia.org/articles/news/city-of-houston/2023/07/31/457387/houston-will-face-a-budget-crisis-by-2025-unless-it-cuts-spending-next-year-city-controller-says/).

If the race were a Democratic primary, Ms. Jackson Lee would most likely have had an advantage, since she has outperformed Mr. Whitmire in polls of Democratic voters. But the position of mayor in Houston is nonpartisan, and while Houston is dominated by Democratic voters, Republicans and independents hold significant sway in deciding races. Mr. Whitmire openly courted centrist voters and Republicans, and has been favored by those voters over Ms. Jackson Lee by wide margins.

Nearly half of Houston’s 2.3 million residents, about 45 percent, are Hispanic, according to census data, with Black and white residents each making up a little less than a quarter of the population. Several Hispanic candidates entered the race — including a city councilman, Robert Gallegos, and a businessman and former chair of the city’s transit system, Gilbert Garcia — but none gained momentum.

Ms. Jackson Lee would be the first Black woman elected mayor of Houston. The current mayor, Sylvester Turner, who is Black, served for two terms but could not run again because of term limits.

PHOTO: Representative Sheila Jackson Lee on the House floor last month as House held a vote to pick a speaker. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Haiyun Jiang for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** November 8, 2023

**End of Document**



[***‘This Is Personal’: Dearborn’s Arab Americans Endure the Agony of War***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69S7-2CJ1-DXY4-X006-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 1, 2023 Friday 13:03 EST

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 1599 words

**Byline:** Kurt Streeter

**Highlight:** “We are feeling everything happening every day,” Abdullah Hammoud, the mayor of Dearborn, Mich., says of the Israel-Hamas war.

**Body**

“We are feeling everything happening every day,” Abdullah Hammoud, the mayor of Dearborn, Mich., says of the Israel-Hamas war.

Abdullah Hammoud, the 33-year-old mayor of Dearborn, Mich., feels the painful weight of a war being fought 6,000 miles away.

He feels it in every corner of his city.

He feels it through anguished stories told as he eats breakfast at AlTayeb Restaurant, as he visits Ronnie Berry’s Halal Meats, and in late-night discussions with his closest friends.

He feels it when he sees cars and homes freshly draped with the Palestinian flag.

He feels it during normally joyful moments: at his city’s Christmas tree lighting, where the mood felt notably somber and subdued; or on Halloween night, when far fewer kids than usual walked his city’s neighborhoods.

“With the level of Islamophobia, parents are worried,” Mr. Hammoud says. “Many people are not in the mood to have a good time.”

He pauses for a moment. “Not when bombs are dropping in Gaza.”

Dearborn, a suburb of roughly 110,000 people bordering Detroit, has one of the highest percentages of Arab Americans among U.S. cities. Census figures show that it is roughly 54 percent Arab American, a figure experts believe is a significant undercount. When he took office in 2022, Mr. Hammoud — the son of Lebanese immigrants, raised in the city’s ***working-class*** east side — became the first Arab American Muslim mayor in Dearborn history.

But all is not well in Dearborn now. This is a community suffering intensely as it beholds the carnage wrought by the [*war between Israel and Hamas*](https://www.nytimes.com/news-event/israel-hamas-gaza).

The recent pause in fighting brought a respite, but Mr. Hammoud, like many in Dearborn, believed it would only be temporary. And it sparked hard emotion, giving residents a chance to step back and more fully feel the weight of the calamity: the dead and the missing, the wounded and displaced. It also highlighted the potential of a diplomatic solution, which the mayor indignantly said should have been the focus all along.

“In this community, right now there is a lot of grief, anger and fear,” Mr. Hammoud said on a recent day, his voice sad and insistent, as he drove around Dearborn in his black Ford F-150 truck. “You can’t help but be anxious when the whole city tells you that they stay up every night following the news, trying to understand how much more death and destruction is happening.”

“We are feeling everything happening every day,” he added. “This is personal for me. And it is personal for a great majority of my city.”

‘Sometimes, people here differ very sharply’

Mr. Hammoud’s ascendance to mayor symbolizes how today’s Dearborn starkly diverges from its past. [*Orville Hubbard,*](https://www.nytimes.com/1982/12/17/obituaries/orville-l-hubbard-of-dearborn-ex-mayor-a-foe-of-integration.html) the mayor from 1942 to 1978, was an avowed segregationist who worked to keep Black residents from buying homes in his city, and used a racist slur when referring to Arab Americans. As the population of immigrants from the Middle East climbed during the 1980s, another mayor ran on his ability to solve the city’s “Arab problem.”

These days, Dearborn showcases a proud, unabashed Arab American spirit. It is visible in the predominance of Arabic script fronting businesses across the city, many of which also make a point of displaying the American flag. It is visible in the groups of older women in chadors and teenage girls wearing hijabs, walking confidently through a local mall. It is visible in the city’s vaulted mosques, smoky hookah bars, and bustling markets selling Iranian pistachios and Aleppo pepper.

It can even be seen at the ballot box. In 2022, Dearborn began offering Arabic-language ballots in its elections.

One would be mistaken, however, to think of the community as monolithic, said Sally Howell, a professor of history and Arab American studies at the University of Michigan-Dearborn.

“The majority are Muslim,” Dr. Howell said, “but there are Arab Christians in Dearborn. There’s a ***working class***, a professional class, Republicans and Democrats. The Arab community in Dearborn reflects the full diversity of political points of view and cultural identifications, and it’s all held within this enclave.”

Tension in the Middle East among rival Muslim nations sometimes reverberates in Dearborn, Dr. Howell noted, creating schisms and tense relationships. And last year, division roiled Arab American residents when many began pushing to ban books with L.G.B.T.Q. themes or stories in public schools.

“Sometimes, people here differ very sharply,” Dr. Howell said. “But generally,” she added, “they get along.”

Case in point: Arab Americans from Dearborn banded together to counter anti-Muslim protesters who repeatedly descended upon the city in the aftermath of the Sept. 11 attacks and the Iraq war, at times visibly armed and on at least one occasion toting a severed pig’s head — a grievous insult to Muslims.

One target of the protesters was the Islamic Center of America, led at the time by Imam Hassan Qazwini, 59, an Iraqi-born cleric who fled the persecution of Saddam Hussein and came to United States in the 1990s. Never, Imam Qazwini said, has he seen Dearborn’s Arab Americans coalesce around an issue as they have around the war in Gaza.

“The community is boiling” he said, “and completely united.”

Unified by anguish

In Dearborn, war is no abstraction. Most people in the city, Mr. Hammoud said, either have firsthand experience with such pain or have family and friends in the Middle East who know all too well the cost of war.

Home to the Ford Motor Company, the city has always been shaped by waves of newcomers from foreign lands. The lure of the automobile assembly line drew a significant wave of Arab immigrants as Dearborn incorporated in the 1920s.

More recently, the mayor said, Arab immigration of the last several decades “was the result of war.”

“The Lebanese civil war, and the fighting there against Israel, brought a large Lebanese population,” he explained. “The wars in Iraq brought a big Iraqi population. The Yemenis are the latest arrivals. They are here because of war.”

Mr. Hammoud’s mother fled from Lebanon to the United States in the 1970s to escape civil war, and his mother-in-law was born in a Palestinian refugee camp. Mr. Hammoud worked as a volunteer for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in Jordan. More than a hundred of the agency’s workers have been [*killed in Gaza.*](https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/news-releases/unrwa-lowers-flags-global-un-mourning-killed-unrwa-colleagues-gaza)

Anguish is the unifying emotion in Dearborn now. Worry about Islamophobia, anti-Arab bigotry and the violence they can spark are part of daily reality. Such fear heightened in mid-October when the police arrested a man from a nearby suburb who had made online threats against Palestinians in Dearborn. The [*Thanksgiving weekend shooting*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/29/us/vermont-shooting-burlington-palestinian-american.html) of three Palestinian American college students in Vermont magnified the sense of danger. Investigators have not determined if it was a hate crime.

Another reality: the sense of being unmoored. Arab Americans have long faced tides of discrimination as they have sought to gain acceptance across the United States. Still, the 2020 presidential election gave the Dearborn community belief that it had gained a foothold in national politics and corridors of power. Arab American support in Dearborn and throughout Michigan, a critical swing state, helped usher President Biden into the White House.

But Mr. Biden’s support for Israel has left many Arab Americans furious and adrift.

“Who do we turn to?” said a congregant at the Islamic Center of America, one of the largest mosques in the United States, as Mr. Hammoud attended Friday prayer.

The question hung in the air. The congregant said there was no good answer. “I hear some say they’ll vote, but it will be a write-in. People will write Gaza.”

Mr. Hammoud’s coterie of close friends and advisers includes a small cluster of Arab Americans in their late 20s and early 30s who grew up in Dearborn, left the comfort of family and a tightly knit community to attend college and returned home, intent on making the city a better place.

On a recent day, he gathered with three from this group at a local cafe. Each had a personal story of war. Mariam Jalloul’s was typical. She remembered being 12 years old, on a trip to see family in Lebanon, as deadly fighting between Israel’s army and Hezbollah put her Beirut suburb in the crossfire. She recalled the thrum of falling bombs, the trembling of her shelter and being sure she would not live. “Well, if the building goes down and we all die,” she recalled thinking, “at least I’m with my mom and sisters. I’m not alone. We will all go out together.’”

Over Yemeni chai, the scent of roasted cardamom in the air, Mr. Hammoud and his friends searched for solutions and solace.

“Before this,” Ms. Jalloul said, “it felt like Arab Americans were becoming part of the fabric within U.S. society. We were being listened to and taken seriously.”

The friends agreed that the war had been a reality check. “Was all that progress just theater? Was it lip service?” Ms. Jalloul pondered.

“Can this country be for us?”

PHOTOS: Abdullah Hammoud is the first Arab American mayor in the 100-year history of Dearborn, Mich.; Mariam Jalloul, a resident, was visiting family in Lebanon in 2006 when fighting broke out. She was 12.; Afternoon prayers at the Islamic Center of America mosque in Dearborn. Worries about Islamophobia, anti-Arab bigotry and violence are part of a daily reality.; Dearborn, a suburb of roughly 110,000 citizens on the edge of Detroit, is the only city with an Arab American majority in the United States. Census figures show that it is 54 percent Arab American. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY VALAURIAN WALLER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A9.

**Load-Date:** December 2, 2023

**End of Document**



[***In Trump’s Criminal Trial, These Are the Jurors Each Side Wants***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BS4-RNM1-DXY4-X1D3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 10, 2024 Wednesday 23:44 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1671 words

**Byline:** Jesse McKinley, Kate Christobek and Maggie Haberman Jesse McKinley is a Times reporter covering upstate New York, courts and politics. Kate Christobek is a reporter covering the civil and criminal cases against former president Donald J. Trump for The Times. Maggie Haberman is a senior political correspondent reporting on the 2024 presidential campaign, down ballot races across the country and the investigations into former President Donald J. Trump.

**Highlight:** Prosecutors in Donald J. Trump’s Manhattan trial may prefer jurors who watch MSNBC and are highly educated. Defense lawyers may favor police officers and sanitation workers.

**Body**

Prosecutors in Donald J. Trump’s Manhattan trial may prefer jurors who watch MSNBC and are highly educated. Defense lawyers may favor police officers and sanitation workers.

On April 15, several hundred New Yorkers will file into a Manhattan courtroom to be scrutinized by prosecutors and defense attorneys, probed and prodded for signs that they could sway — or stymie — [*the first criminal trial of a former American president*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/08/nyregion/donald-trump-trial-what-to-know.html).

Lawyers representing the State of New York and Donald J. Trump will help select the 12 people who will decide the former president’s fate.

The lawyers will try to divine unspoken political biases, opinions about law enforcement and other hidden agendas. The potential jurors, who could face public anger and threats if they are chosen, will be asked about their education, occupations, families and news sources.

The questions will drill slowly deeper: Potential jurors, all from one of the state’s most liberal counties, will be asked to reveal whether they volunteered for or against Mr. Trump. Perhaps most critically, they will be asked whether their feelings would interfere with their ability to be fair.

Seating the members of the jury [*and several alternates*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/08/nyregion/donald-trump-trial-what-to-know.html) could take two weeks or more, and the choices may be as pivotal as any evidence presented in court.

“It’s the most important part,” said [*Arthur Aidala, a defense attorney*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/08/nyregion/donald-trump-trial-what-to-know.html) whose [*firm*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/08/nyregion/donald-trump-trial-what-to-know.html) has had many high-profile clients, including Rudy Giuliani, Mr. Trump’s former lawyer. “And the hardest part too.”

[*Mr. Trump faces several trials*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/08/nyregion/donald-trump-trial-what-to-know.html), but other cases are mired in delays. The 12 jurors in Manhattan who will decide whether he falsified business records to hide an affair with a porn star will bear unblinking scrutiny.

For conservatives, the trial is a chance to expose what they see as an abuse of prosecutorial power and a plot led by Democrats to derail Mr. Trump. For liberals, it could be the only test of the judicial system’s power over the former president before the election this fall.

The stakes of jury selection are particularly high for Mr. Trump’s team, which is aware of [*the former president’s poor standing*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/08/nyregion/donald-trump-trial-what-to-know.html) among many in New York County — Manhattan, as most people know it — which [*overwhelmingly voted for President Biden*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/08/nyregion/donald-trump-trial-what-to-know.html) in 2020.

Mr. Trump’s legal team sees the case as winnable, although some believe a full acquittal is less likely than the prospect of finding jurors willing to cause a mistrial by holding out against a unanimous guilty verdict, according to two people with direct knowledge of the discussions.

Mr. Trump’s lawyers want a jury that includes younger Black men and white ***working-class*** men, particularly public employees like police officers, firefighters and sanitation workers. Those who have had bad experiences with the legal system will also be prized by the defense, which has cast the case as politically motivated.

Polls have shown that [*voters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/08/nyregion/donald-trump-trial-what-to-know.html) who haven’t graduated from college tend [*to favor Republicans*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/08/nyregion/donald-trump-trial-what-to-know.html). So prosecutors, conversely, will probably be looking for more educated voters from Democratic neighborhoods, fishing for those who consume news from sources like MSNBC, known for its outspoken liberal hosts, and who are fond of late-night comedians like Stephen Colbert, who hosted [*a presidential panel with Mr. Biden*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/08/nyregion/donald-trump-trial-what-to-know.html) on [*March 28*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/08/nyregion/donald-trump-trial-what-to-know.html).

Each potential juror will answer a uniform set of questions, and lawyers can ask follow-ups. Some queries may be designed to uncover biases against — or allegiances to — Mr. Trump, such as whether jurors have any feelings or opinions about how he is being treated in this case, or whether they believe a former president can be criminally charged in state court.

Each side will be able to remove a limited number of jurors without explanation, a so-called peremptory challenge. They can also ask for jurors to be removed “for cause” by providing specific reasons they believe a juror cannot be fair and impartial.

Those disqualifications are critical.

“It’s always most important to know who your worst jurors are going to be,” said Renato Stabile, an attorney who does jury consulting. “It’s jury deselection, not jury selection. Because you can only control who you are getting rid of.”

Unlike most trials, where many potential jurors are loath to serve, some may be actively trying to get seated in this case. Michael Farkas, a defense attorney, said that those who seem to be angling for the jury “are the people who are most likely to have a partisan agenda.”

Some may not be completely forthcoming.

“Getting 12 jurors you think you actually know is difficult enough in a regular case,” said Mr. Farkas. “In a case like this, both parties can pretty much rest assured that they are going to have people on the jury that aren’t being completely honest about how they feel.”

Mr. Aidala was blunter about potential jurors.

“They lie,” he said, adding, “People want to be on that jury because they think they’re going to write a book or they’re going to be on ‘20/20’ or ‘48 Hours’ or one of those things.”

Prosecutors are aware of the perils of trying famous defendants, and Mr. Trump is globally famous.

“People know who he is,” said Joshua Steinglass, a senior trial counsel with Mr. Bragg’s office, at a Feb. 15 hearing on jury selection. “They’re going to have an opinion one way or the other. They can like him or dislike him. They can still be fair jurors so long as that is not going to affect their abilities to fairly judge the evidence.”

In Justice Juan M. Merchan’s decision issued last week [*expanding a gag order on Mr. Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/08/nyregion/donald-trump-trial-what-to-know.html), he suggested that the former president’s fame could influence deliberations.

“The conventional ‘David vs. Goliath’ roles are no longer in play as demonstrated by the singular power defendant’s words have on countless others,” the justice wrote.

[*Justice Merchan could wield significant influence*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/08/nyregion/donald-trump-trial-what-to-know.html). In courtrooms, jurors often look to judges for guidance. By repeatedly attacking Justice Merchan, Mr. Trump could risk punishment, and jurors could find themselves sympathetic to the judge trying to contain him.

The case itself is relatively straightforward: Mr. Trump faces nearly three dozen felony counts of falsifying business records related to a hush-money payment made to Stormy Daniels, a porn actress, to buy her silence in the waning days of the 2016 presidential campaign.

At first blush, Mr. Trump’s jury pool appears to be unfriendly: [*70 percent of Manhattan’s 1.1 million registered voters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/08/nyregion/donald-trump-trial-what-to-know.html) are Democrats. Many know the defendant well, since he [*once called New York his home*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/08/nyregion/donald-trump-trial-what-to-know.html) and made his name in its tabloid newspapers. Juries and judges in Manhattan have already found Mr. Trump liable for [*committing sexual abuse*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/08/nyregion/donald-trump-trial-what-to-know.html), [*defaming his accuser*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/08/nyregion/donald-trump-trial-what-to-know.html) and, most recently, for wildly inflating [*his net worth to obtain better loan terms*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/08/nyregion/donald-trump-trial-what-to-know.html).

Valerie Hans, [*a professor of law*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/08/nyregion/donald-trump-trial-what-to-know.html) at Cornell University who has [*studied jur*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/08/nyregion/donald-trump-trial-what-to-know.html)y behavior, said that pretrial publicity typically favored prosecutors, but that dynamic could be altered by Mr. Trump’s divisive behavior.

“Trump has not ceded the pretrial publicity to the prosecution in this case at all,” said Ms. Hans, noting that Mr. Trump had repeatedly referred to case as a “witch hunt,” a view that his supporters echo.

“It can help shape how people look at the evidence that’s presented at trial from the very start,” she said, adding, “People are more likely to agree with things they have heard many times before.”

Mr. Trump seems well aware of the public relations battle he is waging in his hometown. The presumptive Republican nominee, who faces three other indictments, has repeatedly called for a crackdown on crime. He recently attended the [*wake of a slain New York City police officer*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/08/nyregion/donald-trump-trial-what-to-know.html), where he said that the country needed to “get back to law and order.”

He has attacked Justice Merchan again and again and said the justice system is rigged against him.

The judge has moved to defend the citizens who may decide the former president’s fate. New York State [*does not allow juries to operate in full anonymity*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/08/nyregion/donald-trump-trial-what-to-know.html), but in early March Justice Merchan [*ordered prospective jurors’ identities to be shielded from the public*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/08/nyregion/donald-trump-trial-what-to-know.html), while effectively barring Mr. Trump from exposing them. The former president will not have access even to their addresses.

Lawyers for both sides, however, will know the jurors’ names. They will scour potential jurors’ social media accounts as well as their voter registration and voting histories, which will show whether they voted but not for whom.

Earlier this year, the federal jurors who found Mr. Trump liable for defaming the writer E. Jean Carroll and ordered him to pay her $83.3 million [*were completely anonymous*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/08/nyregion/donald-trump-trial-what-to-know.html). Judge Lewis A. Kaplan encouraged them to stay that way.

“My advice to you is that you never disclose that you were on this jury,” Judge Kaplan told them at the end of the trial. “And I won’t say anything more about it.”

Jurors in the criminal trial will also be subject to an intense media spotlight, with scores of reporters packing the courtroom and a constant barrage of commentary from social media and traditional news outlets.

And, of course, they will have to reckon with Mr. Trump, who will sit in the court for weeks just feet away from them. In the defamation trial, he was fixated on the jurors from the moment they walked into the courtroom. He pivoted to study them as they answered biographical questions and frequently talked to his lawyers.

But his participation may have been a double-edged sword. For prospective jurors, it provided their first glimpse of Mr. Trump’s pique at being a defendant.

Judge Kaplan read a summary of the case to them, including the established finding that Mr. Trump had sexually assaulted Ms. Carroll. Later, Judge Kaplan asked the prospective jurors whether any believed that the court system was treating the former president unfairly.

Mr. Trump raised his hand.

PHOTOS: Former president Donald J. Trump leaving the State Supreme Court in Manhattan after a hearing on his criminal case last month. Left, the jury box at the court. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEFFERSON SIEGEL FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A16.

**Load-Date:** April 11, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Ted Cruz Would Like to Put Some Words in Your Mouth; Jamelle Bouie***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:668J-7PW1-JBG3-63S7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 30, 2022 Tuesday 12:02 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1054 words

**Byline:** Jamelle Bouie

**Highlight:** The idea that student loan relief is a handout to a small minority of affluent college graduates is simply a myth.

**Body**

Critics of President Biden’s plan to relieve the debt of millions of Americans with federal student loans have made a considered choice to put their words in the mouths of an imagined group of ***working-class*** and blue-collar voters, angry and aggrieved at debt forgiveness for upper-income college graduates.

[*For example, here’s Senator Ted Cruz of Texas*](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/biden-student-loan-forgiveness-plan-backlash-criticism/): “What President Biden has, in effect, decided to do is to take from ***working-class*** people, to take from truck drivers and construction workers right now, thousands of dollars in taxes in order to redistribute it to college graduates who have student loans.”

Now, as I [*noted*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/27/opinion/republican-biden-student-loan-program.html) over the weekend, this way of thinking betrays an ignorance of ***working-class*** life in this country. To work as a truck driver or a medical technician or a home inspector or any number of other similar blue-collar jobs, you need training, licenses, certifications. People go to school to meet these requirements. They apply for the same federal student loans and take on the same debt as someone going to college. And many of these Americans labor under the burden of that debt because of high costs and lower-than-expected earnings. (To say nothing of those who attended college, took on debt, but didn’t graduate.)

The idea that student loan relief is a handout to a small minority of affluent college graduates is simply a myth.

But even if you put all this aside, there is also the fact that these would-be spokesmen for ***working-class*** and blue-collar Americans aren’t actually speaking for ***working-class*** and blue-collar Americans. The polls, so far, make this clear.

The first poll since the plan was announced, [*from Emerson College*](https://emersoncollegepolling.com/august-national-poll-biden-bounces-back-on-approval-and-2024-ballot-voters-split-on-student-debt-relief-and-student-loan-program-value/), shows broad approval from across the electorate. When asked about loan forgiveness of up to $10,000 for borrowers making under $125,000 a year — one of the key planks of Biden’s plan — 35 percent of respondents said it was “just about the right amount of action.” This might not seem like much, but then consider the 30 percent of respondents who said $10,000 worth of relief was “not enough.” Presumably, this group will support the current plan but wishes it would go even further — bringing the total number of supporters to almost two-thirds of Americans. Just over a third of respondents, by contrast, said that Biden’s plan went too far.

A second poll, [*conducted by YouGov for CBS News*](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1I1kCPBeysGALnPoddxMP_Ch6Ki9WApf0/view), goes into more detail about the demographics of support for Biden’s plan. Overall, 54 percent of Americans said that they approved of the Biden administration canceling some student loan debt for certain borrowers, versus 46 percent who disapproved. Nearly 70 percent of all Americans 44 and under supported the policy, as well as 47 percent of voters from 45 to 64. Only the oldest Americans showed strong disapproval. What’s interesting as well is that 88 percent of Black Americans, 68 percent of Hispanics and 41 percent of whites without a college degree approved of the plan.

This, I’m certain, includes plenty of Americans with ***working-class*** and blue-collar jobs.

When you consider who benefits from the president’s plan, this support makes sense. [*According to the administration*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/25/us/politics/biden-student-loans-middle-class.html?smtyp=cur&amp;smid=tw-nytimes), close to 90 percent of affected borrowers earn $75,000 or less, they are disproportionately young and Black, and they include millions of people who work the kinds of jobs that, for critics of debt relief, are supposed to entitle their views to greater consideration.

There is a broader context for this support. The student loan debt crisis has at least some of its origins in decisions made during the 1970s, ’80s and ’90s to reduce state support for higher education and induce Americans to take out loans so that they might have “skin in the game.” This was part of a larger agenda to degrade the social infrastructure of public life, as policymakers traded easy credit and access to cheap consumer goods for high wages and a measure of economic security.

It is no coincidence that all of this took shape in the wake of the civil rights movement, the fracturing of the New Deal coalition and the end (for those who had enjoyed it) of the Fordist economic order of male breadwinners and traditional families. Opposition to broad redistribution on the basis of racial chauvinism dovetailed in a mutually reinforcing fashion with opposition to redistribution as part of the basis for a new order of shareholder dominance.

The rise of the student loan, in other words, is tied to this larger story of the transformation of the American political economy in the last decades of the 20th century, a transformation that you can see, in politics, with the suburban tax revolts of the 1970s and the rise of the “welfare queen” as an object of ridicule and contempt in the 1980s.

As power moved away from workers to shareholders and owners of capital, the losers in this great experiment were a majority of ordinary Americans. And as is often the case in the history of capitalist inequality in the United States, Black Americans bore much of the initial brunt of this transformation.

Given who has been hit hardest by the destruction of public goods in this country, it’s no surprise that young people, working people and Black people are among the groups most supportive of student loan forgiveness. In the same way, it is no surprise that so many people on the right and in the center of American politics are opposed to it, partisanship aside.

Even a debt relief policy as modest as President Biden’s is a sea change from the direction of American policymaking for the last 40 years. It is not unlike President Barack Obama’s Affordable Care Act, another moderate and limited program that nonetheless changed the health care landscape for the better.

Neither is perfect, but both represent a challenge to the political and economic order since Reagan — to austerity, to tax cuts and to attempts to dismantle the welfare state for good. And for the market fundamentalists among us, any challenge is one challenge too many.

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PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Travis Dove for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** August 30, 2022

**End of Document**



[***Sherrod Brown Embarks on the Race of His Life***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BM4-HJ81-JBG3-601P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 22, 2024 Friday 22:13 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1496 words

**Byline:** Jonathan Weisman Jonathan Weisman is a politics writer, covering campaigns with an emphasis on economic and labor policy. He is based in Chicago.

**Highlight:** Ohio will almost certainly go for Donald Trump this November. The Democratic senator will need to defy the gravity of the presidential contest to win a fourth term.

**Body**

Ohio will almost certainly go for Donald Trump this November. The Democratic senator will need to defy the gravity of the presidential contest to win a fourth term.

Senator Sherrod Brown, Democrat of Ohio, has always had the luxury of running for election in remarkably good years for his party. He won his seat in 2006, during the backlash to the Iraq War, won re-election in 2012, the last time a Democrat carried the state, and did so again in 2018, amid a national reckoning of Donald J. Trump’s presidency.

His campaign in 2024 will be different, and most likely the toughest of his career, with a Republican Party determined to win his seat and a Democratic president hanging off him like one of his trademark rumpled suits. In an election year when control of the Senate relies on the Democratic Party’s ability to win every single competitive race, an enormous weight sits on the slumped shoulders of the famously disheveled 71-year-old.

“I fight for Ohioans,” Mr. Brown said in an interview on Wednesday. “There’s a reason I win in a state that’s a little more Republican.”

Mr. Brown’s tousled hair and gravelly voice have spoken to ***working-class*** voters since he was elected Ohio’s secretary of state in 1982. His arms may be clenched tightly around his chest, but he projects a casual confidence that he can win once again in firmly red Ohio, where he is the last Democrat holding statewide office.

But beneath that image is trouble. On Monday, he had just received an endorsement from the 100,000-strong Ohio State Building and Construction Trades Council, when a retired bricklayer, Jeff King, pulled him aside in a weathered union hall in Dayton.

Mr. Brown has had plenty of achievements to run on, Mr. King, who made the trip from his local in Cincinnati, told the senator. But, he asked, would workers in a blue-collar state that has twice handed Mr. Trump eight-percentage-point victories understand who should get the credit?

“That’s the mission,” Mr. Brown said, leaning in. “They don’t know enough.”

The party and its union allies have made the re-election of Ohio’s senior senator their highest priority — “the very top,” said Lee Saunders, the president of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees and the chairman of the A.F.L.-C.I.O.’s political committee.

The election could be breaking Mr. Brown’s way. With Mr. Trump’s endorsement — and a nudge from a Democratic super PAC — the Democrats’ preferred Republican opponent, [*Bernie Moreno, easily prevailed*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/19/us/politics/ohio-senate.html) in the Republican Senate primary on Tuesday, handing the incumbent [*a foil with staggering wealth*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/19/us/politics/ohio-senate.html), little political experience and the imprimatur of a former president who could prompt some voters to split their tickets.

The next day, the Biden administration announced [*an $8.5 billion deal to fund Intel*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/19/us/politics/ohio-senate.html) Corporation’s semiconductor manufacturing, much of it destined for Ohio, courtesy of legislation that Mr. Brown helped secure. Because of Mr. Brown, that law, [*the Chips and Science Act*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/19/us/politics/ohio-senate.html), requires so-called [*project labor agreements*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/19/us/politics/ohio-senate.html) to be struck between management and union laborers before plant construction could begin. So 7,000 union tradesmen will be employed at the massive Intel complex outside of Columbus.

On that same Wednesday, [*the administration finalized stringent new car and truck emissions standards*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/19/us/politics/ohio-senate.html) that should increase electric-vehicle manufacturing at [*the Stellantis Jeep complex*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/19/us/politics/ohio-senate.html) in Toledo and [*automotive battery plants around Youngstown*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/19/us/politics/ohio-senate.html).

Finally, construction should begin around election time on a [*long-sought replacement for the Brent Spence Bridge*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/19/us/politics/ohio-senate.html), linking Cincinnati to its suburbs in Kentucky. That, too, was delivered in part by Mr. Brown.

Yet Republicans are supremely confident for a much simpler reason: political gravity. In March polling, Mr. Trump leads Mr. Biden in Ohio [*by as few as nine percentage points, and as many as 18*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/19/us/politics/ohio-senate.html). Mr. Brown will most likely run ahead of Mr. Biden in the state, Republicans say, but not by enough to win.

“We have an opportunity now to retire the old commie,” Mr. Moreno proclaimed at his victory party on Tuesday, referring to Mr. Brown.

In an interview on Wednesday, Mr. Brown insisted that his toughest Senate race was his first, when he unseated Mike DeWine, who went on to win two terms as Ohio’s governor.

And Mr. DeWine lent credence to that confidence on Monday night, pleading with voters in Columbus to cast their ballots for the candidate he thought could beat Mr. Brown, State Senator Matt Dolan.

“This is not going to be an easy race, folks,” Mr. DeWine advised at the Hey Hey Bar &amp; Grill in Columbus’s German Village. “I’ve run against this man.”

This year could be different.

“Nothing can save Sherrod Brown from the fact that he votes with Joe Biden 99 percent of the time,” Mr. Moreno said.

Compared to Mr. Moreno, a political newcomer, Mr. Brown is a fixture in Ohio. “People just know I stand up for them,” he said.

Two years ago, Tim Ryan, who was then a U.S. representative, ran for the Senate as a blue-collar Democrat from the Mahoning Valley, cut from the mold of Mr. Brown. Though he ran what has almost universally been hailed as a textbook campaign, [*he lost to J.D. Vance by six percentage points*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/19/us/politics/ohio-senate.html).

But Mr. Ryan said he lacked something Mr. Brown has: a fixed identity across the state. To win in Ohio as a Democrat, he said, “the one thing you need to do is have the name Sherrod Brown.”

This fight will be about Mr. Moreno trying to define Mr. Brown’s policy agenda — and the Democrat removing Mr. Biden’s name from it. Mr. Brown talks up his action to save more than 1,460 pensions of union drivers in Ohio through the [*Butch Lewis Act, a pension provision*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/19/us/politics/ohio-senate.html) named in memory of an Ohio Teamster and inserted into the enormous Covid relief law, the American Rescue Plan.

He tells audiences of his role in the huge law signed by Mr. Biden that extended veterans health care to former service members who were exposed to toxic “burn pits” in Iraq and Afghanistan. It was also named after an Ohioan, Sgt. First Class Heath Robinson, who died of lung cancer at 39.

He speaks effusively of the CHIPS Act, which ensures that the two new semiconductor plants being built in Ohio with federal money will employ union-trained workers.

But even he said he understood the road ahead, especially when Mr. Moreno was calling his record “job-killing, Green New Deal radicalism.”

“They know the accomplishments,” Mr. Brown said. “They just don’t really know who did it.”

The incumbent will almost certainly be able to match Republicans dollar for dollar and then some. Between the allegiances he has built in the labor movement and the corporate interests with business before the Senate Banking Committee, which he chairs, Mr. Brown has built a formidable war chest: $33.5 million raised since 2019, and $13.5 million cash on hand at the end of last month.

Mr. Moreno, after a brutal three-way primary, emerged with $2.4 million in cash, according to late February federal campaign finance records.

And Mr. Brown said beneath Ohio’s pro-Trump tilt was a state less conservative than Republicans believe. Last August, Ohioans [*crushed a ballot measure engineered*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/19/us/politics/ohio-senate.html) by Republicans to make it harder for future ballot measures to pass, a transparent effort to defeat a pending vote on abortion rights. Three months later, [*they enshrined the right to abortion*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/19/us/politics/ohio-senate.html) in the state’s Constitution, by 13 percentage points. On the same day, [*they voted to legalize marijuana*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/19/us/politics/ohio-senate.html) — by 14 points.

“That ought to scare them,” Mr. Brown said of his Republican opponents. “They need to figure out how to win those voters."

Just how much Mr. Brown can continue to outperform national Democrats is a subject of debate in Ohio. David Pepper, a former chairman of the Ohio Democratic Party, said the senator outperformed the rest of the Democratic ticket in 2018 by more than 10 percentage points, [*beating Republican James B. Renacci by 7 percentage points*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/19/us/politics/ohio-senate.html) when Mr. DeWine was beating his Democratic opponent for governor, Richard Cordray, by 3.7 points.

“The question is, how much does Biden compete here?” said David Pepper, a former chairman of the Ohio Democratic Party. “If he competes hard, he keeps it in reach for Brown.”

At the Dayton union hall of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 82, it was impossible to find anyone not firmly in Mr. Brown’s camp.

“As many pensions as he’s saved, absolutely” he’s going to win, David Bruce, the president of the Dayton Building Trades Council, declared.

But beneath the bravado was an acknowledgment of the work ahead.

“That’s our battle,” the retired bricklayer, Mr. King, said, citing the stream of right-wing information consumed by many of his union brethren. “We’re called as union leaders to do a better job with our message. The problem is, we’re bricklayers. We don’t understand messages.”

PHOTO: Senator Sherrod Brown in Dayton, Ohio. He will run against a Trump-backed rival in November. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MADDIE MCGARVEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A16.

**Load-Date:** March 23, 2024

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[***Taking a Dim View Of the Road Ahead***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69DK-V571-DXY4-X02B-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 17, 2023 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. 2

**Length:** 563 words

**Byline:** By Rhoda Feng

**Body**

Time -- and a whole lot more -- stands still in Owen Panettieri's static drama about a doomsday prepper.

Owen Panettieri's play ''The Lights Are On'' offers a dispiriting preview of what many of our homes may look like in the future.

The muddled play, a co-production of New Light Theater Project and Embeleco Unlimited, takes place in the living quarters of Liz (Danielle Ferland), a doomsday prepper who spends her days pacing about her storm-boarded house, examining sundry supplies and sorting jars of canned food. Five years earlier, Hurricane Prudence ravaged her home. ''Afterwards, there wasn't a lot worth saving. It all had to go,'' she matter-of-factly tells her neighbor Trish (Jenny Bacon).

The play begins when a discombobulated Trish visits Liz because she thinks someone may have broken into her home. The two haven't spoken in seven years, yet nothing in Sarah Norris's direction conveys a sense of estrangement. Instead, simply hearing Liz's voice seems to lower Trish's blood pressure by several degrees, and soon they are chatting as easily as if Trish had stopped by for a coffee chat after Sunday services.

Initially, the pair present a study in contrasts: Trish, with her silk top and expensive haircut, comes from inherited wealth, whereas Liz, with her loosefitting flannel shirt and mom jeans, is ***working class***. Yet as they catch up and catastrophize about the world, certain selfish similarities between the two women emerge. Trish has always been too preoccupied with her own life to consider the needs of her neighbor; during Hurricane Prudence, she refused to admit Liz and her son, Nathan (Marquis Rodriguez), into the safety of her home. For her part, Liz has turned her house ''into a prison'' for herself and her son, Trish notes.

An ambient sense of the uncanny pervades the play, but the purpose is unclear. What to make of the fact that only Trish can hear something pawing at plaster? Why is a knob on a cabinet affixed to the wrong side? Why do characters refer to nonexistent ''food on the stove'' and mistake tea for wine? And any tension the play accrues is repeatedly dispelled by retirement-ready stereotypes of the hysterical woman (Trish) and ball-and-chain mother (Liz).

Panettieri's vision of capitalism is also cartoonish, whether the absurd ''Transformers''-sounding names of the giant corporations Trionics and Meglamax or the fanciful notion that Liz herself has a capitalist streak. She has a side hustle selling provisions at ''very reasonable'' markups, according to Nathan, but we never see her take orders from customers, print packing slips or prepare items for shipment. The range of stuff overtaking her kitchen like kudzu does not appear to be for sale, but stockpiled in case of an apocalyptic event. Which might as well have arrived at the end of the play's 95 molasses-slow minutes. While Panettieri's drama has no trouble imagining the end of the world, imagining convincing characters is a tougher task.

The Lights Are OnThrough Nov. 11 at Theater Row, Manhattan; newlighttheaterproject.com. Running time: 1 hour 35 minutes.

This review is supported by Critical Minded, an initiative to invest in the work of cultural critics from historically underrepresented backgrounds.The Lights Are OnThrough Nov. 11 at Theater Row, Theater One, in Manhattan; newlighttheaterproject.com. Running time: 1 hour 35 minutes.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/16/theater/lights-are-on-review.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/16/theater/lights-are-on-review.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: From left: Marquis Rodriguez as Nathan, Jenny Bacon as Trish and Danielle Ferland as Liz in Owen Panettieri's ''The Lights Are On,'' directed by Sarah Norris. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HUNTER CANNING) This article appeared in print on page C2.

**Load-Date:** October 17, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Behind the Plan to Build a City From Scratch in Solano County; California Today***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B5S-4NF1-JBG3-600D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 24, 2024 Wednesday 09:00 EST

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 1040 words

**Highlight:** The company California Forever began collecting signatures last week for a ballot initiative that would essentially ask residents for permission to build.

**Body**

The company California Forever began collecting signatures last week for a ballot initiative that would essentially ask residents for permission to build.

Residents of Rio Vista, an agricultural town of 10,000 near the edge of Solano County, have been captivated for most of the last six years by one question: Who was buying up all the farmland?

It appeared to be a little-known company called Flannery Associates, which by last year had become the largest landowner in the county. Residents speculated on its purpose: Some thought it could be a cover for foreign spies; others believed it was a shell company acquiring property for a new Disneyland.

But even after investigations by the county and federal agencies, nobody could learn anything about the company’s owners or true intentions.

The veil lifted in August, when my colleague Erin Griffith and I [*revealed that the purchases*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/25/business/land-purchases-solano-county.html) were being directed by a former Goldman Sachs trader named Jan Sramek, who wanted to build a city of up to 400,000 people on what is now rolling yellow farmland, where families have raised sheep and cattle for generations.

Sramek is backed by a who’s who of Silicon Valley. His investors include billionaires like Michael Moritz, the venture capitalist from Sequoia Capital; Reid Hoffman, the co-founder of LinkedIn; and Laurene Powell Jobs, founder of the Emerson Collective and the widow of the Apple co-founder Steve Jobs.

Now comes the campaign.

In a recent article, I delved into Sramek, the history of Flannery Associates and where the effort may go from here. Last week, the company, now called California Forever, began collecting signatures for a ballot initiative that would essentially ask Solano County voters for permission to build the city.

It will be an uphill battle. The initiative, if it qualifies for the ballot, would ask voters to amend a popular, longstanding county ordinance that aims to protect farms by steering development to cities.

Sramek came to California from the Czech Republic to make his fortune in start-up companies. In an interview, I found him to be well-studied in housing policy. His basic message was that if the state was serious about tackling its housing problems, it will have to build whole new communities. Adding density to existing neighborhoods through “infill” development — the focus of state legislators over the past decade — is also important, but will not be enough, he said.

“We can’t say that we are about economic opportunity, and then ***working-class*** Californians are leaving the state every year,” Sramek told me.

His policy message is hard to disagree with. But because he operated in secret for years, and in several cases sued farmers who refused to sell to his company, many voters find him untrustworthy. That has made California Forever’s ballot-initiative campaign something of an apology tour.

You can read my full article [*here*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/19/business/economy/flannery-california-forever-solano.html).

The rest of the news

* As the California FAIR Plan, which provides basic fire insurance coverage for homes in high-risk areas, has exploded in size over the past few years, [*homeowners have started to complain of poor service*](https://calmatters.org/economy/2024/01/california-fire-insurance-2/), rising costs and threats of being dropped, CalMatters reports.

Southern California

* The unusual torrent of rain [*that slammed the San Diego area*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/23/us/san-diego-flood-damage.html) this week put a number of residents in life-threatening situations. Some San Diegans wondered why they had not received more warning.
* The Los Angeles Times said it would lay off about 115 journalists, [*cutting its newsroom staff by more than 20 percent*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/23/business/media/los-angeles-times-layoffs-newsroom.html), after a tumultuous few weeks in which top editors left the newspaper.

1. The artists who performed as the Soft Moon and Silent Servant and a third person were [*found dead in Los Angeles*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/23/arts/music/soft-moon-silent-servant-found-dead.html) last week. The authorities have not determined a cause, but they said “possible narcotics” were found at the scene.
2. A pressurized gas cylinder [*exploded*](https://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/lafd-captain-injured-pressurized-gas-cylinder-explosion/3319457/) at a homeless encampment in Los Angeles, injuring a Los Angeles Fire Department captain, KNBC-TV reported.

Northern California

* Daniel Lurie, who is running against Mayor London Breed of San Francisco, has raised more money in support of [*the mayor’s ballot measure to expand police access*](https://www.sfexaminer.com/news/politics/daniel-lurie-outraises-london-breed-on-san-francisco-prop-e/article_7f12ee3e-b947-11ee-84f6-73705bb5b4a1.html) to new technology than the mayor has, The San Francisco Examiner reports. Breed’s team has criticized Lurie’s fundraising effort as duplicative and harmful; Lurie argues that the mayor’s failings made it necessary.

1. Two San Francisco residents were convicted of murder for [*torturing and poisoning a man*](https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/fentanyl-injection-murder-tortue-conviction-18623896.php) and then throwing him into the Bay in a suitcase, The San Francisco Chronicle reports. One pleaded guilty and the other was convicted by a jury; both face possible sentences of life in prison.

What we’re recommending

In her new novel, “Dead in Long Beach, California,” Venita Blackburn [*explores the chaos of mourning*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/20/books/review/dead-in-long-beach-california-venita-blackburn.html) by following a woman who stumbles into an ethically dubious way to cope with loss.

Tell us

Today we’re asking about love: not whom you love but what you love about your corner of California.

Email us a love letter to your California city, neighborhood or region — or to the Golden State as a whole — and we may share it in an upcoming newsletter. You can reach the team at [*CAtoday@nytimes.com*](mailto:CAtoday@nytimes.com).

And before you go, some good news

Every day, editors on The New York Times’s Insider team pluck interesting and surprising facts from articles in the newspaper to showcase in our print edition.

The Insider team, which provides subscribers with behind-the-scenes looks at how Times journalism is made, recently [*rounded up its favorite facts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/30/insider/72-of-our-favorite-facts-of-2023.html) of 2023. The list includes tidbits on history, science and popular culture, among other subjects. Some are playful, like the recipe for Cookie Monster’s prop chocolate-chip cookies on “Sesame Street,” while others shed light on issues in the news.

All 72 facts are organized by the month they appeared in the newspaper, and include links to the articles from which they were drawn.

Thanks for reading. We’ll be back tomorrow.

P.S. Here’s [*today’s Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/crosswords/game/mini).

Soumya Karlamangla, Maia Coleman, Briana Scalia and Halina Bennet contributed to California Today. You can reach the team at [*CAtoday@nytimes.com*](mailto:CAtoday@nytimes.com).

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

PHOTO: Solano County, the site of the proposed new city. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Aaron Wojack for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** January 24, 2024

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[***She Welcomes You to Her 'Cabaret'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BP1-WMC1-JBG3-605R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 31, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section AR; Column 0; Arts and Leisure Desk; Pg. 4

**Length:** 1590 words

**Byline:** By Douglas Greenwood

**Body**

When Rebecca Frecknall was a child, one of her favorite things to watch was a televised 1993 London revival of ''Cabaret,'' which her father had recorded on VHS tape. As the British theater director grew up, she hoped that one day she would stage a version of the musical, in which a writer falls in love with an exuberant and wayward cabaret performer in Weimar-era Germany.

In early March, in a Midtown rehearsal room, Frecknall, 37, was preparing to do just that. Her ''Cabaret,'' which opens in previews at the August Wilson Theater on April 1, is a transfer from London's West End, where it opened in 2021 to critical acclaim. The show won seven Olivier Awards, the British equivalent to the Tonys.

''I always wanted to direct 'Cabaret','' Frecknall said later in an interview. ''I just never thought I'd get the rights to it.'' Her opportunity came when Eddie Redmayne -- a producer on the show who played the Emcee in London, and will reprise the part on Broadway -- asked her in 2019 to be part of a bid for a revival.

At first it seemed like ''a pipe dream,'' Redmayne said, but after years of wrangling, they pulled it off. For the London show, the Playhouse Theater was reconfigured to reflect the musical's debauched setting, transforming it into the Kit Kat Club, with cabaret tables and scantily clad dancers and musicians roaming the foyer and auditorium. The August Wilson Theater is getting a similar treatment, Frecknall said. To honor the playhouse's namesake, the production designer Tom Scutt commissioned a Black artist, Jonathan Lyndon Chase, to paint murals in the reconfigured lobby, with theatergoers now entering via an alleyway off 52nd Street.

Shortly before the show opened in London, Frecknall's father died. That recorded revival, directed by Sam Mendes, was one of his favorites, and Frecknall loved it so much that, as she grew up and studied theater, she chose never to see the show onstage.

That has perhaps helped her find her own way with the show. In London, where Frecknall has been mounting notable productions since 2018, she has earned a reputation for refreshing the classics: ''A Streetcar Named Desire,'' ''Three Sisters'' and ''Romeo and Juliet.'' But she is not afraid to disregard Chekhov's stage directions or cut key scenes from Shakespeare. For her recent show ''Julie'' at the International Theater Amsterdam, she adapted Strindberg's ''Miss Julie'' herself, changing the setting from a manor house to a modern, stainless-steel kitchen. Instead of a gown, her Julie wore a gold sequined cocktail dress.

Ivo van Hove, the Tony-award winning director who commissioned ''Julie'' for his Amsterdam playhouse, said he admired Frecknall for her ''daring to transpose those sacred texts to the present,'' adding that she taught her actors to ''speak the language of the body, not just the language of words.''

Dance sequences are a hallmark of her shows, often devised by Frecknall herself. ''I sort of say it flippantly that I'd like to be a choreographer,'' she said. ''There's something for me about bodies and movement that feels so good.''

In her ''Romeo and Juliet,'' the knife fights between Montagues and Capulets became energetic, ballet-like episodes. For ''Streetcar,'' at the same theater, her ensemble moved as if guided by the crashing cymbals of a live drummer. Her influences were rooted more in dance than drama, she said: ''I would be Pina Bausch if I could.''

Frecknall's interest in movement started with childhood dance classes that she took while growing up in Warboys, a small village near Cambridge, England. There, she said, ''everybody knew each other,'' and ''no one went to the theater.'' Her family was the exception.

Her father, Paul Frecknall, had been obsessed with the stage since he was a boy, but a theater career was out of the question for the ***working-class*** lad, Frecknall said. It ''wasn't really something to pursue -- you got a job that paid something,'' she added. Instead, he channeled his passion into amateur dramatics, and, along with his wife Kate, joined a community theater group.

Frecknall's parents nurtured her interest in the arts. She took flute and dance lessons and listened to cast albums from her father's CD collection. Occasionally, she went with her father to London to see shows on the West End. (The first time she saw ''Cats,'' she said, she was 8 years old and so scared she cried.)

She also enjoyed sorting through her father's theater memorabilia. Among his playbill collection, Frecknall discovered the program for a London production of Peter Shaffer's ''Equus.'' Her curiosity was piqued, and her father gave her the script.

''It changed my life,'' Frecknall said. Having only seen musicals, she hadn't considered that theater could be a vehicle for moral or political questions. ''There were ideas in that play that were so much bigger,'' she added. ''I didn't know theater could do that.''

After graduating high school, Frecknall enrolled to study drama at Goldsmiths College in London. One of her teachers there, Cass Fleming recalled that she was ''curious and sort of brave,'' and that, even then, she was making work ''that sat between directing and choreographing.'' After postgraduate study at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art, she worked as an assistant director at esteemed London institutions, including the Young Vic and the National Theatre.

It was while working on a 2012 staging of ''The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe'' that Frecknall met Rupert Goold, the Tony-nominated director who now runs the Almeida, an off-West End venue known for its cutting-edge approach. ''Directing tends to breed a certain level of overconfidence,'' Goold said, but with Frecknall, it ''just didn't feel like that. She seemed quiet, kind of good-natured, and a bit anxious.'' He added that he would ''be lying if I said I knew from that first week that we had a major director on our hands.''

In 2016, after assisting directors for nearly seven years, Frecknall had her directorial debut: a more traditional take on ''Miss Julie'' at a regional theater. Two years later, she joined the Almeida's resident director program. That year, Goold commissioned her production of Williams's rarely staged ''Summer and Smoke,'' in which actors performed in a pit of dirt surrounded by pianos that the ensemble sporadically played. It won Frecknall her first Olivier.

The actor Patsy Ferran, who played the lead in ''Summer and Smoke'' and has worked with Frecknall on two other shows, said rehearsing with the director was liberating. ''You can think you've found your limit,'' Ferran said, but Frecknall always pushed performers beyond it, drawing better performances out of them.

Rehearsals usually began with warm-up games, she said, and though Frecknall is serious about her work, ''the process isn't.'' Both Ferran and Paul Mescal, who played Stanley Kowalski in Frecknall's ''Streetcar,'' compared the director's rehearsal rooms to ''playgrounds.''

Rehearsals were the part of a production Frecknall said she enjoyed the most. ''I don't like having a show on,'' she added. ''I do always have a slight, low level of anxiety around it,'' she said.

Mescal, who won an Olivier for his ''Streetcar'' performance, said, ''Rebecca struggles to enjoy the finished product because she's always searching for something greater.'' But that was also ''why her work is so brilliant and so commanding,'' he added. ''Because she never settles.''

''Cabaret'' chronicles the insular nightclub life of its characters while Nazism thrives around them, suggesting that their apathy helped spread it. During rehearsals this month, Frecknall invited Joshua Stanton, a rabbi, and Betsy L. Billard, a queer Jewish woman, into the studio for a workshop, giving the cast a chance to contemplate the musical's historical message.

As part of that process, Redmayne said, ''Every single person in that cast had a conversation about our own heritage.'' Frecknall ''knows her responsibility to the story,'' he added, which is to help the cast ''bring their own stories to the piece.''

Before the ''Cabaret'' transfer was announced, Frecknall had signed on to direct another musical on Broadway: an adaptation of ''The Great Gatsby'' with music by Florence Welch, of Florence and the Machine. Frecknall didn't have time for both, she said, though it was ''probably the best thing'' for ''Gatsby,'' a show based on such an important American text, that it would now be directed by an American, Rachel Chavkin.

Frecknall said she was at a point in her career where she could afford to be selective, and now turns down work that doesn't feel right. ''I never feel like I'm going to work to fund my life. My work is my life,'' she said. ''I'm really low maintenance,'' she added. ''I'm single and don't have dependents. I just have to feed my cat.''

Once ''Cabaret'' opens here, she plans to return to London and take a break for the summer, she said: By then, she will have spent six months working on three productions back-to-back. But she was already looking forward, and said that she would love to make a film one day or direct another stage production from her dad's VHS collection: Stephen Sondheim's ''Company.''

Getting a musical off the ground is expensive and difficult, she said -- like a ''big fish in a stream'' that ''very few people catch'' -- and she knew ''Cabaret'' might be her one chance.

But van Hove wasn't quite so worried. ''She is one of those directors who will stay with us for a long time,'' he said.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/27/theater/rebecca-frecknall-cabaret-broadway.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/27/theater/rebecca-frecknall-cabaret-broadway.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Rebecca Frecknall, top, has earned a reputation for refreshing the classics. She recently ran through a tech rehearsal of ''Cabaret'' at the August Wilson Theater with, above, Thomas Recktenwald and, at left from left, Eddie Redmayne, Ato Blankson-Wood and Clifford Bradshaw. Redmayne, above left, will reprise his role of Emcee on Broadway. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY AMIR HAMJA/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page AR4.

**Load-Date:** March 31, 2024

**End of Document**



[***‘The Lights Are On’ Review: Catastrophizing About the Future***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69DF-6W01-JBG3-63F0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 16, 2023 Monday 23:38 EST

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**Section:** THEATER

**Length:** 598 words

**Byline:** Rhoda Feng

**Highlight:** Time — and a whole lot more — stands still in Owen Panettieri’s static drama about a doomsday prepper.

**Body**

Time — and a whole lot more — stands still in Owen Panettieri’s static drama about a doomsday prepper.

[*Owen Panettieri*](https://www.owenpanettieri.com/)’s play “The Lights Are On” offers a dispiriting preview of what many of our homes may look like in the future.

The muddled play, a co-production of [*New Light Theater Project*](https://www.newlighttheaterproject.com/) and Embeleco Unlimited, takes place in the living quarters of Liz (Danielle Ferland), a doomsday prepper who spends her days pacing about her storm-boarded house, examining sundry supplies and sorting jars of canned food. Five years earlier, Hurricane Prudence ravaged her home. “Afterwards, there wasn’t a lot worth saving. It all had to go,” she matter-of-factly tells her neighbor Trish (Jenny Bacon).

The play begins when a discombobulated Trish visits Liz because she thinks someone may have broken into her home. The two haven’t spoken in seven years, yet nothing in Sarah Norris’s direction conveys a sense of estrangement. Instead, simply hearing Liz’s voice seems to lower Trish’s blood pressure by several degrees, and soon they are chatting as easily as if Trish had stopped by for a coffee chat after Sunday services.

Initially, the pair present a study in contrasts: Trish, with her silk top and expensive haircut, comes from inherited wealth, whereas Liz, with her loosefitting flannel shirt and mom jeans, is ***working class***. Yet as they catch up and catastrophize about the world, certain selfish similarities between the two women emerge. Trish has always been too preoccupied with her own life to consider the needs of her neighbor; during Hurricane Prudence, she refused to admit Liz and her son, Nathan (Marquis Rodriguez), into the safety of her home. For her part, Liz has turned her house “into a prison” for herself and her son, Trish notes.

An ambient sense of the uncanny pervades the play, but the purpose is unclear. What to make of the fact that only Trish can hear something pawing at plaster? Why is a knob on a cabinet affixed to the wrong side? Why do characters refer to nonexistent “food on the stove” and mistake tea for wine? And any tension the play accrues is repeatedly dispelled by retirement-ready stereotypes of the hysterical woman (Trish) and ball-and-chain mother (Liz).

Panettieri’s vision of capitalism is also cartoonish, whether the absurd “Transformers”-sounding names of the giant corporations Trionics and Meglamax or the fanciful notion that Liz herself has a capitalist streak. She has a side hustle selling provisions at “very reasonable” markups, according to Nathan, but we never see her take orders from customers, print packing slips or prepare items for shipment. The range of stuff overtaking her kitchen like kudzu does not appear to be for sale, but stockpiled in case of an apocalyptic event. Which might as well have arrived at the end of the play’s 95 molasses-slow minutes. While Panettieri’s drama has no trouble imagining the end of the world, imagining convincing characters is a tougher task.

The Lights Are On

Through Nov. 11 at Theater Row, Manhattan; [*newlighttheaterproject.com*](https://www.newlighttheaterproject.com/the-lights-are-on). Running time: 1 hour 35 minutes.

This review is supported by Critical Minded, an initiative to invest in the work of cultural critics from historically underrepresented backgrounds.

The Lights Are On Through Nov. 11 at Theater Row, Theater One, in Manhattan; newlighttheaterproject.com. Running time: 1 hour 35 minutes.

PHOTO: From left: Marquis Rodriguez as Nathan, Jenny Bacon as Trish and Danielle Ferland as Liz in Owen Panettieri’s “The Lights Are On,” directed by Sarah Norris. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HUNTER CANNING) This article appeared in print on page C2.

**Load-Date:** October 16, 2023

**End of Document**



[***How Trump Could Be Arrested and Booked, and What Happens Next***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68Y5-97G1-JBG3-62HS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 15, 2023 Tuesday 12:22 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 425 words

**Byline:** Richard Fausset and Danny Hakim

**Highlight:** The former president must surrender to the authorities in Fulton County, Ga., by noon on Aug. 25, the district attorney said.

**Body**

The former president must surrender to the authorities in Fulton County, Ga., by noon on Aug. 25, the district attorney said.

Former President Donald J. Trump has until no later than noon on Aug. 25 to voluntarily surrender to authorities in Fulton County, Fani T. Willis, the district attorney, said on Monday.

The script that officials in Atlanta will follow for his arrest and booking is likely to deviate from the standard operating procedure, just as it did when Mr. Trump was arrested on separate charges in New York in April.

In New York, prosecutors contacted a lawyer for Mr. Trump on the evening of March 30 “to coordinate his surrender to the Manhattan D.A.’s Office for arraignment,” according to a post on [*Twitter*](https://twitter.com/ManhattanDA/status/1641579988360019968?s=20) by the district attorney, Alvin Bragg. The move was unsurprising, as suspects in white-collar cases are often given a chance to turn themselves in.

A few days later, Mr. Trump was [*fingerprinted and escorted*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/04/04/nyregion/trump-arrest-arraignment) through a Manhattan courthouse after surrendering to investigators from the district attorney’s office. But he was also allowed to forgo certain procedural indignities, including being handcuffed and having his booking photo taken.

Some of those accommodations were likely arranged in [*pre-arrest discussions*](https://abcnews.go.com/US/nyc-prepared-protests-related-potential-trump-indictment-mayor/story?id=97992036) that the Secret Service conducted with their counterparts in the New York Police Department. In Georgia, similar coordination is likely to be undertaken by the Secret Service and the Fulton County Sheriff’s Department, which is responsible for the main jail system for Atlanta, as well as courthouse security.

In the months leading up to Mr. Trump’s arrest, sheriff’s department officials declined to discuss the logistical details, although the [*Fulton County sheriff*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/01/us/trump-indictment-georgia.html) has said Mr. Trump won’t receive any special treatment. The department’s website notes that most people arrested in Fulton County are taken to the main jail on Rice Street, just northwest of downtown Atlanta and close to Bankhead, a ***working-class*** neighborhood rich in [*local hip-hop lore*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bankhead_Bounce).

At the jail, arrestees typically undergo medical screening, fingerprinting and a check for outstanding warrants. They also have their mug shot taken. “All arrestees who do not bond out of jail will routinely appear before a judge within 24 hours after arrest,” the website states.

PHOTO: Authorities standing near barricades outside the Fulton County courthouse in preparation for District Attorney Fani Willis announcing an indictment in her investigation into election meddling, in Atlanta. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Brynn Anderson/Associated Press FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** August 20, 2023

**End of Document**



[***In Milwaukee, Worries That G.O.P. Gathering Won't Boost Business***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BRP-S751-DXY4-X01H-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 8, 2024 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 12

**Length:** 1793 words

**Byline:** By Jonathan Weisman

**Body**

In Chicago, venues are booking fast for the Democratic convention in August. But Milwaukee, host of the Republican convention, is wondering if customers will come.

Dan Jacobs, a contestant on the newest season of ''Top Chef,'' is having a national star turn with his soups, cheese treats and elevated snacks -- and his open struggle with a rare degenerative disease.

But that publicity has not translated to a surge of prospective customers booking soirees at his Milwaukee restaurants, DanDan and EsterEv, ahead of the Republican National Convention, which is just three months away.

''We haven't gotten one single inquiry, like nothing,'' said the restaurateur. ''That's where I think everybody's like, 'What's going on?'''

With the Republican convention slated to kick off in Milwaukee on July 15, some of the city's biggest and most sought-after restaurants, concert halls and other venues are alarmed at how slowly the expected events around the gathering are taking shape.

Birch, whose chef, Kyle Knall, has twice been nominated for a James Beard Award for the best chef in the Midwest, has no signed contracts, and indeed has received only one inquiry, restaurant management said. The gracious, old-world Pabst and Riverside theaters also remain unbooked, according to entertainment industry officials. Leslie West, who co-owns and runs the Rave, Eagles Club and Eagles Ballroom, said she had given up and would ''just book our own shows during the R.N.C. time period, no need to stress about it.''

''We're seeing what everyone else is seeing,''said Adam Siegel, whose restaurant, Lupi & Iris, is finalizing contracts on two 100-plate brunches but has not seen the complete restaurant buyouts he was expecting. ''There's no sense of security that it will move forward in the way that most conventions move forward.''

His co-owner, Michael DeMichele, later pronounced himself ''thrilled about brunches that are being booked.''

Last August, when the Republican Party chose Milwaukee to host its convention, the city's Democratic mayor, Cavalier Johnson, promoted it as ''full of unexpected gems'' and urged conventioneers and partygoers alike to ''take all your money to Milwaukee, spend it that week and leave it.''

Now, theories abound in Milwaukee about why bookings are off to such a slow start. Among them: turnover of convention staff after the presumptive nominee, former President Donald J. Trump, cleaned house at the Republican National Committee, turnover that officials deny has happened; a small city lacking event infrastructure; and a reluctance by would-be conventioneers to participate in an event showcasing Mr. Trump and his most ardent followers.

Republicans involved in the planning of the convention say that the concerns are overstated, that fund-raising is ahead of schedule and that bookings are actively being worked out between groups and venues. The R.N.C.'s Committee on Arrangements cited 50 events that ''have already been signed or are moving to contract in short order.''

''The fact is the incredible support from the Milwaukee business community and beyond has put this convention in an unprecedented position for success,'' said Reince Priebus, a former R.N.C. chairman and Mr. Trump's first White House chief of staff, who now chairs the Milwaukee host committee, which is primarily responsible for fundraising. ''We're ahead of previous host committees in our fund-raising efforts, and ahead of schedule on our financial and other goals.''

Elise Dickens, the chief executive officer of the Committee on Arrangements, said, ''Our team is working around the clock to connect external groups with local businesses to put on unforgettable events.''

And some bookings are coming through. The Bradley Symphony Center has ''confirmed bookings,'' said Rick Snow, the center's vice president of facilities and building operations, with ''additional events in the works.''

''A lot of work will start coming together now,'' he said. ''People who have done large-scale events before know things really come together in the final weeks of planning; it's the nature of the beast.''

But about 100 miles south in Chicago, the city that will play host to the Democrats about a month after Milwaukee, the beast's nature has been the opposite, organizers and event planners said. Navy Pier is booked up. Its Offshore Rooftop restaurant and another popular penthouse bar overlooking the lake, Cindy's Rooftop, have multiple contracts, as does Chicago Cut, a popular steakhouse on the Chicago River. The Salt Shed, which has a capacity of 3,600, is signed for concerts.

Kimball Stroud, a Democratic event planner, said so many theaters were taken in Chicago this spring that she ''dug deep'' and discovered the newly renovated and opened Ramova Theater in the ***working-class*** neighborhood of Bridgeport, and then bought it out for two nights: one for former Representative Gabrielle Giffords's gun-control organization, another for a yet-to-be-disclosed client. She is trying to get a third night as well.

Republicans involved in the convention planning say business in Milwaukee should begin heating up soon, though. Democrats putting together their convention in Chicago, a much larger city, had the advantage of being able to book the state delegations quickly into eight hotels downtown. In Milwaukee, though, the G.O.P. just sent out hotel assignments to delegates in late March -- in 110 hotels scattered around southern Wisconsin.

Delegates, corporations, lobbying firms and trade associations may have been waiting to know where those hotels would be located before they would be ready to sign contracts for restaurant gatherings, concerts and warehouse parties.

Evan Hughes, a co-founder and the chief executive of Central Standard Distillery and Central Standard Crafthouse & Kitchen, said Friday he had three evening buyouts booked and three proposals in negotiation. CNN and Politico are expected to open a joint dining and media center, most likely at the same decorous downtown Turner Hall venue that the media organizations had booked for the aborted 2020 convention.

Mr. Hughes said he had heard from several planners that groups had prioritized securing venues for the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, and that they were now ''turning their focus to Milwaukee.''

But if Mr. Trump is involved, white knuckles tend to follow. Venue managers say upheaval at the Republican National Committee, after Mr. Trump became the presumptive nominee and began installing an even more loyal team, has meant business partners have dropped out and been replaced by new faces. R.N.C. officials say there has been no turnover. Prospective customers have asked for clauses in contracts to hold them harmless in case Mr. Trump simply calls off the convention.

''This is a great opportunity for our city to shine,'' said Mr. Siegel, of Lupi & Iris, ''and that's all we want, for our city to shine.''

In 2020, Democrats opted to hold their convention virtually because of the coronavirus pandemic, canceling on the city of Milwaukee as hotels and businesses emptied across the country. Republicans staged part of theirs at the White House, a radical break from tradition that mixed politics with the trappings of governance and prompted Democrats to charge the Trump administration with a litany of Hatch Act violations. (The law generally bars government employees from participating in partisan activities.)

Eight years later, Mr. Trump is a known quantity, and his presence is far more of a complicating factor. One Milwaukee bar, the Mothership, announced last month that it was closing down for the convention, because, the owner, Ricky Ramirez, said, ''I'm not trying to get involved with or actively take money or rent the space out to that tomfoolery.''

Some organizations will have a toehold in Milwaukee as they go all in on Chicago. The Latino Leaders Network will hold a reception at a Milwaukee law office for about 150 people, said the group's chairman, Mickey Ibarra. It is holding a blowout on Navy Pier for 750 guests, with a contract that allows it to expand to 1,000.

''There will be a very big difference,'' he said.

But even in Chicago, there is some concern that, beyond labor unions, state delegations and liberal interest groups, major corporations could be shying away from the Democratic convention, because those businesses are also shying away from the Republicans, said Sam Toia, the president of the Illinois Restaurant Association. As in Milwaukee, conversations are happening with such companies, but contracts have yet to be signed.

Skittishness from deep-pocketed corporations may be keeping some of the largest, priciest venues out of the conversation. The Milwaukee Art Museum, with its panoramic views of Lake Michigan designed by the renowned Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava, will not be hosting private parties, for instance, convention and Milwaukee officials said, citing cost and a desire not to entangle the museum with politics.

In some cases, there has been a clear mismatch in expectations. The Riverside Theater, with a capacity of 2,500, was asked to host a group of just 50 for a film screening and an open bar. It offered a fee of $116,804, according to an invoice obtained by The New York Times.

Pabst Theater Group CEO Gary Witt said the quote was based on a rate for the full facility, renting a special projector, screen, using a concert sound system for the film, and including food and drink. ''We can't afford to lose out on the potential of a full rental in a 2,500 capacity theater by hosting just 50 people at a reduced rate,'' he said. The venue remains unbooked, according to entertainment industry officials.

Numerous businesses say that, three months out, such disputes should have been long smoothed over. By February 2020, just before the pandemic threw plans into chaos, much of Milwaukee was already booked for the summer Democratic convention.

Ms. Stroud, the Democratic event planner, said that, by February, she had been looking into building a temporary floor over the fixed seats at the Pabst and Riverside theaters to let partyers dance and mingle. And Mr. Jacobs, the Milwaukee restaurateur, said he had been selling single tables for a day at $1,000 a seat, as Democratic conventioneers nailed down places to hold court.

There is a potential cost to the slow start. Like other Great Lake cities, Milwaukee comes alive in the summer. The convention will put much of the city off limits in the middle of July, and send locals scurrying out of town.

''If we don't see the business, I don't think our locals are going to be here to support us,'' Mr. Jacobs said. ''With the D.N.C., we never felt this level of trepidation.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/07/us/politics/republican-convention.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/07/us/politics/republican-convention.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: The home arena of the Milwaukee Bucks of the N.B.A. will serve as the main venue for the Republican National Convention in July. (PHOTOGRAPH BY LAUREN JUSTICE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Dan Jacobs, a contestant on ''Top Chef,'' owns two restaurants in the city. ''We haven't gotten one single inquiry,'' he said.

Adam Siegel said his restaurant, Lupi & Iris, hadn't seen the rush he expected, but he was finalizing two contracts for brunches. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY KEVIN MIYAZAKI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A12.

**Load-Date:** April 8, 2024

**End of Document**



[***In Milwaukee, Restaurants and Venues Worry of Seeing Limited R.N.C. Boost***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BRH-5741-JBG3-600F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 7, 2024 Sunday 09:58 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1866 words

**Byline:** Jonathan Weisman Jonathan Weisman is a politics writer, covering campaigns with an emphasis on economic and labor policy. He is based in Chicago.

**Highlight:** In Chicago, venues are booking fast for the Democratic convention in August. But Milwaukee, host of the Republican convention, is wondering if customers will come.

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And some bookings are coming through. The Bradley Symphony Center has “confirmed bookings,” said Rick Snow, the center’s vice president of facilities and building operations, with “additional events in the works.”

“A lot of work will start coming together now,” he said. “People who have done large-scale events before know things really come together in the final weeks of planning; it’s the nature of the beast.”

But about 100 miles south in Chicago, the city that will play host to the Democrats about a month after Milwaukee, the beast’s nature has been the opposite, organizers and event planners said. Navy Pier is booked up. Its Offshore Rooftop restaurant and another popular penthouse bar overlooking the lake, Cindy’s Rooftop, have multiple contracts, as does Chicago Cut, a popular steakhouse on the Chicago River. The Salt Shed, which has a capacity of 3,600, is signed for concerts.

Kimball Stroud, a Democratic event planner, said so many theaters were taken in Chicago this spring that she “dug deep” and discovered the newly renovated and opened [*Ramova Theater*](https://www.milwaukeerep.com/visit/venues/pabst-theater/) in the ***working-class*** neighborhood of Bridgeport, and then bought it out for two nights: one for former Representative Gabrielle Giffords’s gun-control organization, another for a yet-to-be-disclosed client. She is trying to get a third night as well.

Republicans involved in the convention planning say business in Milwaukee should begin heating up soon, though. Democrats putting together their convention in Chicago, a much larger city, had the advantage of being able to book the state delegations quickly into eight hotels downtown. In Milwaukee, though, the G.O.P. just sent out hotel assignments to delegates in late March — in 110 hotels scattered around southern Wisconsin.

Delegates, corporations, lobbying firms and trade associations may have been waiting to know where those hotels would be located before they would be ready to sign contracts for restaurant gatherings, concerts and warehouse parties.

Evan Hughes, a co-founder and the chief executive of Central Standard Distillery and Central Standard Crafthouse &amp; Kitchen, said Friday he had three evening buyouts booked and three proposals in negotiation. CNN and Politico are expected to open a joint dining and media center, most likely at the same decorous downtown Turner Hall venue that the media organizations had booked for the aborted 2020 convention.

Mr. Hughes said he had heard from several planners that groups had prioritized securing venues for the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, and that they were now “turning their focus to Milwaukee.”

But if Mr. Trump is involved, white knuckles tend to follow. Venue managers say upheaval at the Republican National Committee, after Mr. Trump became the presumptive nominee and began installing an even more loyal team, has meant business partners have dropped out and been replaced by new faces. R.N.C. officials say there has been no turnover. Prospective customers have asked for clauses in contracts to hold them harmless in case Mr. Trump simply calls off the convention.

“This is a great opportunity for our city to shine,” said Mr. Siegel, of Lupi &amp; Iris, “and that’s all we want, for our city to shine.”

In 2020, Democrats opted to hold their convention virtually because of the coronavirus pandemic, canceling on the city of Milwaukee as hotels and businesses emptied across the country. [*Republicans staged part of theirs at the White House*](https://www.milwaukeerep.com/visit/venues/pabst-theater/), a radical break from tradition that mixed politics with the trappings of governance and prompted Democrats to charge the Trump administration with a litany of [*Hatch Act violations*](https://www.milwaukeerep.com/visit/venues/pabst-theater/). (The law generally bars government employees from participating in partisan activities.)

Eight years later, Mr. Trump is a known quantity, and his presence is far more of a complicating factor. One Milwaukee bar, the Mothership, announced last month that it was closing down for the convention, because, the owner, Ricky Ramirez, said, “I’m not trying to get involved with or actively take money or rent the space out to that tomfoolery.”

Some organizations will have a toehold in Milwaukee as they go all in on Chicago. The Latino Leaders Network will hold a reception at a Milwaukee law office for about 150 people, said the group’s chairman, Mickey Ibarra. It is holding a blowout on Navy Pier for 750 guests, with a contract that allows it to expand to 1,000.

“There will be a very big difference,” he said.

But even in Chicago, there is some concern that, beyond labor unions, state delegations and liberal interest groups, major corporations could be shying away from the Democratic convention, because those businesses are also shying away from the Republicans, said Sam Toia, the president of the Illinois Restaurant Association. As in Milwaukee, conversations are happening with such companies, but contracts have yet to be signed.

Skittishness from deep-pocketed corporations may be keeping some of the largest, priciest venues out of the conversation. The Milwaukee Art Museum, with its panoramic views of Lake Michigan designed by the renowned Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava, will not be hosting private parties, for instance, convention and Milwaukee officials said, citing cost and a desire not to entangle the museum with politics.

In some cases, there has been a clear mismatch in expectations. The Riverside Theater, with a capacity of 2,500, was asked to host a group of just 50 for a film screening and an open bar. It offered a fee of $116,804, according to an invoice obtained by The New York Times.

Pabst Theater Group CEO Gary Witt said the quote was based on a rate for the full facility, renting a special projector, screen, using a concert sound system for the film, and including food and drink. “We can’t afford to lose out on the potential of a full rental in a 2,500 capacity theater by hosting just 50 people at a reduced rate,” he said. The venue remains unbooked, according to entertainment industry officials.

Numerous businesses say that, three months out, such disputes should have been long smoothed over. By February 2020, just before the pandemic threw plans into chaos, much of Milwaukee was already booked for the summer Democratic convention.

Ms. Stroud, the Democratic event planner, said that, by February, she had been looking into building a temporary floor over the fixed seats at the Pabst and Riverside theaters to let partyers dance and mingle. And Mr. Jacobs, the Milwaukee restaurateur, said he had been selling single tables for a day at $1,000 a seat, as Democratic conventioneers nailed down places to hold court.

There is a potential cost to the slow start. Like other Great Lake cities, Milwaukee comes alive in the summer. The convention will put much of the city off limits in the middle of July, and send locals scurrying out of town.

“If we don’t see the business, I don’t think our locals are going to be here to support us,” Mr. Jacobs said. “With the D.N.C., we never felt this level of trepidation.”

PHOTOS: The home arena of the Milwaukee Bucks of the N.B.A. will serve as the main venue for the Republican National Convention in July. (PHOTOGRAPH BY LAUREN JUSTICE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Dan Jacobs, a contestant on “Top Chef,” owns two restaurants in the city. “We haven’t gotten one single inquiry,” he said.; Adam Siegel said his restaurant, Lupi &amp; Iris, hadn’t seen the rush he expected, but he was finalizing two contracts for brunches. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY KEVIN MIYAZAKI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A12.

**Load-Date:** April 8, 2024

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[***A French Writer Who Unflinchingly Cut Into Personal Memory***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66JM-S8W1-DXY4-X1JK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 7, 2022 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1669 words

**Byline:** By Alex Marshall, Alexandra Alter, Laura Cappelle and Aurelien Breeden

**Body**

Ernaux's writing has spoken particularly to women and to others who, like her, come from a ***working class*** seldom depicted with such clarity in literature.

For decades, the French writer Annie Ernaux has dissected the most humiliating, private and scandalous moments from her past with almost clinical precision: ''I shall carry out an ethnological study of myself,'' she wrote in her 1997 memoir ''Shame.''

On Thursday, she was awarded one of literature's highest honors, the Nobel Prize, for her body of work. Ernaux's writing has spoken particularly to women and to others who, like her, come from a ***working class*** seldom depicted with such clarity in literature: She has described her upbringing in a small town in Normandy, an illegal abortion she had the 1960s, her dissatisfaction with domestic life, and a passionate extramarital affair.

It was a striking choice by the Nobel committee to honor a writer whose work is woven from intensely personal and often ordinary experiences. Mats Malm, the permanent secretary of the Swedish Academy, which decides the prize, announced the decision at a news conference in Stockholm, lauding the ''courage and clinical acuity with which she uncovers the roots, estrangements and collective restraints of personal memory.''

At a news conference at the Paris offices of her publisher, Gallimard, Ernaux, 82, promised to keep writing. ''To receive the Nobel Prize is, for me, a responsibility to continue,'' she said.

She felt compelled, in particular, to keep examining the inequality and struggles that women face. ''Speaking from my condition as a woman,'' she said, ''it does not seem to me that we, women, have become equal in freedom, in power.''

Ernaux becomes only the 17th woman to have been awarded the prize, which has been given to 119 writers since it was formed in 1901. She is the second woman to receive the prize in three years after Louise Glück, the American poet, was given 2020's award.

While early on in her career Ernaux wrote autobiographical fiction, she quickly cast off any pretense that she was inventing a plot and began writing memoirs, though she has often resisted labeling her work as either fiction or nonfiction.

''Everything she writes, every word, is literal and factually true,'' said Dan Simon, the founder of Seven Stories Press, which has been publishing Ernaux in English for 31 years. ''And yet these are tremendous works of the imagination.''

The experiences she wrote about in the 1980s and 1990s -- an unwanted pregnancy and abortion, her love affairs, her ambivalence about marriage and motherhood -- were considered shocking by some social conservatives, but resonated deeply with a broad readership.

Ernaux has described her writing as a political act, one meant to reveal entrenched social inequality, and has compared her use of language to ''a knife.'' She was influenced by Simone de Beauvoir, the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and by the social upheaval of May 1968, when there were weeks of demonstrations, strikes and civil unrest in France. She has described her prose as ''brutally direct, ***working-class*** and sometimes obscene.''

She often situated her own private experiences and memories within the context of French culture and society, drawing parallels between her life and more universal struggles of women and ***working class*** people. Her work captured a moment of intense social change in France, away from traditional Catholic values and toward more secular, permissive and sexually liberated mores.

''When she started out, it was very challenging to the establishment, the way she put herself and her life at the center of large questions about social change in France,'' said the novelist Hari Kunzru, who often teaches Ernaux's work to his writing students at New York University. ''For the literary establishment, a ***working class*** woman from the north of France is not supposed to do that, and yet she makes herself a very powerful stand-in. She wants to speak in a general way through the particular.''

Ernaux was born in 1940 and grew up in a ***working-class*** Catholic family in Yvetot, a small town in Normandy where her parents had a grocery store and cafe. Her father was violent and abusive, and when she was 12, she saw him try to kill her mother, an event she writes about with shocking directness in ''Shame'': ''My father tried to kill my mother one Sunday in June, in the early afternoon,'' the first line reads.

She tried writing in college, but publishers rejected her book as ''too ambitious,'' she told The New York Times in 2020. She didn't take up writing again until her 30s, when she was a married mother of two, working as a French teacher.

That effort led to her 1974 debut, ''Cleaned Out,'' a deeply autobiographical novel that she worked on in secret from her husband, who belittled her writing. After she sold the book to a prestigious publishing house, Gallimard, her husband was incensed that she had concealed the project, pretending that she was working on her Ph.D. thesis. The marriage unraveled shortly after the publication of her third book, ''A Frozen Woman,'' in 1981, which explored her discomfort with marriage and motherhood. After their divorce, Ernaux never remarried, and said she preferred the freedom of living alone.

She found broad commercial success in France in 1992, when she released ''Simple Passion,'' a book that detailed her affair with a married foreign diplomat. It incensed social conservatives for its unapologetic depiction of female desire, but struck a chord with readers for its frank portrayal of sexual longing without moral approbation. The book sold 200,000 copies in its first two months.

''Men and women confided in me, told me they wish they'd written that book,'' Ernaux told The Times in 2020.

Ernaux has frequently examined and re-examined the same events in her life from different angles. Her 2000 memoir, ''Happening,'' is a stark account of her abortion in 1963 as a college student, a pivotal event that she first attempted to address in fiction, with ''Cleaned Out.'' After chronicling her affair with the diplomat in ''Simple Passion,'' she later gave readers an unfiltered glimpse of that relationship when she released her diaries, which includes entries from 1988 too 1990, in a volume titled ''Getting Lost.''

''The almost primitive directness of her voice is bracing,'' the Times critic Dwight Garner wrote in his review of the book. ''It's as if she's carving each sentence onto the surface of a table with a knife.''

It took her decades to write about one of the most agonizing events of her life -- a confusing sexual experience she had in the summer of 1958, when she was 18, which left her feeling ashamed and abandoned, and resulted in depression and an eating disorder. ''I am endowed by shame's vast memory, more detailed and implacable than any other, a gift unique to shame,'' she wrote in that memoir, ''A Girl's Story.''

Scholars, critics and fellow authors have praised her work for the way she connects individual memory to collective experience, particularly for women and for members of the ***working class***. Ernaux also upended assumptions about what literature could be, said the French writer Édouard Louis, the author of ''The End of Eddy.''

''She achieved a hugely important formal revolution in literature, away from metaphors, pretty sentences and characters,'' said Louis, who writes about his own ***working class*** roots. ''Annie Ernaux didn't try to fit into existing definitions of literature, of what is beautiful: She came up with her own.''

While Ernaux has long been celebrated in France, and has been widely translated for decades, she didn't gain much recognition in the English-speaking world until her memoir ''The Years'' was shortlisted for the International Booker Prize in 2019. The book serves both as an account of Ernaux's experience and as a generational memoir of postwar France, and captures the shift toward sexual liberation and consumerism.

''This is an autobiography unlike any you have ever read; you might call it a collective autobiography,'' Edmund White wrote in The New York Times.

Fans of Ernaux say that part of what makes her work so extraordinary is the ordinariness of the experiences she chronicles. She writes about the tedium of marriage and motherhood, the confusion and ambivalence over her first sexual experience, the grinding sadness of watching an elderly parent deteriorate.

''Her tone is remarkably unsentimental, even when she's talking about very difficult material,'' said the writer Francine Prose, who said she's been a reader of Ernaux's work for decades. ''I can't think of anyone quite like her, period. You can't really say what the genre is, it's not autofiction, it's not, strictly speaking, memoir. It's as if she invented her own genre and perfected it.''

Ernaux has long been a favorite for the Nobel Prize, which is given for a writer's entire body of work, and comes with an award of 10 million Swedish krona, or about $911,000. Past winners have included Toni Morrison, J.M. Coetzee and even Bob Dylan.

The Swedish Academy has tried to increase the diversity of considered authors, after facing criticism that, before Thursday's announcement, 95 of the past 118 Nobel laureates were European or North American, and only 16 women.

Anders Olsson, the chair of the academy's Nobel Committee, defended the choice of another European writer, saying at a news conference on Thursday that there had been a dearth of female laureates, and that ''our focus must be on literary quality first of all.''

For Ernaux, memory and personal experience isn't something to be mined and written up once, but something to be constantly revisited and reinterpreted.

''For me, writing was and remains a way to shed light on things that one feels but are unclear,'' she said at the news conference. ''Writing is a path to knowledge.''

Elizabeth A. Harris contributed reporting from New York.Elizabeth A. Harris contributed reporting from New York.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/06/books/annie-ernaux-nobel-prize-literature.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/06/books/annie-ernaux-nobel-prize-literature.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Annie Ernaux's books, starting with ''Cleaned Out'' in 1974, were penetrating looks at her most intimate and ordinary experiences. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ISABELLE ESHRAGHI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** October 7, 2022

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[***As Trial Looms, Trump Plays to a Jury of Millions***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BT1-45D1-DXY4-X00Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 14, 2024 Sunday 17:46 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1834 words

**Byline:** Ben Protess, Jonah E. Bromwich, Maggie Haberman and William K. Rashbaum Ben Protess is an investigative reporter at The Times, writing about public corruption. He has been covering the various criminal investigations into former President Trump and his allies. Jonah E. Bromwich covers criminal justice in New York, with a focus on the Manhattan district attorney&amp;#8217;s office and state criminal courts in Manhattan. Maggie Haberman is a senior political correspondent reporting on the 2024 presidential campaign, down ballot races across the country and the investigations into former President Donald J. Trump. William K. Rashbaum is a senior writer on the Metro desk, where he covers political and municipal corruption, courts, terrorism and law enforcement. He was a part of the team awarded the 2009 Pulitzer Prize for Breaking News.

**Highlight:** Donald J. Trump and his lawyers realize his chances in the courtroom are dicey. He intends to make whatever happens a political triumph.

**Body**

Donald J. Trump and his lawyers realize his chances in the courtroom are dicey. He intends to make whatever happens a political triumph.

The first criminal trial of Donald J. Trump will begin on Monday, and the 45th president thinks he can win — no matter what the jury decides. Mr. Trump will aim to spin any outcome to his benefit and, if convicted, to become the first felon to win the White House.

Manhattan prosecutors, who have accused Mr. Trump of falsifying records to cover up a sex scandal, hold advantages that include a list of insider witnesses and a jury pool drawn from one of the country’s most liberal counties. Mr. Trump and some aides and lawyers privately concede that a jury is unlikely to outright acquit him, according to people with knowledge of the discussions.

So Mr. Trump, the presumptive 2024 Republican nominee, is seeking to write his own reality, telling a story that he believes could pave his return to the White House. He has framed his failed efforts to delay the case as evidence he cannot receive a fair trial, casting himself as a political martyr under attack from the prosecution and the judge.

To pull off an acquittal, he is [*considering testifying*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/nyregion/trump-trial-testify-hush-money-case.html) to personally persuade jurors of his innocence.

It would be a rare and risky move for most defendants. But Mr. Trump is putting his own stamp on the role, attacking the district attorney who brought the case, Alvin L. Bragg, with all the power of his bully pulpit. That behavior and its aftershocks are expected to continue throughout a weekslong trial.

Mr. Trump, 77, is deploying the same tactics that made him the singular political figure of the last decade. Since announcing his first presidential candidacy, he has bulldozed through American life, flattening political and cultural norms as he goes. He stunned the world as the insurgent victor in the 2016 election, was twice impeached as president and pushed democracy to the brink as the incumbent who refused to concede his 2020 election loss.

Now, with jury selection starting on Monday, Mr. Trump will become the first former U.S. president to stand trial on criminal charges. Win or lose, he will be the first presidential candidate whose [*political fate*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/nyregion/trump-trial-testify-hush-money-case.html), before being decided by millions of voters, will be shaped by 12 people in a jury box.

The 34 felonies Mr. Trump is facing, which could carry a four-year prison sentence, have struck a nerve with the former president. While Mr. Trump has spent years reveling in the glow of the White House and his sunny South Florida estate, the trial will be held in a dingy county courtroom. When the former president is there — he is required to be in court, but [*can ask to be excused*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/nyregion/trump-trial-testify-hush-money-case.html) — he will be transported back to the borough and tabloid atmosphere where he made his name.

He established himself as one of the loudest voices in a loud city, gossiping about his love affairs and broadcasting his political opinions. That bombastic style, and his time on “The Apprentice” television show, gave him an immediate following when he became a candidate in 2015. He repeatedly condemned Muslims, insulted a prominent female journalist and a reporter with a physical disability and glorified political violence by saying he would pay the legal fees of supporters who assaulted protesters at his rallies.

“He’s been able to create the age of Trump by becoming the fist smashing into America’s sacred institutions,” the historian Douglas Brinkley said.

He added that while many Democrats hoped the trial would put an end to that, “Trump understands media culture well enough to really believe that ‘as long as other people are talking about me, I win.’”

In the courtroom, however, it has been quite some time since Mr. Trump won a major victory. In this year’s first two months alone, he lost a pair of civil trials in spectacular fashion, leading to an $83 million defamation judgment and a $454 million fraud penalty. In both cases, he took the stand. Both times it went poorly.

The losses hit his wallet and his ego. But they never threatened his freedom, unlike his four criminal cases unfolding in cities up and down the East Coast.

Whether those cases could imperil or aid his presidential campaign is an open question. Of the four, which include charges that he mishandled classified documents and tried to subvert democracy, the sex scandal cover-up case in Manhattan is viewed within Mr. Trump’s campaign as the least damaging. A conviction in any case [*would not prevent him from taking office*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/nyregion/trump-trial-testify-hush-money-case.html).

Still, the Manhattan prosecution presents distinctive threats: For now, it is the only case on track to conclude before Election Day, as Mr. Trump has managed to bog down the others in delays and appeals. And even if Mr. Trump wins back the White House, he could not pardon himself for the Manhattan charges, as he could in the two federal cases he’s facing.

The Manhattan case is also replete with mortifying personal details for Mr. Trump and his family: There’s the porn star who said she had sex with him, the former Trump fixer who paid her off and the tabloid publisher who helped him bury all manner of scurrilous stories.

To adapt his candidacy to the trial, he will essentially bring his presidential campaign to the courthouse. One person familiar with his preliminary plans described weekend events held in strategically important states near New York, including Pennsylvania, where he is holding a rally this weekend. He will conduct radio and television interviews from Trump Tower, where he is expected to stay during the trial, which will be in session every weekday except Wednesday.

Mr. Trump and the Republican Party have made the trial a staple of his campaign fund-raising. One email sent on Friday had the subject line “72 hours until all hell breaks loose!” — ominous language evocative of his social media posts before a pro-Trump mob swarmed the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

Mr. Trump has not since summoned a similar uprising. But the spectacle of the trial is expected to spill into the streets of Lower Manhattan, where protesters, both those who love and defend Mr. Trump and those who hate and want him convicted, will gather behind police barricades as traffic grinds to a halt.

Stephen K. Bannon, the right-wing media host who is Mr. Trump’s former White House chief strategist, will have episodes of his “War Room” show recorded outside the courthouse. The area will be crawling with police officers and the U.S. Secret Service, and, for a few weeks, the general disruption will alter the flow of life on the city’s downtown streets.

The atmosphere will be less raucous and more tense inside the courtroom, under the watchful eye of the presiding trial judge, Juan M. Merchan, who is known for his strict control of proceedings. There, while the Secret Service and much of the press corps remain glued to Mr. Trump’s every move, prosecutors from the Manhattan district attorney’s office will tell the story that they hope will lead the jury to convict Mr. Trump.

Mr. Bragg, the district attorney who has bet his career on the case’s outcome, argues that the payment was Mr. Trump’s original act of election interference. His prosecutors will tell jurors that during the 2016 campaign, Mr. Trump repeatedly tried to kill damaging stories, regardless of whether they were true, and coordinated hush-money payments to three different people who were hawking embarrassing information.

The 34 felony charges of falsifying business records, though, directly relate to only one of those episodes, involving the porn star Stormy Daniels, who said she and Mr. Trump had sex in 2006. When Ms. Daniels looked to sell her story a decade later, Mr. Trump sought to keep it under wraps.

At Mr. Trump’s direction, prosecutors will say, the former fixer, Michael D. Cohen, paid Ms. Daniels $130,000 to keep quiet. After Mr. Trump won the election, the new president reimbursed Mr. Cohen, and his company disguised the purpose of the payments in corporate records, stating they were for a “legal expense.”

In response, Mr. Trump has falsely claimed that Mr. Bragg is following orders from President Biden to prosecute him. He has assailed Mr. Bragg, who is Black and a Democrat, as a “racist” and sought to change the conversation by blaming the district attorney for violent crime in New York City — even though murders and shootings have gone down during Mr. Bragg’s tenure.

At Mr. Bragg’s request, Justice Merchan recently imposed a gag order on Mr. Trump, barring him from attacking witnesses, prosecutors and jurors. After Mr. Trump took aim at Justice Merchan’s daughter, a Democratic political consultant, the judge expanded the gag order to include his own family.

Mr. Trump has pressed the judge to step aside, citing his daughter’s career. Justice Merchan has already rejected one such request, noting that a judicial ethics panel concluded last year that he had no real conflict.

The former president has also taken aim at some of Mr. Bragg’s key witnesses, hurling threats and social media screeds in their direction. Mr. Cohen, in particular, has felt the brunt of the attacks from Mr. Trump, who has sued him, called him a “rat” and referred to him as “death.” Their confrontation in the courtroom, where Mr. Cohen will be the star witness, is expected to be the climactic moment of the trial.

But if Mr. Trump were to take the stand, Mr. Cohen would be quickly overshadowed. The former president is likely to delay a final decision until he knows whether the judge will restrict prosecutors’ efforts to cross-examine him, and until he can assess the performance of his former fixer.

The jurors will be assessing Mr. Cohen, too. If even one does not believe his testimony, the trial could end with a hung jury, a clear victory for the former president. Todd Blanche, the lawyer leading the case, has told Mr. Trump in recent weeks that he can win the trial, people with knowledge of the discussion said.

The case could be won or lost during jury selection, in the next two weeks. The expectation is that many potential jurors will be Manhattan Democrats with animus for Mr. Trump. The former president’s lawyers are hoping to spot sympathizers and will focus on younger Black men and white ***working-class*** men.

But Mr. Trump may struggle even with sympathetic jurors if he chooses to testify. At the civil fraud trial, the judge — who decided that case instead of a jury — was not impressed.

He “rarely responded to the questions asked, and he frequently interjected long, irrelevant speeches,” the judge wrote in his decision, adding, “His refusal to answer the questions directly, or in some cases, at all, severely compromised his credibility.”

PHOTOS: In a Manhattan court on Monday, Donald J. Trump will become the first former U.S. president to stand trial on criminal charges. (POOL PHOTO BY BRENDAN MCDERMID); Mr. Trump has falsely claimed that President Biden ordered Alvin L. Bragg to prosecute him. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVE SANDERS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A20) This article appeared in print on page A1, A20.

**Load-Date:** April 14, 2024

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[***Scores of Public Housing Workers Charged With Bribery***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B8P-R7K1-DXY4-X02B-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 7, 2024 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 16

**Length:** 1252 words

**Byline:** By Jesse McKinley, Mihir Zaveri and Corey Kilgannon

**Body**

Manhattan's federal prosecutor said the number of bribery charges, 70 in all, amounted to a single-day record for the Justice Department.

Federal prosecutors in Manhattan unsealed bribery and extortion charges on Tuesday against 70 current and former employees of the New York City Housing Authority, a sweeping accusation of malfeasance in a troubled organization.

Damian Williams, the U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, said it was the largest number of federal bribery charges the Department of Justice had ever handed out in a single day.

In describing the scheme, Mr. Williams said dozens of employees, including superintendents and assistant superintendents, had taken more than $2 million in bribes from contractors seeking to do work at apartment buildings throughout the city's five boroughs, from Stapleton Houses on Staten Island to Eastchester Gardens in the Bronx.

Prosecutors said that the scheme revealed Tuesday involved small-dollar repairs -- amounting to under $10,000 -- to things like windows and plumbing: deals that do not go through competitive bidding and are meant to quickly address problems in buildings.

More than $13 million in work, however, was wrongly handed out, prosecutors said, with defendants demanding payment to authorize work or to approve it after it was done. The accused employees usually received kickbacks of 10 to 20 percent of the contract value, prosecutors said, though sometimes the payments were higher.

All told, nearly 100 housing developments -- nearly one-third of the authority's properties -- were touched by the scheme, Mr. Williams said, calling it ''classic pay to play.''

''This culture of corruption at NYCHA ends today,'' he said.

After dozens of arrests spanning several states in the early-morning hours, the legal proceedings on Tuesday gave a sense of the scope of the investigation. By midafternoon, several hearings were underway in six courtrooms across five floors of Federal District Court in Manhattan, attended by various agency representatives, defense and government lawyers, and defendants' relatives. The defendants are due back in court in early March.

As the nation's largest public housing authority, NYCHA receives more than $1 billion in federal funding. The agency is run by a board of seven people appointed by the mayor.

Lisa Bova-Hiatt, NYCHA's chief executive, said in a statement that the accused employees had ''put their greed first and violated the trust of our residents, their fellow NYCHA colleagues and all New Yorkers.''

She said the agency was working hard to improve conditions in public housing and had alerted investigators to the suspicious behavior behind some of the charges.

''We will not allow bad actors to disrupt or undermine our achievements,'' she said.

New York's public housing system, with more than 300,000 residents, was once a heralded source of homes for ***working-class*** people. But declining funding from the federal government over the decades has left the agency in need of an estimated $78 billion worth of repairs.

Tenants regularly lodge complaints about aging buildings, rodents, leaky pipes and broken elevators across NYCHA's more than 300 developments. Still, in a city starved for affordable housing, a NYCHA apartment is coveted: Hundreds of thousands of people crowd waiting lists.

The agency is grasping for ways to improve the standard of living. A plan to shift some developments over to private management and to run others under a new public benefit corporation could unlock billions of dollars from a new stream of federal housing aid.

But in addition to financial problems and disrepair, the agency has routinely faced accusations of corruption and mismanagement. In 2017, investigators found that NYCHA had submitted false paperwork to the federal government saying it had conducted inspections of lead paint in apartments.

In 2019, as part of a settlement with federal prosecutors, the city accepted the appointment of a federal monitor to scrutinize NYCHA's progress dealing with some of its most serious problems, including lead, mold and heating failures.

In a statement on Tuesday, the monitor, Bart M. Schwartz, said that the arrests ''point to the need for continued systemic changes to NYCHA's culture and for greater accountability, oversight and enforcement.''

''This is a step in the right direction reminding NYCHA's employees and vendors that they cannot continue to take advantage of the residents,'' he said.

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Investors and news organizations have repeatedly noted the potential for malfeasance in relation to the small-dollar contracts, which are also known as ''micro-purchasing.'' In 2019, the news website The City investigated how low-level managers of developments had handed out $250 million in contracts to a small group of vendors.

In September 2021, nine contractors were indicted on bribery charges in connection with micro-purchasing schemes.

Margaret Garnett, the former commissioner of the city's Department of Investigation, said at the time that micro-purchasing ''has a laudable goal -- to give development superintendents the flexibility to get small repairs made quickly, without a complex bidding and procurement process.''

But, she added, it is ''highly vulnerable to fraud and corruption, as this investigation shows.''

In 476 pages of complaints, prosecutors outlined in painstaking detail the small-bore corruption, which, in one case, also involved destruction of evidence -- deleted text messages -- and making false statements to investigators. In another case, prosecutors said cash bribes from a developer were left in a drawer at a building rather than being handed directly to the defendant.

In yet another case, at the Vladeck Houses on Manhattan's Lower East Side, an assistant superintendent was straightforward about his expectations, agreeing to award a contract with a special stipulation.

''You need to take care of me,'' the assistant superintendent said, according to the complaint. Soon thereafter, the contractor paid him $1,000 in cash in the basement of one of the development's buildings.

Jocelyn Strauber, the city's investigations commissioner, said on Tuesday that her agency had suggested to NYCHA officials that they make reforms to the micro-purchasing process, noting that misconduct around these smaller repairs ''drove up the cost of this type of work and diverted valuable public funds away from public housing and into the pockets of corrupt NYCHA staff.''

Indeed, Mr. Williams said that the practice of shaking down contractors had become ''business as usual'' at many NYCHA buildings and asked that contractors who had been extorted come forward. He also said that the work of rooting out corruption in the city's public housing would continue.

''NYCHA residents deserve better,'' Mr. Williams said, adding, ''We are not done.''

Olivia Bensimon contributed reporting.

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Damian Williams, Manhattan's federal prosecutor, said the scheme involved nearly 100 buildings. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVE SANDERS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A16.

**Load-Date:** February 8, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Scores of N.Y. Public Housing Workers Charged in Record Corruption Case***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B8H-XKY1-DXY4-X054-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 6, 2024 Tuesday 11:59 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1267 words

**Highlight:** Manhattan’s federal prosecutor said the number of bribery charges, 70 in all, amounted to a single-day record for the Justice Department.

**Body**

Manhattan’s federal prosecutor said the number of bribery charges, 70 in all, amounted to a single-day record for the Justice Department.

Federal prosecutors in Manhattan unsealed bribery and extortion charges on Tuesday against 70 current and former employees of the New York City Housing Authority, a sweeping accusation of malfeasance in a troubled organization.

Damian Williams, the U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, said it was the largest number of federal bribery charges the Department of Justice had ever handed out in a single day.

In describing the scheme, Mr. Williams said dozens of employees, including superintendents and assistant superintendents, had taken more than $2 million in bribes from contractors seeking to do work at apartment buildings throughout the city’s five boroughs, from [*Stapleton Houses*](https://www.nyc.gov/assets/nycha/downloads/pdf/Stapleton.pdf) on Staten Island to [*Eastchester Gardens*](https://www.nyc.gov/assets/nycha/downloads/pdf/Eastchester%20Gardens.pdf) in the Bronx.

Prosecutors said that the scheme revealed Tuesday involved small-dollar repairs — amounting to under $10,000 — to things like windows and plumbing: deals that do not go through competitive bidding and are meant to quickly address problems in buildings.

More than $13 million in work, however, was wrongly handed out, prosecutors said, with defendants demanding payment to authorize work or to approve it after it was done. The accused employees usually received kickbacks of 10 to 20 percent of the contract value, prosecutors said, though sometimes the payments were higher.

All told, nearly 100 housing developments — nearly one-third of the authority’s properties — were touched by the scheme, Mr. Williams said, calling it “classic pay to play.”

“This culture of corruption at NYCHA ends today,” he said.

After dozens of arrests spanning several states in the early-morning hours, the legal proceedings on Tuesday gave a sense of the scope of the investigation. By midafternoon, several hearings were underway in six courtrooms across five floors of Federal District Court in Manhattan, attended by various agency representatives, defense and government lawyers, and defendants’ relatives. The defendants are due back in court in early March.

As the nation’s largest public housing authority, NYCHA receives more than $1 billion in federal funding. The agency is run by a board of seven people appointed by the mayor.

Lisa Bova-Hiatt, NYCHA’s chief executive, said in a statement that the accused employees had “put their greed first and violated the trust of our residents, their fellow NYCHA colleagues and all New Yorkers.”

She said the agency was working hard to improve conditions in public housing and had alerted investigators to the suspicious behavior behind some of the charges.

“We will not allow bad actors to disrupt or undermine our achievements,” she said.

New York’s public housing system, with more than 300,000 residents, was once a [*heralded*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/06/25/nyregion/new-york-city-public-housing-history.html) source of homes for ***working-class*** people. But declining funding from the federal government over the decades has left the agency in need of an estimated [*$78 billion*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/12/nyregion/nyc-housing-authority-nycha.html) worth of repairs.

Tenants regularly lodge complaints about aging buildings, rodents, leaky pipes and broken elevators across NYCHA’s more than 300 developments. Still, in a city starved for affordable housing, a NYCHA apartment is coveted: Hundreds of thousands of people crowd waiting lists.

The agency is grasping for ways to improve the standard of living. A plan to [*shift some developments over*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/07/nyregion/nycha-public-housing-vote.html) to private management and to run others under a new public benefit corporation could unlock billions of dollars from a new stream of federal housing aid.

But in addition to financial problems and disrepair, the agency has routinely faced accusations of [*corruption and mismanagement*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/10/nyregion/nycha-scandals-chairwoman-resigns.html). In 2017, [*investigators found*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/14/nyregion/nyc-lead-paint-inspections.html) that NYCHA had submitted false paperwork to the federal government saying it had conducted inspections of lead paint in apartments.

In 2019, as part of a settlement with federal prosecutors, the city accepted the appointment of a federal monitor to scrutinize NYCHA’s progress dealing with some of its most serious problems, including lead, mold and heating failures.

In a statement on Tuesday, the monitor, Bart M. Schwartz, said that the arrests “point to the need for continued systemic changes to NYCHA’s culture and for greater accountability, oversight and enforcement.”

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Mr. Jones expressed concern about how the corruption may affect the buildings’ condition and the toll that could take on the tenants. “With the cost of living in New York now, and this neighborhood changing, we are increasingly at risk here,” he said.

Investors and news organizations have [*repeatedly*](https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdny/pr/nycha-superintendents-sentenced-prison-accepting-bribes) noted the potential for malfeasance in relation to the small-dollar contracts, which are also known as “micro-purchasing.” In 2019, the news website The City [*investigated how low-level managers*](https://www.thecity.nyc/2019/10/07/nycha-s-250-million-no-bid-and-sometimes-no-work-repair-jobs/) of developments had handed out $250 million in contracts to a small group of vendors.

In September 2021, nine contractors were indicted on bribery charges in connection with micro-purchasing schemes.

Margaret Garnett, the former commissioner of the city’s Department of Investigation, [*said at the time that*](https://www.nyc.gov/assets/doi/press-releases/2021/September/14CommRemarksPresser_9202021.pdf) micro-purchasing “has a laudable goal — to give development superintendents the flexibility to get small repairs made quickly, without a complex bidding and procurement process.”

But, she added, it is “highly vulnerable to fraud and corruption, as this investigation shows.”

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In yet another case, at the [*Vladeck Houses*](https://www.nyc.gov/assets/nycha/downloads/pdf/Vladeck.pdf) on Manhattan’s Lower East Side, an assistant superintendent was straightforward about his expectations, agreeing to award a contract with a special stipulation.

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Indeed, Mr. Williams said that the practice of shaking down contractors had become “business as usual” at many NYCHA buildings and asked that contractors who had been extorted come forward. He also said that the work of rooting out corruption in the city’s public housing would continue.

“NYCHA residents deserve better,” Mr. Williams said, adding, “We are not done.”

Olivia Bensimon contributed reporting.

PHOTO: Damian Williams, Manhattan’s federal prosecutor, said the scheme involved nearly 100 buildings. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVE SANDERS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A16.

**Load-Date:** February 7, 2024

**End of Document**



[***How to Restage ‘Cabaret’? Don’t Treat It Like a Classic.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BN5-GBS1-DXY4-X2H4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 27, 2024 Wednesday 13:14 EST

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**Section:** THEATER

**Length:** 1632 words

**Byline:** Douglas Greenwood

**Highlight:** The British director Rebecca Frecknall’s immersive revival of the Kander and Ebb musical was a hit in London. This spring, she’s bringing it to Broadway.

**Body**

When Rebecca Frecknall was a child, one of her favorite things to watch was a televised 1993 London revival of “Cabaret,” which her father had recorded on VHS tape. As the British theater director grew up, she hoped that one day she would stage a version of the musical, in which a writer falls in love with an exuberant and wayward cabaret performer in Weimar-era Germany.

In early March, in a Midtown rehearsal room, Frecknall, 37, was preparing to do just that. Her “Cabaret,” which opens in previews at the August Wilson Theater on April 1, is a transfer from London’s West End, where it opened in 2021 to critical acclaim. The show [*won seven Olivier Awards*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/10/theater/olivier-awards-winners-cabaret-eddie-redmayne.html), the British equivalent to the Tonys.

“I always wanted to direct ‘Cabaret’,” Frecknall said later in an interview. “I just never thought I’d get the rights to it.” Her opportunity came when Eddie Redmayne — a producer on the show who played the Emcee in London, and will reprise the part on Broadway — asked her in 2019 to be part of a bid for a revival.

At first it seemed like “a pipe dream,” Redmayne said, but after years of wrangling, they pulled it off. For the London show, the Playhouse Theater was reconfigured to reflect the musical’s debauched setting, transforming it into the Kit Kat Club, with cabaret tables and scantily clad dancers and musicians roaming the foyer and auditorium. The August Wilson Theater is getting a similar treatment, Frecknall said. To honor the playhouse’s namesake, the production designer Tom Scutt commissioned a Black artist, Jonathan Lyndon Chase, to paint murals in the reconfigured lobby, with theatergoers now entering via an alleyway off 52nd Street.

Shortly before the show opened in London, Frecknall’s father died. That recorded revival, directed by Sam Mendes, was one of his favorites, and Frecknall loved it so much that, as she grew up and studied theater, she chose never to see the show onstage.

That has perhaps helped her find her own way with the show. In London, where Frecknall has been mounting notable productions since 2018, she has earned a reputation for refreshing the classics: “[*A Streetcar Named Desire*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/10/theater/olivier-awards-winners-cabaret-eddie-redmayne.html),” “[*Three Sisters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/10/theater/olivier-awards-winners-cabaret-eddie-redmayne.html)” and “[*Romeo and Juliet.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/10/theater/olivier-awards-winners-cabaret-eddie-redmayne.html)” But she is not afraid to disregard Chekhov’s stage directions or cut key scenes from Shakespeare. For her recent show “Julie” at the International Theater Amsterdam, she adapted Strindberg’s “Miss Julie” herself, changing the setting from a manor house to a modern, stainless-steel kitchen. Instead of a gown, her Julie wore a gold sequined cocktail dress.

Ivo van Hove, the Tony-award winning director who commissioned “Julie” for his Amsterdam playhouse, said he admired Frecknall for her “daring to transpose those sacred texts to the present,” adding that she taught her actors to “speak the language of the body, not just the language of words.”

Dance sequences are a hallmark of her shows, often devised by Frecknall herself. “I sort of say it flippantly that I’d like to be a choreographer,” she said. “There’s something for me about bodies and movement that feels so good.”

In her “Romeo and Juliet,” the knife fights between Montagues and Capulets became energetic, ballet-like episodes. For “Streetcar,” at the same theater, her ensemble moved as if guided by the crashing cymbals of a live drummer. Her influences were rooted more in dance than drama, she said: “I would be Pina Bausch if I could.”

Frecknall’s interest in movement started with childhood dance classes that she took while growing up in Warboys, a small village near Cambridge, England. There, she said, “everybody knew each other,” and “no one went to the theater.” Her family was the exception.

Her father, Paul Frecknall, had been obsessed with the stage since he was a boy, but a theater career was out of the question for the ***working-class*** lad, Frecknall said. It “wasn’t really something to pursue — you got a job that paid something,” she added. Instead, he channeled his passion into amateur dramatics, and, along with his wife Kate, joined a community theater group.

Frecknall’s parents nurtured her interest in the arts. She took flute and dance lessons and listened to cast albums from her father’s CD collection. Occasionally, she went with her father to London to see shows on the West End. (The first time she saw “Cats,” she said, she was 8 years old and so scared she cried.)

She also enjoyed sorting through her father’s theater memorabilia. Among his playbill collection, Frecknall discovered the program for a London production of Peter Shaffer’s “Equus.” Her curiosity was piqued, and her father gave her the script.

“It changed my life,” Frecknall said. Having only seen musicals, she hadn’t considered that theater could be a vehicle for moral or political questions. “There were ideas in that play that were so much bigger,” she added. “I didn’t know theater could do that.”

After graduating high school, Frecknall enrolled to study drama at Goldsmiths College in London. One of her teachers there, Cass Fleming recalled that she was “curious and sort of brave,” and that, even then, she was making work “that sat between directing and choreographing.” After postgraduate study at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art, she worked as an assistant director at esteemed London institutions, including the Young Vic and the National Theatre.

It was while working on a 2012 staging of “The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe” that Frecknall met Rupert Goold, the Tony-nominated director who now runs the Almeida, an off-West End venue known for its cutting-edge approach. “Directing tends to breed a certain level of overconfidence,” Goold said, but with Frecknall, it “just didn’t feel like that. She seemed quiet, kind of good-natured, and a bit anxious.” He added that he would “be lying if I said I knew from that first week that we had a major director on our hands.”

In 2016, after assisting directors for nearly seven years, Frecknall had her directorial debut: a more traditional take on “Miss Julie” at a regional theater. Two years later, she joined the Almeida’s resident director program. That year, Goold commissioned her production of Williams’s rarely staged “Summer and Smoke,” in which actors performed in a pit of dirt surrounded by pianos that the ensemble sporadically played. It won Frecknall her first Olivier.

The actor Patsy Ferran, who played the lead in “Summer and Smoke” and has worked with Frecknall on two other shows, said rehearsing with the director was liberating. “You can think you’ve found your limit,” Ferran said, but Frecknall always pushed performers beyond it, drawing better performances out of them.

Rehearsals usually began with warm-up games, she said, and though Frecknall is serious about her work, “the process isn’t.” Both Ferran and Paul Mescal, who played Stanley Kowalski in Frecknall’s “Streetcar,” compared the director’s rehearsal rooms to “playgrounds.”

Rehearsals were the part of a production Frecknall said she enjoyed the most. “I don’t like having a show on,” she added. “I do always have a slight, low level of anxiety around it,” she said.

Mescal, who won an Olivier for his “Streetcar” performance, said, “Rebecca struggles to enjoy the finished product because she’s always searching for something greater.” But that was also “why her work is so brilliant and so commanding,” he added. “Because she never settles.”

“Cabaret” chronicles the insular nightclub life of its characters while Nazism thrives around them, suggesting that their apathy helped spread it. During rehearsals this month, Frecknall invited Joshua Stanton, a rabbi, and Betsy L. Billard, a queer Jewish woman, into the studio for a workshop, giving the cast a chance to contemplate the musical’s historical message.

As part of that process, Redmayne said, “Every single person in that cast had a conversation about our own heritage.” Frecknall “knows her responsibility to the story,” he added, which is to help the cast “bring their own stories to the piece.”

Before the “Cabaret” transfer was announced, Frecknall had signed on to direct another musical on Broadway: an adaptation of “The Great Gatsby” with music by Florence Welch, of Florence and the Machine. Frecknall didn’t have time for both, she said, though it was “probably the best thing” for “Gatsby,” a show based on such an important American text, that it would now be directed by an American, Rachel Chavkin.

Frecknall said she was at a point in her career where she could afford to be selective, and now turns down work that doesn’t feel right. “I never feel like I’m going to work to fund my life. My work is my life,” she said. “I’m really low maintenance,” she added. “I’m single and don’t have dependents. I just have to feed my cat.”

Once “Cabaret” opens here, she plans to return to London and take a break for the summer, she said: By then, she will have spent six months working on three productions back-to-back. But she was already looking forward, and said that she would love to make a film one day or direct another stage production from her dad’s VHS collection: Stephen Sondheim’s “Company.”

Getting a musical off the ground is expensive and difficult, she said — like a “big fish in a stream” that “very few people catch” — and she knew “Cabaret” might be her one chance.

But van Hove wasn’t quite so worried. “She is one of those directors who will stay with us for a long time,” he said.

PHOTOS: Rebecca Frecknall, top, has earned a reputation for refreshing the classics. She recently ran through a tech rehearsal of “Cabaret” at the August Wilson Theater with, above, Thomas Recktenwald and, at left from left, Eddie Redmayne, Ato Blankson-Wood and Clifford Bradshaw. Redmayne, above left, will reprise his role of Emcee on Broadway. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY AMIR HAMJA/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page AR4.

**Load-Date:** March 31, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Reflections on the E. Jean Carroll Verdict***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B8G-RBK1-JBG3-6014-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 6, 2024 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 19; LETTERS

**Length:** 1232 words

**Body**

To the Editor:

Jessica Bennett's compelling essay ''The Audacity of E. Jean Carroll'' (Opinion, Feb. 4) vividly captures the events in that New York courtroom last month.

It is truly astonishing to me, even in the wake of the verdict, that the former president continues to command a substantial base of support, especially among women of all ages. I find it perplexing how women of integrity can seemingly compartmentalize his abhorrent behavior and still cast their ballots for a notorious womanizer.

What's even more disturbing is his public trashing, maligning and dehumanizing of anyone who dares to hold him accountable. Remarkably, the women who support him believe his lies, many asserting that his policies trump his behavior.

Additionally, the numerous indictments and upcoming trials seem to, unbelievably, only bolster his popularity. The prospect of his re-election as president of the United States is not just disconcerting; it's also a chilling reminder of the challenges we face as a divided nation.

God help us all!

(Rabbi) Reuven H. TaffSacramento

To the Editor:

Like E. Jean Carroll, I'm a writer. I was also sexually assaulted. Not once, but twice.

Like E. Jean, I kept silent for years. Fifty to be exact.

I'm a member of the silent generation. I spent my career writing nonfiction and historical fiction, most recently ''Sisters at War,'' about brave women who fought back against the rape and brutality of the SS in wartime Paris.

Writing my book inspired me to come forward about my own story. The perpetrators who assaulted me still haunt me. The first was an unknown assailant in Italy; the second was date rape and kidnapping in graduate school.

I will soon celebrate 55 years since I graduated from the university. I'm on a committee to recreate the college experience in the 1960s. When I told the event coordinator my story, she suggested that I educate incoming students about date rape and what happened to me.

I can't bring the men who hurt me to justice like E. Jean, but I can talk about it. After half a century, I can say the word ''rape'' and move on. Educate a new generation of young women.

And that is my win.

Jina BacarrIrvine, Calif.

To the Editor:

Re ''Trump's Libel Case Exposes the Law's Limits,'' by RonNell Andersen Jones (Opinion guest essay, Jan. 30):

It's true that even the $83.3 million in damages awarded against Donald Trump may not deter him from defaming E. Jean Carroll again. As Ms. Jones notes, ''the incentives to serve up lies for politics or profit'' may now be so strong that damages awards no longer suffice to deter repeat offenders.

But Ms. Jones overlooks an additional remedy that could be far more effective in stopping persistent defamers: an injunction against continued defamation. Ruby Freeman and Shaye Moss, the Georgia election workers who won a $148 million award against Rudolph Giuliani, have sought just this type of remedy.

If Mr. Giuliani repeated his defamatory statements after the issuance of such an injunction, he would face the risk of a contempt order and some time in prison. That would give him a powerful incentive to think long and hard before he defames them again.

Stuart AltschulerNew YorkThe writer is a lawyer.

The U.S., Iran and the Risks of War

To the Editor:

Re ''As U.S. Acts, Biden Deems Iran Unlikely to Shoot Back,'' by David E. Sanger and Farnaz Fassihi (news analysis, Feb. 4):

Mr. Sanger and Ms. Fassihi offer a very nuanced and thorough prognosis for what may ensue as a result of the American airstrikes on Iran-linked targets in Syria and Iraq.

They write that the expectation in Washington and among its allies is that the Iranians will not respond, in order to avoid a wider war. In my mind, this raises a critical question: When does military action intended to deter aggression become a tripwire for all-out war?

I am especially concerned that this is taking place in an election year, as the article notes.

For Western minds to try to project how countries in the Middle East will respond is a gamble that could result in all-out war, and not just in the Middle East. Tensions are rising between the U.S. and China over Taiwan, while the war between Ukraine and Russia still has unpredictable results.

John A. ViterittiLaurel, N.Y.

Alternatives to Biden

To the Editor:

''The Democratic Party Is Having an 'Identity Crisis,''' by Ezra Klein (column, Feb. 4):

Yes, the Democratic Party has an image of being the party of the ***working class***, but is now finding its voters more college-educated and split between those wanting progressive change and those wanting the status quo.

But if President Biden seems too old to run for re-election, as many Democrats feel, the question remains, who better in the party to be nominated? Not Vice President Kamala Harris, many also feel. Perhaps the governor of Michigan, Gretchen Whitmer? Perhaps a Democratic senator from the Midwest?

While there are many able Democrats, both progressive and centrist, there are no obvious choices to run for president with national appeal. Why is this so? Because the Democratic leadership has failed to train up its next generation of leaders.

James BerkmanBoston

Fighting Back at Penn

To the Editor:

Re ''At Penn, President's Exit Fails to Quell Turmoil'' (news article, Jan. 30):

I am extremely happy to see that professors at the University of Pennsylvania have reacted strongly to a document sent by the billionaire Marc Rowan to, in essence, create a more conservative campus.

With the recent Republican attacks on the presidents of Harvard, M.I.T. and Penn, the hostile government takeover of New College of Florida, the banning of D.E.I. initiatives, the elimination of sociology as a core course in Florida's public universities, and so on, it's about time that professors are beginning to fight back.

Moreover, as professors, we should not let university donors or politicians dictate to us about our profession. We are certainly capable of running our universities free of interference from wealthy individuals and biased politicians who pander to their base.

To my colleagues at Penn, I say: Together we stand, divided we fall, and keep up the good fight.

Michael HadjiargyrouCenterport, N.Y.The writer is a professor of biological and chemical sciences at the New York Institute of Technology.

Pets in Cold Weather

To the Editor:

Re ''How to Protect Pets From Cold Weather'' (Here to Help, Jan. 27):

Thank you for sharing information about protecting animal companions during cold weather.

I hope that readers will also look out for dogs whose owners have left them chained or penned outside. These animals are no better equipped to survive freezing temperatures than humans are, and they commonly suffer from frostbite and hypothermia. Some die from exposure.

Good Samaritans who see dogs kept outside for long periods without adequate shelter from the elements (at least a sturdy doghouse insulated with dry straw that has a covered entrance to block the wind) should note the animal's exact location and alert local law-enforcement authorities immediately.

If officers don't respond, they should call PETA. Anyone who leaves animals outside to suffer in severe weather may face criminal charges.

Kristin RickmanNorfolk, Va.The writer is the director of the emergency response team at PETA, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/05/opinion/e-jean-carroll-trump-verdict.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/05/opinion/e-jean-carroll-trump-verdict.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A19.

**Load-Date:** February 6, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Justices Allow School to Keep Diversity Policy***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BCP-9901-JBG3-60K6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 21, 2024 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1326 words

**Byline:** By Adam Liptak

**Body**

The decision, along with an order this month declining to block West Point's admissions program, suggests that most justices are not eager to immediately explore the limits of its ruling from June.

The Supreme Court cleared the way on Tuesday for the use of admissions criteria intended to diversify the student body at an elite public high school in Virginia, declining to revisit the role race may play in admissions months after it sharply curtailed affirmative action programs in higher education.

In turning down a challenge to a policy that eliminated standardized tests, the court gave no reasons, as is its custom in issuing such orders. Justice Samuel A. Alito Jr. issued a dissent, joined by Justice Clarence Thomas, that was harshly critical of an appeals court's ruling in the case upholding the new criteria and rejecting the challengers' argument that they unlawfully disadvantaged Asian Americans.

The Supreme Court struck down race-conscious admissions programs at Harvard and the University of North Carolina in June but left open the constitutionality of admissions standards like the ones in Virginia that do not directly account for race in trying to diversify enrollment.

The court's decision not to take up the case from Virginia, along with an order this month declining to block West Point's race-conscious admissions program, suggests that most of the justices are not eager to take immediate steps to explore the limits of its ruling from June. It takes four votes to grant review, for instance, and the Virginia case failed to clear that bar.

In his dissent on Tuesday, Justice Alito expressed frustration.

The Supreme Court's ''willingness to swallow the aberrant decision below is hard to understand,'' Justice Alito wrote. ''We should wipe the decision off the books, and because the court refuses to do so, I must respectfully dissent.''

The revisions to the Virginia admissions program followed protests over the 2020 murder of George Floyd. Amid concerns about how few Black and Hispanic students attended the school, one of the country's top public high schools, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology in Alexandria, Va., adopted what it said were race-neutral admissions standards. The school board did away with a rigorous entrance examination and prioritized admission to the top students from each public middle school in the area rather than the top applicants from any school.

Admissions officers were also instructed to consider ''experience factors,'' such as whether students were poor, learning English or attending a middle school that was ''historically underrepresented.'' But the officers were not told the race, sex or name of any applicant.

A group of parents, many of them Asian American, objected to the plan and, calling themselves the Coalition for T.J., sued to stop it.

Joshua Thompson, a lawyer with the Pacific Legal Foundation, a libertarian law group representing the parents' group, expressed disappointment that the justices had declined to intervene.

''Discrimination against students based on their race is not only ethically wrong but also a clear violation of the Constitution's guarantee of equal protection,'' he said in a statement.

Karl Frisch, the chair of the Fairfax County School Board, said he welcomed the conclusion of a yearslong litigation.

''We have long believed that the new admissions process is both constitutional and in the best interest of all of our students,'' he said in a statement. ''It guarantees that all qualified students from all neighborhoods in Fairfax County have a fair shot at attending this exceptional high school.''

Richard D. Kahlenberg, a proponent of class-conscious affirmative action, said the court had struck the right balance, handing a victory to ''poor and ***working-class*** students of all races.''

''This is an important signal that selective high schools and colleges and universities should feel confident in using race-neutral strategies to achieve diversity,'' he said in a statement.

The Supreme Court's action let stand a ruling from a divided three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, in Richmond, Va., which declared in May that Thomas Jefferson did not discriminate in its admissions. The Pacific Legal Foundation asked the Supreme Court to hear their appeal, saying the new admissions plan was ''intentionally designed to achieve the same results as overt racial discrimination.''

The Supreme Court's decision in June in Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard, the coalition's petition said, ''might mean little if schools could accomplish the same discriminatory result through race-neutral proxies.'' The petition noted that Chief Justice John. G. Roberts Jr.'s majority opinion, quoting an earlier ruling, had said that ''what cannot be done directly cannot be done indirectly.''

Lawyers for the school board responded that the new admissions criteria had nothing to do with race and were focused instead on removing socioeconomic and geographic barriers.

''The new policy is both race neutral and race blind,'' the school board's brief said. ''It was not designed to produce, and did not in fact produce, a student population that approximates the racial demographics of Fairfax County or any other predetermined racial balance.''

After the changes went into effect in 2021, the percentage of Asian American students offered admission dropped to 54 percent from 73 percent. The percentage of Black students grew to 8 percent from no more than 2 percent; the percentage of Hispanic students grew to 11 percent from 3 percent; and the percentage of white students grew to 22 percent from 18 percent.

In the Fairfax County school system in 2020, about 37 percent of students were white, 27 percent were Hispanic, 20 percent were Asian and 10 percent were Black.

Writing for the majority in the appeals court's decision in May, Judge Robert B. King, who was appointed by President Bill Clinton, said the before and after numbers were not the right place to start. That would, he said, quoting from the school board's brief, turn ''the previous status quo into an immutable quota.''

He added that the school had a legitimate interest in ''expanding the array of student backgrounds.''

Justice Alito, in dissent on Tuesday, questioned that reasoning. ''What the Fourth Circuit majority held, in essence, is that intentional racial discrimination is constitutional so long as it is not too severe,'' Justice Alito wrote. ''This reasoning is indefensible, and it cries out for correction.''

He elaborated, quoting from an earlier decision. ''Even though the new policy bore 'more heavily' on Asian American applicants (because it diminished their chances of admission while improving the chances of every other racial group), the panel majority held that there was no disparate impact because they were still overrepresented in the T.J. student body,'' Justice Alito wrote.

He added: ''That is a clearly mistaken understanding of what it means for a law or policy to have a disparate effect on the members of a particular racial or ethnic group.''

In dissent in the Fourth Circuit, Judge Allison J. Rushing, who was appointed by President Donald J. Trump, made a similar point. The majority, she wrote, had refused ''to look past the policy's neutral varnish'' and consider instead ''an undisputed racial motivation and an undeniable racial result.''

The decision reversed a 2022 ruling by Judge Claude M. Hilton of the Federal District Court in Alexandria, who found that the changes made by the school board had disproportionately burdened Asian American students and were ''racially motivated.''

''It is clear that Asian American students are disproportionately harmed by the board's decision to overhaul T.J. admissions,'' Judge Hilton wrote. ''Currently and in the future, Asian American applicants are disproportionately deprived of a level playing field.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/20/us/supreme-court-race-school-admissions.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/20/us/supreme-court-race-school-admissions.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: A group of parents tried to stop the admissions rules at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology in Alexandria, Va. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KENNY HOLSTON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A15) This article appeared in print on page A1, A15.

**Load-Date:** February 21, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Stony Brook to Get $500 Million, Thanks to Ex-Professor and Alumna***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68CC-VW71-JBG3-64VP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 2, 2023 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 698 words

**Byline:** By Liam Stack

**Body**

Gifts of that size are rare for universities. They're even rarer for a public institution like Stony Brook, part of New York's state university system.

Stony Brook University, a public school on Long Island, received a donation of $500 million on Thursday from a foundation formed by an alumnus and a former faculty member, making it the recipient of one of the largest gifts to a university in American history.

The donation, which will go toward the school's endowment, will also trigger another $200 million injection of public funds under a donation matching program passed as part of the New York State budget in April. The school said it hopes the gift will spur other donations that could amount to hundreds of millions of dollars.

Gifts of that size are rare for universities, and especially so for public institutions like Stony Brook, which is one of the flagship schools of the State University of New York. The donation plus the state matching funds amount to nearly twice the amount of Stony Brook's current endowment of $370 million, the university president, Maurie McInnis, said in an interview.

The donation was made by the Simons Foundation, which was formed in 1994 by Jim Simons, a former Stony Brook math professor who later made billions as a hedge fund manager, and his wife Marilyn Simons, who received her bachelor's degree and doctorate at Stony Brook.

The university has long been known as an engine of social mobility, enrolling students from poor and ***working class*** backgrounds and propelling many of them to the middle and upper classes of American life. But that role has been challenged in recent years by rising tuition costs at Stony Brook and across the country.

Ms. McInnis said more than 50 percent of Stony Brook students had their tuition fully covered by financial aid and state grants, but that many struggled with the ancillary costs of attending university.

''What our students struggle with are all the other costs related to going to college whether that is trying to afford room and board, or if they are commuters it can be commuting costs, it can be textbook costs,'' she said. ''Investing in our students is one of the ways that we might expend this money in the future.''

But the effects of the gift will not be immediate, she cautioned. Stony Brook will receive the full $500 million sum over the course of seven years. It will also aim to raise a further $200 million from other donors in the next three years to qualify for the maximum amount of state matching funds.

Mr. and Mrs. Simons have made other large gifts to Stony Brook in the past that, when combined with the gift on Thursday, amount to roughly $1.2 billion, said Ms. McInnis. She said Mr. Simons joined the faculty in 1968, when the university was only five years old.

In an interview on Wednesday, Mr. and Mrs. Simons said the state's new endowment matching program convinced them to make a large unrestricted gift now. They also said the $500 million donation was an opportunity to express their gratitude to the university, which Mrs. Simons said ''was transformative in my life.''

She grew up in a ***working class*** household, graduated from the university in 1974, and went on to earn a Ph.D. in economics. She said she hoped the gift would help people from ''underserved communities'' to thrive at the school.

''I was really grateful when the opportunity opened up for me to attend Stony Brook for college,'' Mrs. Simons said. ''I commuted to the school with my brother and my cousin. They went off to lay brick and I went to my calculus class.''

Mr. Simons, who has appeared several times on Forbes ranking of the wealthiest people in the world, is a prominent mathematician in addition to his work as a hedge fund manager. He said he formulated one of his most widely-cited mathematical innovations, the Chern-Simons form, while teaching at the university.

That innovation, which he called ''probably my best idea,'' has been used by physicists to contribute to the development of quantum field theory. He also met his wife during his time at the school.

''All of that was because I worked at Stony Brook,'' he said. ''So I am very fond of the university.''

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: The donation was made by the Simons Foundation, formed by Jim Simons, a former Stony Brook math professor who later made billions as a hedge fund manager, and his wife Marilyn Simons, who received her bachelor's and doctorate there. 9PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHNNY MILANO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A17.

**Load-Date:** June 3, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Many Americans Believe the Economy Is Rigged; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BCP-NDS1-JBG3-616N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 21, 2024 Wednesday 11:15 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1322 words

**Byline:** Katherine J. Cramer and Jonathan D. Cohen

**Highlight:** The economy is driven by greed and shot with uncertainty. That’s what Americans said in more than 30 small-group discussions in the past two years.

**Body**

When asked what drives the economy, many Americans have a simple, single answer that comes to mind immediately: “greed.” They believe the rich and powerful have designed the economy to benefit themselves and have left others with too little or with nothing at all.

We know Americans feel this way because we asked them. Over the past two years, as part of [*a project*](https://www.amacad.org/economy) with the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, we and a team of people conducted over 30 small-group conversations with Americans from almost every corner of the country. While national indicators may suggest that the economy is strong, the Americans we listened to are mostly not thriving. They do not see the economy as nourishing or supporting them. Instead, they tend to see it as an obstacle, a set of external forces out of their control that nonetheless seems to hold sway over their lives.

Take the perceived prevalence of greed. This is hardly a new feeling, but it has been exacerbated recently by inflation and higher housing costs. Americans experience these phenomena not as abstract concepts or political talking points but rather as grocery stores and landlords demanding more money.

[*Income inequality*](https://www.amacad.org/economy) has been in decline over the last few years. But try explaining that to someone struggling to pay the rent. “I just feel like the underdog can’t get ahead, and it’s all about greed and profit,” one Kentucky participant noted. It is not necessarily the actual distribution of wealth that troubles people. It is the feeling that the economy is rigged against them.

There is a clear disconnect between the macroeconomic story and the micro-American experience. While a tight job market has produced historic gains for lower-income workers, many of the low-income workers we spoke with are unable to accumulate enough money to build a safety net for themselves. “I like the feeling of not living on the edge of disaster,” a special-education teacher in rural Tennessee said. “[I am] at my fullest potential economically” right now, but “I’m still one doctor’s visit away from not being there, and pretty much most people I know are.”

If there is a singular explanation for dissatisfaction with the economy, it is a lack of financial certainty. While direct government assistance early in the pandemic certainly helped many in 2020 and 2021, millions of households still [*struggled*](https://www.amacad.org/economy) to get food, and many millions fell behind on rent. These feelings of instability do not dissipate quickly, especially when rising prices make trips to the store adventures in budgetary arithmetic and the threat of an accident or a surprise medical bill looms around every corner. “Uncertainty really affects your well-being. It affects what you do. It affects how you behave,” said a unionized airport worker in Virginia who tutors in the evenings.

An absence of economic resilience prevents people from spending time with family, from getting involved in their community and from finding ways to build a safety net. “The way the economy is going right now, you don’t know where it’s going to be tomorrow, next week,” a human resources employee in Indiana said. Well-being “is about being financially stable. It’s not about being rich, but it’s about being able to take care of your everyday needs without stressing.”

Stress is a rampant part of American life, much of it caused by financial insecurity. Some people aspire for the mansion on the hill. Many others are looking just to get their feet on solid ground.

One does not need to look hard beyond traditional metrics to see the prevalence of insecurity. In June [*an industry report*](https://www.amacad.org/economy) found that auto loan delinquencies were higher than they were at the peak of the Great Recession. [*Credit card use*](https://www.amacad.org/economy) has swelled, and delinquencies are at among their highest rates in a decade. After hitting a historic low in 2021 thanks to the expansion of the child tax credit, [*child poverty*](https://www.amacad.org/economy) more than doubled in 2022 after the tax credit’s expansion expired. Also in 2022, rates of [*food insecurity*](https://www.amacad.org/economy) reached their highest levels since 2015.

Such trends do not affect all Americans equally. Most disproportionately affect Black and Hispanic households, which perhaps helps explain Republicans’ gains in these communities, according to recent polls. Geography plays a major role, too. In some parts of the country — particularly rural areas — many people feel they have been left out of the progress and promise of the high-tech economy. Even if their finances remain in good health, they seem to fear for the future of their community, and they blame the economy.

The political system is supposed to make all this better. Instead, even as both major parties have vied to cast themselves as the standard-bearer of the ***working class***, many Americans see politicians as unable or unwilling to do anything to help them. “In my democracy, I’d like to see us get rid of Republicans, Democrats,” one Kentucky participant told us. “Just stand up there, tell me what you can do. If you can do it, I don’t have to care what you are.” Many Americans seem to see Washington as awash in partisan squabbles over things that have little effect on their lives. Many believe that politicians are looking out for their political party, not the American people.

It should not be surprising, then, that so many are so pessimistic about a seemingly strong economy. A rising gross domestic product lifts lots of boats, but many Americans feel as if they are drowning.

What would make the people we talked to less stressed? The ability to accumulate savings. Low-wage workers have seen their incomes rise only for many of these gains to be wiped out by inflation. And the costs of housing, health care and child care can quickly absorb even a very robust rainy-day fund. Without a safety net that can propel people into security, the threat of these costs will continue to make many Americans feel unstable, uncertain and decidedly unhappy about the economy.

A helpful starting point would be to address benefit cliffs — income eligibility cutoffs built into certain benefits programs. As households earn more money, they can make themselves suddenly ineligible for benefits that would let them build up enough wealth to no longer need any government support. In Kansas, for example, a family of four remains eligible for Medicaid as long as it earns under $39,900. A single dollar in additional income results in the loss of health care coverage — and an alternative will certainly not cost only a buck.

Reforming these types of cliffs for health care, child care, housing and food assistance programs would allow the millions of households receiving state aid to achieve a sense of stability. Take this mother in Chicago who told us that her income is just above the eligibility cutoffs. The cliff “knocks me out of a lot of the opportunity to qualify for a lot of the programs that could assist in benefiting myself and my child,” she said.

The Americans we listened to want resiliency so they can feel that they are in control of their lives and that they have a say in the direction of their community and their nation. They want a system focused less on how the economy is doing and more on how Americans are doing. As one Houston man observed: “We’re so far down on the economic chain that we don’t have nothing. It seems like our voices don’t matter.” But they do matter. The rest of us just need to listen.

Katherine J. Cramer is a political science professor at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Jonathan D. Cohen is the author of “For a Dollar and a Dream: State Lotteries in Modern America.”

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.amacad.org/economy) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://www.amacad.org/economy). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.amacad.org/economy).

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

**Load-Date:** February 22, 2024

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[***A New Book Reckons With the Border Crisis, in All Its Complexity; nonfiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B89-DJ81-JBG3-600F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 5, 2024 Monday 16:40 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 1238 words

**Byline:** Matthieu Aikins, Matthieu Aikins is a contributing writer for The New York Times Magazine and a fellow at Type Media Center who, since 2008, has been covering conflicts in Afghanistan and the Middle East, the U.S. military&#39;s operations overseas, forced migration and human rights.

**Highlight:** In “Everyone Who Is Gone Is Here,” Jonathan Blitzer connects the dots between U.S. foreign policy in Central America and the migrant crisis.

**Body**

In “Everyone Who Is Gone Is Here,” Jonathan Blitzer connects the dots between U.S. foreign policy in Central America and the migrant crisis.

EVERYONE WHO IS GONE IS HERE: The United States, Central America, and the Making of a Crisis, by Jonathan Blitzer

The immigration crisis at the southern border has become [*a defining issue of this year’s presidential election*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/30/us/politics/biden-border-crisis-immigration.html?searchResultPosition=1).

With polls showing Americans’ rising alarm at a surge in migration, President Biden has tacked right, pleading with Republicans to sign a bipartisan deal that grants them much of their immigration wish list, including curtailing asylum. Given his druthers, he’d “shut down the border right now and fix it quickly,” he has said. Donald Trump, who wrested anti-immigrant politics into the mainstream in his first campaign, has promised to take control by carrying out “the largest deportation in history” if re-elected.

As Jonathan Blitzer shows in “Everyone Who Is Gone Is Here,” his timely and instructive history of the immigration crisis, the trouble at the border isn’t likely to be solved soon, since it is the outcome of a long and vexed entanglement between the United States and its southern neighbors. In the past decade, those crossing have shifted from Mexicans looking for work to Central Americans and others seeking asylum. The deplorable results include unaccompanied children, family separations and refugee encampments.

Drawing on his reporting as a staff writer for The New Yorker, Blitzer profiles a cast that includes migrants, activists and politicians, unspooling their stories across a half-century in three acts: the Cold War counterinsurgencies in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, which displaced millions and helped remake U.S. immigration policy; the growth of gangs in Central America, bolstered by deportation; and the rise in asylum seekers as a mass movement of the dispossessed.

Juan Romagaoza, a leftist medical student and the moral center of the book, is witness to the horrors of the Salvadoran military’s repression, backed by the United States, in the 1980s. After being maimed by soldiers during torture, he escapes to Mexico and eventually to the United States, where he participates in the struggles of Central Americans seeking protection against deportation. Early waves of activists and deserters are followed by migrants fleeing poverty and violence as the “dividing line between the U.S. and Central America only grew blurrier.” At one point almost a quarter of El Salvador’s population would be living in this country.

Among them is Eddie Anzora, a ***working-class*** kid growing up “half anthropologist, half wannabe hood” in South Los Angeles, where a metastasizing gang culture reflects the American dialectic between prison and street life. As the war on gang crime accelerates through the late 1980s, his city becomes a focus of a domestic counterinsurgency, the “national vanguard of anti-gang policing.” California cops pioneer collaborations with immigration authorities to “clean out” city and state jails, a practice later replicated on a nationwide scale: “It was much easier to deport someone than it was to convict him of a crime.”

In a post-conflict Central America suffering under the corrupt rule of ex-combatants, the criminal gangs take root. The U.S. deportation machine eventually catches up with Anzora after he’s arrested for drug possession, and he ends up back in El Salvador, where he has to dodge gang members deported from the streets of L.A. Fleeing poverty and criminal violence, Central Americans begin to claim asylum in ever greater numbers at the southern border, leading to the humanitarian crises we see there today — starting with a wave of unaccompanied children in 2014.

The last major immigration reform passed by Congress was in 1990; since then, the border has been mostly managed by ad hoc executive action and the federal courts. As Blitzer illustrates, the American immigration system is a victim of its own dysfunction. The growing backlog in asylum applications encourages more people to use it to stay in the country; draconian laws and border controls increase the population of “trapped” undocumented immigrants; rules meant to protect children at the border incentivize parents to send them on their own.

In at times exhaustive detail, Blitzer chronicles the policy sausage factory in Washington, D.C., contrasting figures like Cecilia Muñoz, a former activist who reluctantly joins the Obama administration, with Trump’s most influential adviser on immigration, Stephen Miller, who “embraced the role of archvillain.”

Yet even as Blitzer dramatizes these partisan battles and the consequences they have for people’s lives — such as when, in 1998, Muñoz and other organizers lobbied for “175,000 immigrant children” to have their food stamps restored — he exposes the deep continuities between Democratic and Republican administrations. The most ironclad is the fixation on the “deterrence” of unauthorized immigrants with increasingly harsh consequences, expressed by strategies with names like Consequence Delivery System, “prevention through deterrence” and the Criminal Consequence Initiative.

It stands to reason that the more desperate the people migrating, the harsher the deterrence that must be inflicted. In practice, this boils down to increasing the danger they face crossing the border illegally, the likelihood of detention if caught, and the difficulty of living their lives afterward without being deported. Some administer these policies reluctantly, others with zeal.

Whereas under President Barack Obama, a proposal by immigration officials to separate parents from children — a “painful” but “not fatal” deterrent — was dismissed as “inhumane,” the Trump administration, in its eagerness, fumbled the chaotic separation of thousands before a nationwide outcry forced a retreat. Blitzer quotes a post-mortem convened by Miller: “We need to be smarter if we want to implement something on this scale again.”

American policy debates are often notable for their parochialism, and so it is perhaps unsurprising that Blitzer makes only passing mention of the experiences of the European Union, where debates over asylum seekers, experiments with “humane” deterrence and eruptions of anti-immigrant populism predate the United States’. Australia’s island prisons for refugees, or South America’s relatively tolerant and generous systems, go unmentioned.

Yet despite the incantations of politicians who promise to restore the integrity of borders and the nation-state, migration is an increasingly global phenomenon, and migrants from Asia and Africa make up a growing share of those apprehended at the border. Like climate change, the rich world’s migration crisis cannot be properly understood at the national scale. Instead, it raises fundamental questions about what it means to be an ethical citizen.

Conflicts over immigration often arise from similarity rather than difference, and the strangers at our border have a familiar history that Blitzer tells in meticulous and vivid detail. It is our own.

EVERYONE WHO IS GONE IS HERE: The United States, Central America, and the Making of a Crisis | By Jonathan Blitzer | Penguin | 523 pp. | $32

PHOTO: A group of migrants wait to be taken away and processed at a detention center by U.S. Customs and Border Patrol officials. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK ABRAMSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page BR17.

**Load-Date:** February 16, 2025

**End of Document**



[***Stony Brook University to Receive $500 Million, an Uncommonly Large Gift***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68C5-WY91-DXY4-X4VF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 1, 2023 Thursday 22:29 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 747 words

**Byline:** Liam Stack

**Highlight:** Gifts of that size are rare for universities. They’re even rarer for a public institution like Stony Brook, part of New York’s state university system.

**Body**

Gifts of that size are rare for universities. They’re even rarer for a public institution like Stony Brook, part of New York’s state university system.

Stony Brook University, a public school on Long Island, received a donation of $500 million on Thursday from a foundation formed by an alumnus and a former faculty member, making it the recipient of [*one of the largest gifts*](https://www.chronicle.com/article/major-private-gifts-to-higher-education/?sra=true&amp;cid=gen_sign_in) to a university in American history.

The donation, which will go toward the school’s endowment, will also trigger another $200 million injection of public funds under a donation matching program passed as part of the New York State budget in April. The school said it hopes the gift will spur other donations that could amount to hundreds of millions of dollars.

Gifts of that size are rare for universities, and especially so for public institutions like Stony Brook, which is one of the flagship schools of the State University of New York. The donation plus the state matching funds amount to nearly twice the amount of Stony Brook’s current endowment of $370 million, the university president, Maurie McInnis, said in an interview.

The donation was made by the Simons Foundation, which was formed in 1994 by Jim Simons, a former Stony Brook math professor who later made billions as a hedge fund manager, and his wife Marilyn Simons, who received her bachelor’s degree and doctorate at Stony Brook.

The university has long been known as an [*engine of social mobility*](http://www.equality-of-opportunity.org/papers/coll_mrc_paper.pdf), enrolling students from poor and ***working class*** backgrounds and propelling many of them to the middle and upper classes of American life. But that role has been challenged in recent years by rising [*tuition costs at Stony Brook*](https://hechingerreport.org/colleges-are-raising-prices-faster-on-their-lower-income-than-their-higher-income-students/) and [*across the country*](https://hechingerreport.org/colleges-are-raising-prices-faster-on-their-lower-income-than-their-higher-income-students/).

Ms. McInnis said more than 50 percent of Stony Brook students had their tuition fully covered by financial aid and state grants, but that many struggled with the ancillary costs of attending university.

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Mr. and Mrs. Simons have made other large gifts to Stony Brook in the past that, when combined with the gift on Thursday, amount to roughly $1.2 billion, said Ms. McInnis. She said Mr. Simons joined the faculty in 1968, when the university was only five years old.

In an interview on Wednesday, Mr. and Mrs. Simons said the state’s new endowment matching program convinced them to make a large unrestricted gift now. They also said the $500 million donation was an opportunity to express their gratitude to the university, which Mrs. Simons said “was transformative in my life.”

She grew up in a ***working class*** household, graduated from the university in 1974, and went on to earn a Ph.D. in economics. She said she hoped the gift would help people from “underserved communities” to thrive at the school.

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That innovation, which he called “probably my best idea,” has been used by physicists to contribute to the development of quantum field theory. He also met his wife during his time at the school.

“All of that was because I worked at Stony Brook,” he said. “So I am very fond of the university.”

PHOTOS: The donation was made by the Simons Foundation, formed by Jim Simons, a former Stony Brook math professor who later made billions as a hedge fund manager, and his wife Marilyn Simons, who received her bachelor’s and doctorate there. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHNNY MILANO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A17.

**Load-Date:** June 2, 2023

**End of Document**



[***A Continental Competition, All in One Neighborhood***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68SP-N1W1-JBG3-6287-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 25, 2023 Tuesday 18:58 EST

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**Section:** SPORTS; soccer

**Length:** 1563 words

**Byline:** Catherine Porter and James Hill

**Highlight:** Inspired by the Africa Cup of Nations, several small-scale soccer tournaments formed in the Paris region. In a ***working-class*** landing spot for immigrants, one event lets locals revel in being exceptional.

**Body**

At the eight-minute mark of the final of the CAN 18 soccer tournament, the players on the Mauritania team score three times in rapid succession.

The balls hitting the goalkeeper’s small net sound like the blasts of a cannon. Boom. Boom. Boom. The last two happen so quickly that many in the crowd miss them.

“Did they score?” the Ivory Coast fan squished next to me asks, looking stunned. “Yes, twice,” a Mauritanian fan on my other side responds gleefully.

It doesn’t take long to understand that the annual soccer tournament of Paris’s 18th arrondissement is different: The stadium is a small, caged turf court in the middle of the Goutte d’Or — the dense, ***working-class*** landing spot for each new wave of immigrants to the city, a place where African wax stores and tailors for boubous compete with boulangeries and bistros among the crowded streets.

The tournament was one of [*many*](https://www.leparisien.fr/amp/seine-saint-denis-93/la-can-des-quartiers-daulnay-lancee-sous-la-canicule-18-06-2022-5X4GOYPVS5AP7MOUDQU64FY3VA.php) [*around Paris*](https://www.mantes-actu.net/foot-coupe-des-nations-mantaises-2023-debutera-10-juin/amp/) inspired by the 2019 edition of the Africa Cup of Nations, or Coupe d’Afrique des nations in French, the continental competition typically held every two years. The events have become so popular that the finals of one in Créteil, a southeastern suburb of Paris, [*were broadcast on Amazon Prime*](https://actu.fr/ile-de-france/creteil_94028/creteil-la-finale-de-la-can-des-quartiers-diffusee-sur-amazon-prime-video_51306003.html) last summer.

In the Goutte d’Or, Mamoudou Camara’s principal aim wasn’t to shine a positive light on immigration and community spirit in his neighborhood, which is tucked behind the Gare du Nord — Europe’s busiest train station — and is among the city’s most impoverished, gritty and diverse areas. He was just thinking a tournament might help his friends survive the hot nights during Ramadan. He raised the idea on Snapchat, and by the end of that evening in summer 2019, six teams had registered. A day later, there were six more.

Instead of holding the event in a far-off stadium, Camara and his friends decided to host it in their childhood nest, the mini court in the center of the urban park where they spent their summer nights and weekends, battling over a ball and rounds of Coca-Cola or Fanta. (The loser paid.)

It offers a very different atmosphere than the marble statues and the manicured flower beds of the Tuileries and Luxembourg gardens. On game nights, the park, Square Léon, is buzzing with older men crowded around checker tables, little kids clambering up playground equipment and older women in West African dresses selling bags of homemade doughnuts and slushy ginger drinks that both tickle and soothe the throat.

Just before the final match starts, a tambour player beats out rhythms.

“In our neighborhood, we have all nationalities,” said Camara, 26. “We are proud to say we are multicultural.”

Around 30 percent of the 21,000 residents in this neighborhood were immigrants or foreigners in 2019, according to France’s national statistics institute.

Sixteen teams registered this year, the event’s fourth edition, to play 31 games over three weeks. On this June night, we are down to the finals. The Ivory Coast, a veteran team that won the inaugural tournament in 2019, is back in its orange and green jerseys, trying to reclaim the title. Challenging them is Mauritania — a team packed with young players, many of them semiprofessionals, wearing yellow and brown. The jerseys were created by a celebrated [*local designer*](https://www.liberation.fr/portraits/youssouf-fofana-trans-sape-20220621_OREGILL5DNH6LLKQTRFNMQWUAI/) who collaborates with Nike, and who has been invited to the presidential palace.

It is just one sign of how the tournament has matured. This year, the neighborhood city hall provides a small grandstand on one side of the court. Everywhere else, spectators stand, claiming their spots a good hour before the game begins.

By the time the referee blows his whistle, we are standing eight rows thick.

The court measures just 25 meters by 16.5 meters — about 82 feet by 54 feet — roughly one-seventeenth of FIFA’s recommended field size. It is framed by a low concrete wall, topped by a tall chain link fence.

The confined area makes for an intense game of precision, tight tricks, bursts of speed and a blasting ball that echoes against the walls and crashes into the fence every few minutes.

This is soccer by inches, with a team losing and gaining the ball within seconds.

Camara and other organizers devised the rules: five players per team on the court; no offside; corner kicks are thrown in; any foul after the fifth within a half results in a penalty kick; and games last 30 minutes to an hour, depending on their importance.

Two people livestream matches, and another camera is rolling for the referee to review plays.

The first year, all players had to be locals, but the rules have since loosened, allowing players from elsewhere to participate. But those who grew up competing on the court quickly reveal themselves by using the side walls to their advantage, bouncing passes around defenders to their teammates and back to themselves.

Martin Riedler, who three years ago formed the tournament’s French team, compared it to a boxing ring.

“You have to be on your toes the whole time, which makes the experience so intense,” said Riedler, who attended Santa Clara University in California on a soccer scholarship. He has packed his team with elite players who can hit the cross bar from the halfway line of a full field, but who also find the arena overwhelming. “You know you won’t sleep at night after a game.”

Players slam each other to the turf, then pick one another up. They continually battle against the wall, so close that a spectator might graze them through the fence. They offer up-close renditions of spectacular maneuvers, flicking the ball over their opponents’ heads and spinning it around their feet. That is one of the beauties of a small court, the referee Bengaly Souré tells me. It’s a compression chamber of technical plays.

“There’s no space, but they create space,” he said.

When a player jumps and kicks the ball into the net midair, Souré turns to the fence and expresses his admiration.

The crowd is part of the fun. Spectators shout their observations over the sounds of African beats, booming from loudspeakers. It is agreed that the player wearing No. 7 for Mauritania — who plays for a team in Italy — is a dangerous force. And though the Ivory Coast falls increasingly behind, the game could turn at any moment.

“I’ve seen a team that’s losing 4-1 make a comeback,” said Makenzy Kapaya, a 37-year-old artist who grew up in the Goutte d’Or but later relocated to a less cramped apartment elsewhere. Like many in the crowd, he has returned to watch the games and to reunite with childhood friends.

“If you have problems, people will help you here, no matter what your origins,” Kapaya said.

The Goutte d’Or, a dense, ***working-class*** area, often makes news for unflattering reasons — drugs, prostitution, violence. The library [*closed for*](https://www.leparisien.fr/paris-75/dealers-violences-degradations-le-ras-le-bol-des-agents-de-la-bibliotheque-de-la-goutte-d-or-24-11-2020-8410210.php) months three years ago because employees said they had been repeatedly threatened by dealers selling near its doors. Following the fatal police shooting of 17-year-old [*Nahel Merzouk*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/29/world/europe/nahel-france-police-shooting-nanterre.html) this summer and the subsequent protests across the country, the local police station was attacked.

Éric Lejoindre, the mayor of the 18th arrondissement, pointed out that local volunteers had been quietly helping with homework, cooking and housing for years. A group of therapists in the Goutte d’Or [*hold regular listening sessions*](https://www.telerama.fr/debats-reportages/sante-mentale-a-barbes-les-ecouteurs-de-rue-tendent-l-oreille-7016013.php), setting out chairs in an abandoned lot for passers-by to unload their burdens.

For all its problems, the neighborhood has huge heart, Lejoindre said.

“Locals know it, but sometimes we need it to emerge in a spectacular fashion,” he said. “For me, CAN is one of those moments when the neighborhood can revel in being a bit exceptional.”

After halftime, the Ivory Coast players rally, bringing the score to 9-7. But then Mauritania yanks the plug from their energy and dreams. As the sky dims into an inky night, and spectators hold up their phones as lanterns, Mauritania scores again. And again. And again. Boom, boom, boom. The players start to do little dances after each goal.

When Souré blows his whistle for full time, a crowd surges onto the tiny court to embrace the young Mauritanian team in a squealing cyclone of joy.

Camara, who will take a few weeks off before beginning preparations for next year’s event, said he was continually surprised by how much joy the little tournament had brought to the neighborhood. At a time when [*anti-immigration sentiments are growing*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/20/world/europe/france-callac-immigrants-refugees.html) and [*identity politics are flaring in France*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/31/world/europe/victor-hugo-france.html), he said he considered it a unifying event. “We thought we were just starting something for fun,” he said, “but we created something bigger.”

Red and white fireworks burst above the little park in the heart of the Goutte d’Or. The celebration will continue for hours.

Juliette Guéron-Gabrielle contributed research from Paris.

Audio produced by Parin Behrooz.

Juliette Guéron-Gabrielle contributed research from Paris. Audio produced by Parin Behrooz.

PHOTOS: Players from Mauritania, top, raised the trophy after winning the CAN 18 tournament in Paris, a local version of the Africa Cup of Nations. Above, from left, players representing Cameroon and Tunisia faced off; Mamoudou Camara, the tournament’s organizer; Ivory Coast fans perched atop a fence to watch the final. (B7); Enthusiastic spectators are a hallmark of the CAN 18 tournament. Players representing Tunisia and Cameroon, left, waited to take the field in an urban park in the gritty neighborhood. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES HILL FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (B10) This article appeared in print on page B7, B10.

**Load-Date:** July 27, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Recent Rulings Could Help Democrats Win Over Voters***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68KT-VHB1-JBG3-64B1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 2, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 19; POLITICAL MEMO

**Length:** 1510 words

**Byline:** By Jonathan Weisman

**Body**

The decisions this week on affirmative action and student loans give Democrats a way to make a case on class and appeal to voters who have drifted away from the party.

Ever since President Bill Clinton advised ''mend it, don't end it,'' affirmative action has had an uneasy place in the Democratic coalition, as omnipresent as the party's allegiance to abortion rights and its promises to expand financial aid for higher education -- but unpopular with much of the public.

Now, in striking down race-conscious college admissions, the Supreme Court has handed the Democrats a way to shift from a race-based discussion of preference to one tied more to class. The court's decision could fuel broader outreach to the ***working-class*** voters who have drifted away from the party because of what they see as its elitism.

The question is, will the party pivot?

''This is a tremendous opportunity for Democrats to course-correct from identity-based issues,'' said Ruy Teixeira, whose upcoming book ''Where Have All the Democrats Gone?'' looks at the bleeding of ***working-class*** voters over the last decade. ''As I like to say, class is back in session.''

Conservative voters have long been more animated by the Supreme Court's composition than liberals have. But the last two sessions of a high court remade by Donald J. Trump may have flipped that dynamic. Since the court overturned Roe v. Wade in 2022, energized Democratic voters have handed Republicans loss after loss in critical elections.

Republicans' remarkable successes before the new court may have actually deprived them of combative issues to galvanize voters going into 2024. Several Republican presidential hopefuls had centered their campaigns on opposition to affirmative action. And the court's granting of religious exemptions to people who oppose gay marriage, along with last year's Dobbs decision, may take the sting out of some social issues for conservatives.

In that sense, the staunchly conservative new Supreme Court is doing the ugly political work for Democrats. Its decision last year to eliminate the constitutional right to abortion elevated an issue that for decades motivated religious conservatives more than it did secular liberals.

Friday's decision to strike down President Biden's student debt relief plan enraged progressive Democrats, who had pressed the president to take executive action on loan forgiveness. A coalition of Generation Z advocacy groups, including Gen-Z for Change and the climate-oriented Sunrise Movement, said on Friday that the court ''has openly declared war on young people.''

But while the Supreme Court made retroactive higher education assistance far more difficult, it may have boosted the Democratic cause of financial aid, through expanded Pell grants and scholarships that do not saddle graduates with crushing debt burdens. Democrats have long pushed expanded grant programs and legislative loan-forgiveness programs for graduates who embark on low-paid public service careers. Those efforts will get a lift in the wake of the court's decision.

The high court's declaration that race-based admission to colleges and universities is unconstitutional infuriated key elements of the Democratic coalition -- Black and Hispanic groups in particular, but also some Asian American and Pacific Islander groups who said conservatives had used a small number of Asian Americans as pawns to challenge affirmative action on behalf of whites.

''They were using the Asian community as a wedge,'' said Representative Judy Chu, Democrat of California, after the decision was handed down on Thursday. ''I stand with the unified community.''

But while they have expressed anger and disappointment over the conservative decisions, Democrats also acknowledge their inability to do much to restore affirmative action, student loan forgiveness and the right to an abortion in the foreseeable future, as long as the 6-3 majority on the Supreme Court holds.

''There's a constitutional challenge in bringing it back,'' said Representative Bobby Scott of Virginia, a longtime Democratic leader on the House education committee.

Simon Rosenberg, a Democratic strategist pressing his party to expand its outreach to the ***working class***, said adding a new emphasis on class consciousness to augment racial and ethnic awareness would fit well with Mr. Biden's pitch that his legislative achievements have largely accrued to the benefit of workers.

Infrastructure spending, electric vehicles investment, broadband expansion and semiconductor manufacturing have promoted jobs -- especially union jobs -- all over the country but especially in rural and suburban areas, often in Republican states.

''By next year, Democrats will be able to say we've invested in red states, blue states, urban areas, rural areas,'' he said. ''We're not like the Republicans. We're for everybody.''

But bigotry, discrimination and the erosion of civil rights will remain central issues for Democrats, given the anger of the party base, Mr. Rosenberg said. The Supreme Court's siding on Friday with a web designer in Colorado who said she had a First Amendment right to refuse to provide services for same-sex marriages cannot be separated from the affirmative action, student loan and abortion decisions.

Mr. Teixeira said Democrats were not likely to see their new opportunities at first.

''If you want to solve some of the underlying problems of the party, this should be a gimme,'' he said of pivoting from racial and ethnic identity to class. But, he added, ''in the short term, the enormous pressure will be not to do that.''

Indeed, the initial Democratic response to the Supreme Court's actions was not to elevate economic hardship as a key preference in college admissions. Instead, Democrats seemed focused on striking down other areas of privilege, especially the legacy admission preference given to the children and grandchildren of alumni of elite institutions.

''What we're fighting for is equal opportunity,'' said Representative Joaquin Castro, Democrat of Texas. ''If they get rid of affirmative action and leave rampant legacy admissions, they're making merit a slogan, not a reality.''

Republicans saw a political line of attack in the Democratic response to the court's decision. Even before 1990, when a campaign ad by Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina featured white hands crumpling a job rejection to denounce ''racial quotas,'' Republicans had used affirmative action to their political advantage.

Mr. Clinton's ''mend it, don't end it'' formulation came after a 1995 speech before California Democrats in which he said of affirmative action programs: ''We do have to ask ourselves, 'Are they all working? Are they all fair? Has there been any kind of reverse discrimination?'''

A June survey by the Pew Research Center found that more Americans disapprove than approve of colleges and universities' using race and ethnicity in admissions decisions, and that Republican and Republican-leaning independent voters are largely unified in their opposition, while Democratic voters are split.

After Mr. Biden expressed his opposition to the Supreme Court's decision, the campaign arm of the Senate Republicans issued a statement calling out three vulnerable Senate Democrats up for re-election in Republican states: Joe Manchin III of West Virginia, Jon Tester of Montana and Sherrod Brown of Ohio.

''Democrats are doubling down on their racist agenda and want to pack the Supreme Court to get their way,'' said Philip Letsou, a spokesman for the National Republican Senatorial Committee. ''Will Democrats like Joe Manchin, Jon Tester and Sherrod Brown denounce Joe Biden's support of racial discrimination and state unequivocally that they oppose packing the court?''

The House Republican campaign arm called Democratic outrage ''the great limousine liberal meltdown.''

But the Supreme Court has offered Democrats a way forward with many of its decisions -- based on class. The affluent will always have access to abortions, by traveling to states where it remains legal, and to elite institutions of higher education, where they may have legacy pull and the means to pay tuition.

Those facing economic struggles are not so privileged. Applicants of color may have lost an edge in admissions, but poor and middle-class students and graduates of all races were dealt a blow when the court declared that the president did not have the authority to unilaterally forgive their student loans.

Representative Marilyn Strickland, Democrat of Washington, said her party now needs to recalibrate away from elite institutions like Harvard and the University of North Carolina, the defendants in the high court's case against affirmative action, and ''respect all types of education and all types of opportunity,'' mentioning union training programs, apprenticeships, trade schools and community colleges.

Mr. Scott agreed. ''This is going to cause some heartburn,'' he said, ''but what we need to campaign on is that we're opening opportunities for everybody.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/01/us/politics/supreme-court-affirmative-action-student-loans-democrats-2024.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/01/us/politics/supreme-court-affirmative-action-student-loans-democrats-2024.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A19.

**Load-Date:** July 2, 2023

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[***Supreme Court Won’t Hear New Case on Race and School Admissions***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BCH-KFG1-JBG3-605K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 20, 2024 Tuesday 09:02 EST

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 1349 words

**Byline:** Adam Liptak Adam Liptak covers the Supreme Court and writes Sidebar, a column on legal developments. A graduate of Yale Law School, he practiced law for 14 years before joining The Times in 2002.

**Highlight:** The decision, along with an order this month declining to block West Point’s admissions program, suggests that most justices are not eager to immediately explore the limits of its ruling from June.

**Body**

The decision, along with an order this month declining to block West Point’s admissions program, suggests that most justices are not eager to immediately explore the limits of its ruling from June.

The Supreme Court [*cleared the way on Tuesday*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/sidebar) for the use of admissions criteria intended to diversify the student body at an elite public high school in Virginia, declining to revisit the role race may play in admissions months after it sharply curtailed affirmative action programs in higher education.

In turning down a challenge to a policy that eliminated standardized tests, the court gave no reasons, as is its custom in issuing such orders. Justice Samuel A. Alito Jr. issued a dissent, joined by Justice Clarence Thomas, that was harshly critical of an appeals court’s ruling in the case upholding the new criteria and rejecting the challengers’ argument that they unlawfully disadvantaged Asian Americans.

The Supreme Court struck down race-conscious admissions programs at Harvard and the University of North Carolina in June but left open the constitutionality of admissions standards like the ones in Virginia that do not directly account for race in trying to diversify enrollment.

The court’s decision not to take up the case from Virginia, along with [*an order this month*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/sidebar) declining to block West Point’s race-conscious admissions program, suggests that most of the justices are not eager to take immediate steps to explore the limits of its ruling from June. It takes four votes to grant review, for instance, and the Virginia case failed to clear that bar.

In his dissent on Tuesday, Justice Alito expressed frustration.

The Supreme Court’s “willingness to swallow the aberrant decision below is hard to understand,” Justice Alito wrote. “We should wipe the decision off the books, and because the court refuses to do so, I must respectfully dissent.”

The revisions to the Virginia admissions program followed protests over the 2020 murder of George Floyd. Amid concerns about how few Black and Hispanic students attended the school, one of the country’s top public high schools, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology in Alexandria, Va., adopted what it said were race-neutral admissions standards. The school board did away with a rigorous entrance examination and prioritized admission to the top students from each public middle school in the area rather than the top applicants from any school.

Admissions officers were also instructed to consider “experience factors,” such as whether students were poor, learning English or attending a middle school that was “historically underrepresented.” But the officers were not told the race, sex or name of any applicant.

A group of parents, many of them Asian American, objected to the plan and, calling themselves the [*Coalition for T.J.*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/sidebar), sued to stop it.

Joshua Thompson, a lawyer with the Pacific Legal Foundation, a libertarian law group representing the parents’ group, expressed disappointment that the justices had declined to intervene.

“Discrimination against students based on their race is not only ethically wrong but also a clear violation of the Constitution’s guarantee of equal protection,” he said in a statement.

Karl Frisch, the chair of the Fairfax County School Board, said he welcomed the conclusion of a yearslong litigation.

“We have long believed that the new admissions process is both constitutional and in the best interest of all of our students,” he said in a statement. “It guarantees that all qualified students from all neighborhoods in Fairfax County have a fair shot at attending this exceptional high school.”

[*Richard D. Kahlenberg*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/sidebar), a proponent of class-conscious affirmative action, said the court had struck the right balance, handing a victory to “poor and ***working-class*** students of all races.”

“This is an important signal that selective high schools and colleges and universities should feel confident in using race-neutral strategies to achieve diversity,” he said in a statement.

The Supreme Court’s action let stand a ruling from a divided three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, in Richmond, Va., which [*declared in May*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/sidebar) that Thomas Jefferson did not discriminate in its admissions. The Pacific Legal Foundation asked the Supreme Court to hear their appeal, saying the new admissions plan was “intentionally designed to achieve the same results as overt racial discrimination.”

The Supreme Court’s decision in June in [*Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/sidebar), [*the coalition’s petition*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/sidebar) said, “might mean little if schools could accomplish the same discriminatory result through race-neutral proxies.” The petition noted that Chief Justice John. G. Roberts Jr.’s majority opinion, quoting an earlier ruling, had said that “what cannot be done directly cannot be done indirectly.”

Lawyers for the school board responded that the new admissions criteria had nothing to do with race and were focused instead on removing socioeconomic and geographic barriers.

“The new policy is both race neutral and race blind,” [*the school board’s brief*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/sidebar) said. “It was not designed to produce, and did not in fact produce, a student population that approximates the racial demographics of Fairfax County or any other predetermined racial balance.”

After the changes went into effect in 2021, the percentage of Asian American students offered admission dropped to 54 percent from 73 percent. The percentage of Black students grew to 8 percent from no more than 2 percent; the percentage of Hispanic students grew to 11 percent from 3 percent; and the percentage of white students grew to 22 percent from 18 percent.

In [*the Fairfax County school system*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/sidebar) in 2020, about 37 percent of students were white, 27 percent were Hispanic, 20 percent were Asian and 10 percent were Black.

Writing for the majority in the appeals court’s decision in May, [*Judge Robert B. King*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/sidebar), who was appointed by President Bill Clinton, said the before and after numbers were not the right place to start. That would, he said, quoting from the school board’s brief, turn “the previous status quo into an immutable quota.”

He added that the school had a legitimate interest in “expanding the array of student backgrounds.”

Justice Alito, in dissent on Tuesday, questioned that reasoning. “What the Fourth Circuit majority held, in essence, is that intentional racial discrimination is constitutional so long as it is not too severe,” Justice Alito wrote. “This reasoning is indefensible, and it cries out for correction.”

He elaborated, quoting from an earlier decision. “Even though the new policy bore ‘more heavily’ on Asian American applicants (because it diminished their chances of admission while improving the chances of every other racial group), the panel majority held that there was no disparate impact because they were still overrepresented in the T.J. student body,” Justice Alito wrote.

He added: “That is a clearly mistaken understanding of what it means for a law or policy to have a disparate effect on the members of a particular racial or ethnic group.”

In dissent in the Fourth Circuit, [*Judge Allison J. Rushing*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/sidebar), who was appointed by President Donald J. Trump, made a similar point. The majority, she wrote, had refused “to look past the policy’s neutral varnish” and consider instead “an undisputed racial motivation and an undeniable racial result.”

The decision reversed [*a 2022 ruling*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/sidebar) by [*Judge Claude M. Hilton*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/sidebar) of the Federal District Court in Alexandria, who found that the changes made by the school board had disproportionately burdened Asian American students and were “racially motivated.”

“It is clear that Asian American students are disproportionately harmed by the board’s decision to overhaul T.J. admissions,” Judge Hilton wrote. “Currently and in the future, Asian American applicants are disproportionately deprived of a level playing field.”

PHOTO: A group of parents tried to stop the admissions rules at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology in Alexandria, Va. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KENNY HOLSTON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A15) This article appeared in print on page A1, A15.

**Load-Date:** February 21, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Supreme Court Decisions on Education Could Offer Democrats an Opening; Political memo***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68KK-BNY1-DXY4-X0M1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 1, 2023 Saturday 12:01 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1499 words

**Byline:** Jonathan Weisman

**Highlight:** The decisions this week on affirmative action and student loans give Democrats a way to make a case on class and appeal to voters who have drifted away from the party.

**Body**

The decisions this week on affirmative action and student loans give Democrats a way to make a case on class and appeal to voters who have drifted away from the party.

Ever since President Bill Clinton advised [*“mend it, don’t end it,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/1997/06/16/us/clinton-feels-sure-footed-on-the-tightrope-of-race.html) affirmative action has had an uneasy place in the Democratic coalition, as omnipresent as the party’s allegiance to abortion rights and its promises to expand financial aid for higher education — but [*unpopular*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/29/us/politics/affirmative-action-polls.html) with much of the public.

Now, in [*striking down race-conscious college admissions*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/06/29/us/affirmative-action-supreme-court), the Supreme Court has handed the Democrats a way to shift from a race-based discussion of preference to one tied more to class. The court’s decision could fuel broader outreach to the ***working-class*** voters who have drifted away from the party because of what they see as its elitism.

The question is, will the party pivot?

“This is a tremendous opportunity for Democrats to course-correct from identity-based issues,” said Ruy Teixeira, whose [*upcoming book “Where Have All the Democrats Gone?”*](https://us.macmillan.com/books/9781250877499/wherehaveallthedemocratsgone) looks at the bleeding of ***working-class*** voters over the last decade. “As I like to say, class is back in session.”

Conservative voters have long been more animated by the Supreme Court’s composition than liberals have. But the last two sessions of a high court remade by Donald J. Trump may have flipped that dynamic. Since the court overturned Roe v. Wade in 2022, energized Democratic voters have handed Republicans loss after loss in critical elections.

Republicans’ remarkable successes before the new court may have actually deprived them of combative issues to galvanize voters going into 2024. Several Republican presidential hopefuls had centered their campaigns on opposition to affirmative action. And the court’s granting of religious exemptions to people who oppose gay marriage, along with last year’s Dobbs decision, may take the sting out of some social issues for conservatives.

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Friday’s decision to strike down President Biden’s student debt relief plan enraged progressive Democrats, who had pressed the president to take executive action on loan forgiveness. A coalition of Generation Z advocacy groups, including Gen-Z for Change and the climate-oriented Sunrise Movement, said on Friday that the court “has openly declared war on young people.”

But while the Supreme Court made retroactive higher education assistance far more difficult, it may have boosted the Democratic cause of financial aid, through expanded Pell grants and scholarships that do not saddle graduates with crushing debt burdens. Democrats have long pushed expanded grant programs and legislative loan-forgiveness programs for graduates who embark on low-paid public service careers. Those efforts will get a lift in the wake of the court’s decision.

The high court’s declaration that race-based admission to colleges and universities is unconstitutional infuriated key elements of the Democratic coalition — Black and Hispanic groups in particular, but also some Asian American and Pacific Islander groups who said conservatives had used a small number of Asian Americans as pawns to challenge affirmative action on behalf of whites.

“They were using the Asian community as a wedge,” said Representative Judy Chu, Democrat of California, after the decision was handed down on Thursday. “I stand with the unified community.”

But while they have expressed anger and disappointment over the conservative decisions, Democrats also acknowledge their inability to do much to restore affirmative action, student loan forgiveness and the right to an abortion in the foreseeable future, as long as the 6-3 majority on the Supreme Court holds.

“There’s a constitutional challenge in bringing it back,” said Representative Bobby Scott of Virginia, a longtime Democratic leader on the House education committee.

Simon Rosenberg, a Democratic strategist pressing his party to expand its outreach to the ***working class***, said adding a new emphasis on class consciousness to augment racial and ethnic awareness would fit well with Mr. Biden’s pitch that his legislative achievements have largely accrued to the benefit of workers.

Infrastructure spending, electric vehicles investment, broadband expansion and semiconductor manufacturing have promoted jobs — especially union jobs — all over the country but especially in rural and suburban areas, often in Republican states.

“By next year, Democrats will be able to say we’ve invested in red states, blue states, urban areas, rural areas,” he said. “We’re not like the Republicans. We’re for everybody.”

But bigotry, discrimination and the erosion of civil rights will remain central issues for Democrats, given the anger of the party base, Mr. Rosenberg said. The [*Supreme Court’s siding on Friday*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/06/30/us/gay-rights-free-speech-supreme-court/heres-what-to-know-about-the-gay-rights-decision?smid=url-share) with a web designer in Colorado who said she had a First Amendment right to refuse to provide services for same-sex marriages cannot be separated from the affirmative action, student loan and abortion decisions.

Mr. Teixeira said Democrats were not likely to see their new opportunities at first.

“If you want to solve some of the underlying problems of the party, this should be a gimme,” he said of pivoting from racial and ethnic identity to class. But, he added, “in the short term, the enormous pressure will be not to do that.”

Indeed, the initial Democratic response to the Supreme Court’s actions was not to elevate economic hardship as a key preference in college admissions. Instead, Democrats seemed focused on striking down other areas of privilege, especially the legacy admission preference given to the children and grandchildren of alumni of elite institutions.

“What we’re fighting for is equal opportunity,” said Representative Joaquin Castro, Democrat of Texas. “If they get rid of affirmative action and leave rampant legacy admissions, they’re making merit a slogan, not a reality.”

Republicans saw a political line of attack in the Democratic response to the court’s decision. Even before 1990, when a [*campaign ad*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KIyewCdXMzk) by Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina featured white hands crumpling a job rejection to denounce “racial quotas,” Republicans had used affirmative action to their political advantage.

Mr. Clinton’s “mend it, don’t end it” formulation came after a 1995 speech before California Democrats in which he said of affirmative action programs: “We do have to ask ourselves, ‘Are they all working? Are they all fair? Has there been any kind of reverse discrimination?’”

A [*June survey by the Pew Research Center*](https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2023/06/08/more-americans-disapprove-than-approve-of-colleges-considering-race-ethnicity-in-admissions-decisions/?utm_source=AdaptiveMailer&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=23-6-08%20Joint%20affirmative%20action%20gen%20distro&amp;org=982&amp;lvl=100&amp;ite=11937&amp;lea=2492946&amp;ctr=0&amp;par=1&amp;trk=a0D3j000013TUjjEAG) found that more Americans disapprove than approve of colleges and universities’ using race and ethnicity in admissions decisions, and that Republican and Republican-leaning independent voters are largely unified in their opposition, while Democratic voters are split.

After Mr. Biden expressed his opposition to the Supreme Court’s decision, the campaign arm of the Senate Republicans issued a statement calling out three vulnerable Senate Democrats up for re-election in Republican states: Joe Manchin III of West Virginia, Jon Tester of Montana and Sherrod Brown of Ohio.

“Democrats are doubling down on their racist agenda and want to pack the Supreme Court to get their way,” said Philip Letsou, a spokesman for the National Republican Senatorial Committee. “Will Democrats like Joe Manchin, Jon Tester and Sherrod Brown denounce Joe Biden’s support of racial discrimination and state unequivocally that they oppose packing the court?”

The House Republican campaign arm called Democratic outrage “the great limousine liberal meltdown.”

But the Supreme Court has offered Democrats a way forward with many of its decisions — based on class. The affluent will always have access to abortions, by traveling to states where it remains legal, and to elite institutions of higher education, where they may have legacy pull and the means to pay tuition.

Those facing economic struggles are not so privileged. Applicants of color may have lost an edge in admissions, but poor and middle-class students and graduates of all races were dealt a blow when the court declared that the president did not have the authority to unilaterally forgive their student loans.

Representative Marilyn Strickland, Democrat of Washington, said her party now needs to recalibrate away from elite institutions like Harvard and the University of North Carolina, the defendants in the high court’s case against affirmative action, and “respect all types of education and all types of opportunity,” mentioning union training programs, apprenticeships, trade schools and community colleges.

Mr. Scott agreed. “This is going to cause some heartburn,” he said, “but what we need to campaign on is that we’re opening opportunities for everybody.”

This article appeared in print on page A19.

**Load-Date:** July 3, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Gluttons for the Grisly***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B83-NYR1-DXY4-X02H-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 4, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 22; ESSAY

**Length:** 1237 words

**Byline:** By Lizzie Pook

**Body**

The genre's roots date back hundreds of years, to the prison cells and gallows of 17th-century London.

''There's been 11 hardback books on me,'' the serial killer John Wayne Gacy told a reporter on the eve of his execution in 1994. ''Thirty-one paperbacks, two screenplays, one movie, one Off Broadway play, five songs and over 5,000 articles. What can I say about it?''

What can be said about it is that murder makes a lucrative story, something authors of the true crime genre have exploited in recent years to forge a multimillion-dollar industry, placing serial killers on our screens, funneling their voices into our ears, recounting their ''exclusive" tell-alls in best-selling books. We may consider the obsession with true crime a contemporary preoccupation -- with Etsy shops selling enamel pins of Ted Bundy's face and his Volkswagen, and crime conventions filling casino-size hotels with teenage girls in ''Murderino'' T-shirts. But these grisly stories, and our insatiable thirst for them, have been monetized for hundreds of years.

Long before the self-styled Zodiac Killer mailed his letters to California newspapers, threatening killing sprees and bombings if his messages were not printed, there was an English prison chaplain named Henry Goodcole who bolstered his modest salary by selling stories about death and sin. Between 1620 and 1636 Goodcole served as ''Ordinary,'' or ''Visitor,'' at London's notoriously lawless Newgate Prison, his job being to attend to the prisoners' spiritual welfare -- preaching, hearing confessions and leading services behind the thick, dank walls.

Newgate was rife with killers (as well as debtors and thieves) and, thus immersed in tales of blood and abomination, Goodcole saw a market opportunity. But how to make his money? Literacy was on the rise in England, and the political, social and religious upheaval of the 1600s meant the public was ravenous for information. Murder, Goodcole shrewdly realized, was among the stories they liked best.

So, the chaplain turned his hand to producing broadsides: cheaply printed prose pamphlets detailing the lives and crimes of the prison's most dangerous inmates. The broadsides featured hyperbolic, often wildly embellished last confessions and ''interviews'' with the condemned, and for a long time Goodcole was one of the most eminent authors on the true crime scene.

But he wasn't the only one making money from murder. Around the country, town leaders and clergymen reported on gruesome local killings as a means -- at least officially -- of deterring the criminally inclined. Such publications as ''The Triumphs of God's Revenge Against the Crying and Execrable Sinne of Wilful and Premeditated Murther,'' written by an Exeter merchant named John Reynolds and sold on Fleet Street beginning in 1621, exaggerated the details of both the scandalous crimes committed by his subjects and the punishments meted out to them. Who could be blamed if the public was willing to empty its pockets for such titillation?

Soon enough, anyone with access to a printer's shop could produce broadsides and tout them to an audience hungry for sensationalism. By the 19th century, murder mania had seized London. Killers such as William Corder, James Greenacre and Daniel Good became household names, their effigies erected in wax in Madame Tussaud's infamous Chamber of Horrors. Theaters put on shows about the dastardly and the depraved. So-called penny dreadfuls -- cheap, serialized novellas -- told of wayward highwaymen and slaughtered maidens.

For much of the century, capital punishment still took place in public. Huge crowds turned out to watch the carnivalesque spectacles of hangings, including Charles Dickens, who wrote in a letter to The Times of London in 1849 that he'd never seen a ''sight so inconceivably awful as the wickedness and levity of the immense crowd.'' He attended hangings more than once, purely to get the full picture for use in his writings, of course.

London's broadside and street ballad salesmen pounced on the true crime fervor with gleeful entrepreneurialism, leading the satirical magazine Punch to accuse them of profiting from ''the abomination of blood.'' The broadsides were churned out quickly and sequentially whenever a crime caught public interest. First, they covered the particulars of the crime; then the trial; and, finally and ''most profitably,'' as the historian Judith Flanders writes in ''The Invention of Murder'' (2011), the ''sorrowful lamentation'' or ''last confession'' of the criminal, often including a vivid description of the execution (even if it hadn't yet taken place). Such intensive coverage transformed killers into celebrities. At James Greenacre's hanging, pies and portrait illustrations were sold in his honor.

Some broadsides sold over a million copies, often at the foot of the gallows with a body still swinging. In 1849, at the double hanging of Frederick and Maria Manning -- a husband-and-wife duo who murdered Maria's lover and stashed his body beneath their flagstone floor -- an estimated two and a half million broadsides were purchased, more than 30 times the number of copies of the popular Illustrated London News sold the year before.

Over time, broadsides grew more sophisticated, if not in content then at least in format. From single sheets for the semiliterate, they blossomed into multi-page editions featuring intricate woodcuts of dead bodies and brutally comic action scenes. Headlines promised ''Barbarous and Awful Murder,'' ''Great and Horrible News'' or ''Elegiac Lines on the Tragical Murder of Poor Daft Jamie.''

The stories themselves were sometimes patently plagiarized. One popular broadside, ''A Copy of Verses on Mary Arnold, the Female Monster'' (1843), told of a woman who, in order to make her daughter a more successful beggar, blinded her by placing beetles in nutshells and tying them over her eyes until they ate through her flesh. Presented as fact, the story was a plotline lifted from G.W.M. Reynolds's ''The Mysteries of London,'' a penny dreadful series that in the 1850s attracted more readers than Dickens.

As public hangings ceased and newspapers became cheap enough for the ***working class*** to obtain, broadsides eventually fell out of favor. But the precedent was set. Today, theories about our appetite for true crime stories abound. Some posit that we read them to satisfy a human need to play detective, to bring order to chaos. As Alice Bolin puts it in ''Dead Girls: Essays on Surviving an American Obsession'' (2018), ''Our cultural obsession with murder stories and the criminal justice system is a prime example of the impulse to narrativize a reality that is basically unexplainable.'' Others submit that we turn to such tales for lessons in how to avoid becoming victims ourselves, or because they encourage empathy, which has a beneficial social function.

Yet the idea that we feed ourselves true crime stories because they have something to teach us -- because they are good for us -- sidesteps an uncomfortable truth: We read these stories because they provide pleasure. We are gluttons for the grisly. We devour and we clamor, voraciously chewing over the details of murder. And so, just as there will always be crime, there will always be someone, pen held aloft, waiting to write all about it.Lizzie Pook's new novel, ''Maude Horton's Glorious Revenge,'' will be published in January.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/01/books/review/true-crime-history-murder.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/01/books/review/true-crime-history-murder.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: A broadside by Henry Goodcole, an eminent author on the true crime beat. (PHOTOGRAPH VIA FOLGER SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY) This article appeared in print on page BR22.

**Load-Date:** February 4, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Finding Connection With the Complexities***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BMR-5FH1-JBG3-60MS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 25, 2024 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1538 words

**Byline:** By Alexis Soloski

**Body**

Currently in two series, ''The Regime'' and ''Alice & Jack,'' this versatile actress has played dozens of characters. What connects them? Not even she knows.

''I really do wish sometimes that I could do all of this a different way,'' Andrea Riseborough said. ''But I suppose I just do it the way that I do it. And there are consequences.''

She paused then, pressing her lips into a thin smile. ''That all sounds a bit dramatic,'' she added.

This was on an afternoon in early March, and Riseborough, 42, a metamorphic actress with a worrying sense of commitment, was seated at a West Village cafe, a basket of vinegar-doused French fries in front of her. She is often unrecognizable from one project to the next, a combination of makeup, hairstyle (what Meryl Streep is to accents, Riseborough is to coiffure) and marrow-deep transformation. Here, offscreen, she wore a Mickey Mouse sweatshirt under a busy leather jacket. Her hair, still growing out from the dismal pixie cut she got for the HBO series ''The Regime,'' was pulled back with an elastic.

In person, she is a particular mix of gravity and nonchalance. She knows that she has a reputation for seriousness, which she rejects. ''It would be pretty strange to apologize for being serious when you're giggling so much,'' she said. But I rarely heard her laugh. She considered each question carefully and her responses were often philosophical rather than personal. ''People,'' she might say in place of ''I.'' Or ''most people.'' Or ''everyone.'' Her face, at rest and free of makeup, isn't especially restful. There is a watchfulness to her, a sense of thoughts tumbling behind those eyes.

In her two decades in the business, goaded by a tireless work ethic that sometimes saw her completing as many as five projects per year, she has amassed credits across stage, film and television. It can be hard to find a through-line among those enterprises, mainstream and independent, comedy and tragedy and horror.

In 2022, for example, she starred in the sex-addled queer musical ''Please Baby Please,'' produced by her production company; the cockeyed interwar drama ''Amsterdam''; the boisterous children's film ''Matilda: the Musical''; the bleak Scandinavian thriller ''What Remains''; and the wrenching Texas-set indie, ''To Leslie,'' for which Riseborough received her first Academy Award nomination. (That nomination was complicated by perceived campaigning irregularities, though the Academy ultimately concluded that no guidelines had been violated.) Try to connect those dots.

Riseborough can't. She disclaims any strategy and if she has an agenda in the roles she chooses, it is hidden very well, maybe even from herself. When I suggested she must have some strong inner core to fling herself so entirely into so many stories, so many lives, she disagreed.

''To say that I have a very stable sense of self would be a sweeping statement,'' she said.

She does seem drawn to sad women, troubled women, women in extreme circumstances. That would describe her current projects: the HBO mini-series ''The Regime,'' in which she plays Agnes, a dictator's handmaiden, and the PBS romantic drama ''Alice & Jack,'' in which she stars as Alice, a whiz financier who overcomes past trauma only to face it in the present. Her role in the movie ''Lee,'' which will be released later this year, may seem like a departure: She plays an editor of British Vogue. But that editor, as it happens, is instrumental in a decision about whether to publish photos of Dachau.

Riseborough didn't see the pattern. ''For the average person, there's a lot of pain in the human experience,'' she said. ''It's not so easy just to live, no matter the privileges you have or don't. It seems that the human experience for everyone is incredibly challenging. Have I played lots of people in a lot of pain? Or have I just played a lot of people going through things?'' Then she relented slightly. An actor, she admitted, could choose not to go to those places, not to take on those roles, to pursue a blither version of her craft. Riseborough has never made those choices.

She grew up in Newcastle, an industrial town in the Northeast of England. Her ***working-class*** parents were passionate about theater and film, and they passed that passion on to Riseborough and her younger sister. Riseborough was an avid dancer, in class more than 20 hours each week, and in elementary school she became involved with the People's Theater, a prominent amateur theater company and ''a wonderful, joyful thing to be a part of,'' she said.

She continued acting all through middle school and high school, before dropping out at 17 to work a series of odd jobs. Riseborough is somewhat oblique in conversation, tending to answer specific questions generally. But this was the one moment -- when asked why she had left school -- in which she consciously avoided a direct response.

''At the time, it was untenable,'' she said. ''That's what I feel comfortable saying.''

That decision removed her from acting for a while. Plays happen at night; so did her restaurant work. But two years later, she auditioned and was accepted to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. While much of the training was psychological, the course also emphasized breath work, speech and movement, physical techniques that she still relies on.

''She has a beautiful, beautiful vocal instrument and incredible control of her body,'' said Victor Levin, the showrunner of ''Alice & Jack.'' ''She can express story with her limbs, the position of her head, what she does with her eyes.''

But Riseborough would never rely on technique alone. And the idea of coasting or phoning it in or falling back on the merely physical during an off day repels her. ''I don't know how to do it if it's not true,'' she said.

Will Tracy, who created ''The Regime,'' confirmed this. ''She's one of the most honest performers you can get,'' he said. ''That type of emotional truth in acting, I don't understand how it works. I wonder if she does.''

She began her professional career before she'd graduated and after a few years working in theater, she began to rack up film credits: ''Never Let Me Go,'' ''Brighton Rock,'' ''Made in Dagenham.'' She played a young Margaret Thatcher in the television movie ''The Long Walk to Finchley'' and starred as Wallis Simpson in ''W.E,'' directed by Madonna.

If American audiences recognize her -- and given the wigs this is a considerable ''if'' -- it is likely for ''To Leslie,'' in which she starred as an alcoholic single mother. The film, directed by Michael Morris, made just $27,000 during its initial theatrical release, but Riseborough earned a Best Actress nomination, aided in part by the many Hollywood A-listers who tweeted in support. Riseborough wouldn't say precisely whose idea it was to rally these boosters (''There wasn't one person,'' she said) or if the subsequent investigation tarnished the nomination. She is proud of having made the movie and happy for people to have seen it.

''What was really clear was that it touched so many people who have been touched by alcoholism so deeply,'' she said.

This resonated with Marc Maron, her co-star in the film. ''When you see her work, you realize that's all she's living for,'' he said. Other actors, he said, have a practiced interview patter, a facility with the red carpet. Not Riseborough.

''There's a whole other part of an actor's job that she really didn't care about, which is kind of a beautiful thing,'' he said. ''I don't know what her life looks like. But the intensity she brings to the work, it feels like life or death, and that's an amazing way to live in your art, you know?''

That way has its consequences. Riseborough broke both her legs in a stunt rehearsal for the Amazon series ''Zero Zero Zero''. (The timing went awry.) Other projects have made her physically ill. ''It's just a very odd profession, because it does affect you, of course, on a cellular level,'' she said.

In her current series, the risks are mostly emotional. In ''The Regime,'' Agnes is forced to share her own child with a despot. Her face is a mask of neutrality, with horror just underneath. In ''Alice & Jack,'' Alice, as prickly as a porcupine, hungers for love even as she pushes Jack (Domhnall Gleeson) away. In both roles she must feel and feel and feel, and those feelings are rarely happy or easy.

Here, at least, she would admit to some continuity. ''The thing that I'm really drawn to is complexity,'' she said, moving swiftly from the specific to the general. ''It's wonderful when you see human experience captured in a way where it embraces the vastness and the complication of what it is to be human.''

Her private life is perhaps less complicated. She and her partner, the actor Karim Saleh (they met on the set of ''Luxor''), split their time between Los Angeles and Paris, though she isn't often home for long. In her rare downtime, she likes to read, to write, to wander. She is an inveterate people watcher. ''Sometimes it's creepy,'' she said. ''I try not to be creepy.''

She has spent two decades without particular plans for her career. She won't claim any plan going forward. ''I feel very much at the beginning,'' she said.

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY JINGYU LIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (C1)

Andrea Riseborough, above. Her recent roles include, below from left, a palace master for a despot, portrayed by Kate Winslet, in ''The Regime''

the conflicted lover of Domhnall Gleeson's character in ''Alice & Jack''

and an alcoholic mother in ''To Leslie.'' (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JINGYU LIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

MIYA MIZUNO/HBO

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MOMENTUM PICTURES) (C7) This article appeared in print on page C1, C7.

**Load-Date:** March 26, 2024

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[***Abortion Politics in 2024***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BS5-9P71-JBG3-6002-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 10, 2024 Wednesday 08:09 EST

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1909 words

**Byline:** David Leonhardt David Leonhardt runs The Morning, The Times&amp;#8217;s flagship daily newsletter. Since joining The Times in 1999, he has been an economics columnist, opinion columnist, head of the Washington bureau and founding editor of the Upshot section, among other roles.

**Highlight:** Four key points to help you make sense of the current debate.

**Body**

Four key points to help you make sense of the current debate.

No American president has done as much to restrict abortion as Donald Trump. When he was running in 2016, he promised to appoint Supreme Court justices who would overturn Roe v. Wade, and his three nominees helped do precisely that in the 2022 Dobbs decision. [*Twenty-one states*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) have since enacted tight restrictions. Yesterday, Arizona’s highest court [*reinstated an 1864 law*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) that bans nearly all abortions.

These laws have proven to be unpopular. When abortion access has appeared on the ballot since 2022, it has consistently won, even in red states like Kansas, Kentucky and Montana. A Wall Street Journal poll last month found that [*abortion stood out*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) from immigration, inflation and foreign wars as the only major issue on which most voters trusted President Biden more than Trump.

All of this helps explains why Trump has tried to reduce his vulnerability on the issue — and why the Biden campaign is already running advertisements about abortion. [*“Donald Trump did this,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) reads the onscreen text at the end of an ad released this week. It focuses on a Texas woman who nearly died during a miscarriage after a hospital refused to treat her.

Trump [*released his own video*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) this week, meant to serve as his defining statement on the issue. He said that states should be free to set their own laws, which is the post-Dobbs status quo. In so doing, he tried to distance himself from [*his past support*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) for a federal ban.

This back-and-forth will be a theme of the 2024 campaign. Democrats will try to focus voters on abortion, while many Republicans will try to shift attention elsewhere. Today’s newsletter offers four key points to help you make sense of the debate.

The four points

1. The politics of abortion have changed.

Before Dobbs, polls suggested that the issue didn’t offer a big political advantage to either party. Most voters favored both significant access to abortion and significant restrictions, which put them to the left of Republican politicians and to the right of Democratic politicians.

But Dobbs — and the reality of statewide bans, as opposed to the mere prospect of them — altered public opinion. Gallup’s polls suggest that almost 10 percent of Americans on net switched from an anti-abortion position to a position favoring abortion access:

2. Democrats still have a challenge: salience.

In the 2022 midterms, several high-profile Democratic candidates highlighted their Republican opponents’ role in restricting abortion access. Stacey Abrams in Georgia and Beto O’Rourke in Texas were among them. So was Nan Whaley, the Democratic candidate for governor in Ohio. “We think it is the issue,” Whaley said.

It wasn’t. These candidates all lost by substantial margins. Nationwide, not a single Republican governor or senator has lost a re-election bid since the Dobbs decision. In House elections, the decision may have played a decisive role in a small number of races.

How could this be? In today’s polarized atmosphere, most voters have already made up their minds. “There’s no one issue in this day and age that can be a silver bullet,” Danielle Deiseroth, executive director of Data for Progress, a left-leaning research firm, told me.

If anything, Democrats may have a harder time focusing attention on abortion in a presidential election, when a larger portion of the electorate doesn’t follow politics closely and prioritizes pocketbook issues. Some of these voters are Black and Hispanic ***working-class*** Americans who tend to care less about abortion policy than white voters, [*Rachel Cohen of Vox has written*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

3. Trump’s has his own problem: suburban swing voters.

Democrats who tried to run on abortion in the 2022 midterms were trying to oust incumbent Republicans. Biden has an easier job this year: He’s trying to reassemble a winning coalition.

His 2020 coalition included many college graduates — and women — in metropolitan areas like Philadelphia, Detroit, Atlanta and Phoenix, who allowed him to win swing states. Abortion access is popular with these voters, Deiseroth notes, especially when framed in terms of freedom and government overreach.

[*A recent poll*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) found that only about one in four independents blame Trump for recent abortion bans. Biden hopes to increase that share — and win back people who voted for him four years ago.

4. Trump hopes voters ignore the past.

Trump’s latest position on the issue is a middle ground for Republicans, in favor of Dobbs but implicitly against a new federal law restricting abortion. This stance is meant to suggest that voting for him won’t lead to new laws forbidding abortion. That may be true (if he were to veto a Republican-passed federal ban, which he didn’t promise in his video). Yet it also ignores some important facts.

As president again, Trump could appoint dozens more federal judges who would interpret existing laws to reduce access. And Trump is effectively asking voters to ignore his first-term record. He remains arguably the most important opponent of abortion access in American history.

For more

* Biden [*condemned*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) the Arizona abortion decision as “cruel” and “extreme.”

1. “I’m pretty pro-life, but I think it should be the woman’s choice”: Read the [*mixed responses of Arizonans*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) to the ruling.
2. Trump’s abortion stance is [*designed to look moderate*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), Times Opinion’s Jamelle Bouie writes.
3. Trump’s contempt for weakness is [*toxic to the pro-life movement*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), which promises protections to the most vulnerable, Times Opinion’s Ross Douthat writes.

THE LATEST NEWS

Diplomacy

* The Japanese prime minister, Fumio Kishida, is on a state visit to Washington. The U.S. and Japan are [*expected to further integrate their militaries*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) to counter China.

1. David Cameron, the British foreign secretary and former prime minister, [*met with Trump at Mar-a-Lago*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Congress

* A bipartisan group of lawmakers plans to introduce a bill in Congress today that would [*limit troops’ exposure to blasts*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) from weapons that can cause brain injuries.

1. Congress passed legislation to get food to children from low-income homes over the summer break. [*Nearly half of Republican-led states*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) are yet to join the program.

More on Politics

* An appeals court judge [*rejected another attempt by Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) to delay his criminal case in Manhattan. The trial is set to start Monday.

1. A judge ordered Trump’s lawyers to redact the name of witnesses from a public filing in the classified documents case. The special counsel, Jack Smith, expressed [*concern for their safety*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).
2. A Florida woman who stole the diary of Ashley Biden, the president’s daughter, and helped sell it to a right-wing group was [*sentenced to a month in prison*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).
3. The U.S. is now [*almost evenly divided*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) between Democrats and Republicans, a Pew report says. More voters have shifted toward the Republican Party.
4. “A reality distortion bubble”: America isn’t as divided as many people think, [*Jim VandeHei and Mike Allen write for Axios*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Israel-Hamas War

* Iran is [*smuggling weapons to Palestinians*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) in the West Bank to stoke unrest, according to Iranian, Israeli and U.S. officials.

1. Benjamin Netanyahu [*reaffirmed that Israel would invade the crowded city of Rafah*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) in southern Gaza. “No force in the world will stop us,” he said in a speech to military recruits.
2. At the top U.N. court, [*Germany rejected an accusation from Nicaragua*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) that it had aided genocide by shipping arms to Israel. It said most of the equipment was nonlethal.
3. The U.S. defense secretary, Lloyd Austin, told a Senate committee that [*the Pentagon had no evidence*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) that Israel was carrying out a genocide in Gaza.
4. Turkey said it would [*limit exports to Israel*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) until there’s a cease-fire in Gaza. Israel threatened to retaliate.

Europe

* England’s health service [*restricted medical gender transition*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) for minors after a four-year review cast doubt on the treatment’s benefits. Several other European countries have similar rules.

1. Europe’s top human rights court ruled that Switzerland violated its citizens’ rights by [*not doing enough to stop climate change*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).
2. Ireland is now led by its youngest ever prime minister: [*the 37-year-old Simon Harris*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).
3. Ukraine’s military has [*turned to drones from China*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) after models sent by Silicon Valley start-ups failed in combat, The Wall Street Journal reports.

Other Big Stories

* The parents of a teenager who shot to death four fellow students at a Michigan high school [*each received 10 to 15 years in prison*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

1. The total solar eclipse delayed some Islamic communities’ [*declaration of Eid al-Fitr*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), the celebration that marks the end of Ramadan.
2. The E.P.A. will require utilities to [*remove “forever chemicals”*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) from tap water. The chemicals identified are linked to cancer.

Opinions

[*Benjamin Netanyahu must step down*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) and leave Israel’s war in Gaza to someone who can win it, Bret Stephens writes.

The U.S. economy has been far more successful at [*recovering from the Covid shock*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) than from the 2008 financial crisis, Paul Krugman argues.

Here are columns by Thomas Friedman on [*an exit strategy for Israel*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) in Gaza and Thomas Edsall on [*Trump and the politics of intimidation*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

MORNING READS

Passion projects: A lab in France is famous for its medical discoveries. Some of its staff are also excelling in another field: [*music*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Cure-all? People claim that apple cider vinegar can help you lose weight and clear acne. [*The science is more nuanced*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Guns, machetes and food poisoning: Read about what one man encountered when he [*ran the length of Africa*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Eclipse: Internet traffic [*dropped by 40 percent or more*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) in the path of totality.

Space: Rising temperatures make it harder for researchers [*to collect meteorites*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) in Antarctica.

Lives Lived: Peter Higgs predicted the existence of a new particle, sparking a half-century search that culminated with a Nobel Prize. The particle — the Higgs boson — was named after him. Higgs [*died at 94*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

SPORTS

College basketball: The men’s national title game between UConn and Purdue [*averaged 14.8 million viewers*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), four million fewer than the women’s game.

Stepping down: The Stanford women’s basketball coach Tara VanDerveer, who holds the record for most wins in college basketball, [*announced her retirement*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

M.L.B.: The Baltimore Orioles [*will promote Jackson Holliday*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), considered the best prospect in baseball, to the major leagues.

ARTS AND IDEAS

Dr. Jane’s Dream: Next year, sometime around World Chimpanzee Day — July 14 — “Dr. Jane’s Dream” will open its doors. The cultural complex, between Mount Kilimanjaro and Serengeti National Park in Tanzania, will celebrate the English primatologist Jane Goodall, who turned 90 last week.

[*Read more about it, and about Goodall’s career*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

More on culture

* [*Donna Dennis*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing)is a trailblazer of installation art who has long been overlooked. Some of her work is being exhibited at O’Flaherty’s in Manhattan.

1. Conan O’Brien [*returned to “The Tonight Show”*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) for the first time in 14 years.

THE MORNING RECOMMENDS …

Bake budget-friendly [*cheesy chicken and mushroom pasta*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Exercise even when [*you’re experiencing allergies*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Buy [*a robot vacuum*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) (they can work).

Find [*a good raincoat*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) for spring showers.

Drink from an [*insulated tumbler*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Download [*these apps*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) before visiting a national park.

GAMES

Here is [*today’s Spelling Bee*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). Yesterday’s pangram was hangable.

And here are [*today’s Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), [*Wordle*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), [*Sudoku*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), [*Connections*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) and [*Strands*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

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

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

PHOTO: In Amarillo, Texas. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Meridith Kohut for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** April 10, 2024

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[***Read All About It! The Long and Bloody History of True Crime Lit.; Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B7F-6JX1-DXY4-X182-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 1, 2024 Thursday 14:30 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 1251 words

**Byline:** Lizzie Pook

**Highlight:** The genre’s roots date back hundreds of years, to the prison cells and gallows of 17th-century London.

**Body**

The genre’s roots date back hundreds of years, to the prison cells and gallows of 17th-century London.

“There’s been 11 hardback books on me,” the serial killer John Wayne Gacy [*told a reporter*](https://murderpedia.org/male.G/g1/gacy-john-wayne.htm) on the eve of his execution in 1994. “Thirty-one paperbacks, two screenplays, one movie, one Off Broadway play, five songs and over 5,000 articles. What can I say about it?”

What can be said about it is that murder makes a lucrative story, something authors of the true crime genre have exploited in recent years to forge a [*multimillion-dollar industry*](https://www.marketplace.org/2022/10/31/the-big-business-of-true-crime/), placing serial killers on our screens, funneling their voices into our ears, recounting their “exclusive" tell-alls in best-selling books. We may consider the obsession with true crime a contemporary preoccupation — with Etsy shops selling enamel pins of [*Ted Bundy’s face*](https://www.etsy.com/fi-en/listing/603877300/ted-bundy-enamel-pin) and [*his Volkswagen*](https://www.etsy.com/fi-en/listing/604217285/bundys-bug-enamel-pin), and crime conventions filling casino-size hotels with teenage girls in “[*Murderino” T-shirts*](https://www.teepublic.com/t-shirt/8894491-murderino?countrycode=US&amp;utm_source=google&amp;utm_medium=shopping&amp;utm_campaign=%5BG%5D+%5BG.NAM%5D+%5BL.ENG%5D+%5BGEN%5D+%5BC.TShirts%5D+%5BPLF%5D&amp;utm_id=notset&amp;utm_content=serial+podcast&amp;ar_clx=yes&amp;ar_channel=google&amp;ar_campaign=71700000112744002&amp;ar_adgroup=&amp;ar_ad=&amp;ar_strategy=search&amp;utm_source=google&amp;utm_medium=cpc&amp;utm_campaign=%5BG%5D+%5BG.USA%5D+%5BL.ENG%5D+%5BGEN%5D+%5BC.TShirts%5D+%5BPMAX%5D&amp;gad_source=1&amp;gclid=Cj0KCQiAnfmsBhDfARIsAM7MKi3jTtIvmr_VpKdOydH9nipJW9aIW9LtWfyLohCLk-sUQk7YmDae3oYaAv8aEALw_wcB&amp;gclsrc=aw.ds#321P8894491D1V). But these grisly stories, and our insatiable thirst for them, have been monetized for hundreds of years.

Long before the self-styled [*Zodiac Killer*](https://www.crimemuseum.org/crime-library/serial-killers/the-zodiac-killer/) mailed his letters to California newspapers, threatening killing sprees and bombings if his messages were not printed, there was an English prison chaplain named Henry Goodcole who bolstered his modest salary by selling stories about death and sin. Between 1620 and 1636 Goodcole served as “Ordinary,” or “Visitor,” at London’s notoriously lawless Newgate Prison, his job being to attend to the prisoners’ spiritual welfare — preaching, hearing confessions and leading services behind the thick, dank walls.

Newgate was rife with killers (as well as debtors and thieves) and, thus immersed in tales of blood and abomination, Goodcole saw a market opportunity. But how to make his money? Literacy was on the rise in England, and the political, social and religious upheaval of the 1600s meant the public was ravenous for information. Murder, Goodcole shrewdly realized, was among the stories they liked best.

So, the chaplain turned his hand to producing broadsides: cheaply printed prose pamphlets detailing the lives and crimes of the prison’s most dangerous inmates. The broadsides featured hyperbolic, often wildly embellished last confessions and “interviews” with the condemned, and for a long time Goodcole was one of the most eminent authors on the true crime scene.

But he wasn’t the only one making money from murder. Around the country, town leaders and clergymen reported on gruesome local killings as a means — at least officially — of deterring the criminally inclined. Such publications as “The Triumphs of God’s Revenge Against the Crying and Execrable Sinne of Wilful and Premeditated Murther,” written by an Exeter merchant named John Reynolds and sold on Fleet Street beginning in 1621, exaggerated the details of both the scandalous crimes committed by his subjects and the punishments meted out to them. Who could be blamed if the public was willing to empty its pockets for such titillation?

Soon enough, anyone with access to a printer’s shop could produce broadsides and tout them to an audience hungry for sensationalism. By the 19th century, murder mania had seized London. Killers such as William Corder, James Greenacre and Daniel Good became household names, their effigies erected in wax in Madame Tussaud’s infamous Chamber of Horrors. Theaters put on shows about the dastardly and the depraved. So-called penny dreadfuls — cheap, serialized novellas — told of wayward highwaymen and slaughtered maidens.

For much of the century, capital punishment still took place in public. Huge crowds turned out to watch the carnivalesque spectacles of hangings, including Charles Dickens, who wrote in a letter to The Times of London in 1849 that he’d never seen a “sight so inconceivably awful as the wickedness and levity of the immense crowd.” He attended hangings more than once, purely to get the full picture for use in his writings, of course.

London’s broadside and street ballad salesmen pounced on the true crime fervor with gleeful entrepreneurialism, leading the satirical magazine Punch to accuse them of profiting from “the abomination of blood.” The broadsides were churned out quickly and sequentially whenever a crime caught public interest. First, they covered the particulars of the crime; then the trial; and, finally and “most profitably,” as the historian Judith Flanders writes in “The Invention of Murder” (2011), the “sorrowful lamentation” or “last confession” of the criminal, often including a vivid description of the execution (even if it hadn’t yet taken place). Such intensive coverage transformed killers into celebrities. At James Greenacre’s hanging, pies and portrait illustrations were sold in his honor.

Some broadsides sold over a million copies, often at the foot of the gallows with a body still swinging. In 1849, at the double hanging of Frederick and Maria Manning — a husband-and-wife duo who murdered Maria’s lover and stashed his body beneath their flagstone floor — an estimated two and a half million broadsides were purchased, more than 30 times the number of copies of the popular Illustrated London News sold the year before.

Over time, broadsides grew more sophisticated, if not in content then at least in format. From single sheets for the semiliterate, they blossomed into multi-page editions featuring intricate woodcuts of dead bodies and brutally comic action scenes. Headlines promised “Barbarous and Awful Murder,” “Great and Horrible News” or “Elegiac Lines on the Tragical Murder of Poor Daft Jamie.”

The stories themselves were sometimes patently plagiarized. One popular broadside, “A Copy of Verses on Mary Arnold, the Female Monster” (1843), told of a woman who, in order to make her daughter a more successful beggar, blinded her by placing beetles in nutshells and tying them over her eyes until they ate through her flesh. Presented as fact, the story was a plotline lifted from G.W.M. Reynolds’s “The Mysteries of London,” a penny dreadful series that in the 1850s attracted more readers than Dickens.

As public hangings ceased and newspapers became cheap enough for the ***working class*** to obtain, broadsides eventually fell out of favor. But the precedent was set. Today, theories about our appetite for true crime stories abound. Some posit that we read them to satisfy a human need to play detective, to bring order to chaos. As Alice Bolin puts it in “[*Dead Girls: Essays on Surviving an American Obsession*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/29/books/review/alice-bolin-dead-girls-michelle-tea-against-memoir.html?searchResultPosition=1)” (2018), “Our cultural obsession with murder stories and the criminal justice system is a prime example of the impulse to narrativize a reality that is basically unexplainable.” Others submit that we turn to such tales for lessons in how to avoid becoming victims ourselves, or because they encourage empathy, which has a beneficial social function.

Yet the idea that we feed ourselves true crime stories because they have something to teach us — because they are good for us — sidesteps an uncomfortable truth: We read these stories because they provide pleasure. We are gluttons for the grisly. We devour and we clamor, voraciously chewing over the details of murder. And so, just as there will always be crime, there will always be someone, pen held aloft, waiting to write all about it.

Lizzie Pook’s new novel, “Maude Horton’s Glorious Revenge,” will be published in January.

PHOTO: A broadside by Henry Goodcole, an eminent author on the true crime beat. (PHOTOGRAPH VIA FOLGER SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY) This article appeared in print on page BR22.

**Load-Date:** February 1, 2024

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[***Transcript: Ezra Klein Interviews Tim Alberta; The Ezra Klein Show***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CH9-B3X1-JBG3-606R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 18, 2024 Thursday 12:05 EST

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**Section:** PODCASTS

**Length:** 7945 words

**Highlight:** The July 18, 2024, episode of “The Ezra Klein Show.”

**Body**

Every Tuesday and Friday, Ezra Klein invites you into a conversation about something that matters, like today’s episode with Tim Alberta. Listen [*wherever you get your podcasts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/19/opinion/how-to-listen-ezra-klein-show-nyt.html).

Transcripts of our episodes are made available as soon as possible. They are not fully edited for grammar or spelling.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

EZRA KLEIN: From New York Times Opinion, this is “The Ezra Klein Show.”

I’m recording this on day three of the Republican National Convention, which has not been like any Republican Convention in recent memory.

Recent Republican Conventions — and I’ve been at a number of them — have been chaotic, unplanned affairs. You remember Clint Eastwood interviewing a chair in 2012? Or the weirdly dark and disunited Republican Conventions in 2016 and 2020?

But this time — this time, Republicans have fallen in line. Fallen in line behind Donald Trump. In line behind his vision of the party. One thing I’m seeing up there, something I think a lot of liberals are missing is, yes, the Republican Party has become a personality cult. Yes, it has become the property of one man. But that is allowing that one man to make changes to what the Republican Party is that his predecessors could not. It is presenting something different up there. Not entirely different, but importantly so.

And maybe it wouldn’t be that way if Trump seemed to be tumbling towards defeat and speaker after speaker were thinking they could be the one to pick up the pieces. But right now, he’s hurtling towards victory — or at least his campaign thinks that he is. And so, as far as I can tell, does everybody else at that convention.

Tim Alberta is at that convention. He’s a staff writer at The Atlantic who just published a fantastic profile of Trump’s two campaign managers and their theory of victory. He’s also the author of “American Carnage: On the Front Lines of the Republican Civil War and the Rise of President Trump,” and “The Kingdom, The Power and The Glory: American Evangelicals in the Age of Extremism.” Both are important books if you want to understand this era in American politics.

As always, my email, [*ezrakleinshow@nytimes.com*](mailto:ezrakleinshow@nytimes.com)

Tim Alberta, welcome to the show.

TIM ALBERTA: Hey, Ezra. Good to talk to you again.

EZRA KLEIN: So you were embedded with the Trump campaign, particularly its campaign leads, for months. You came out of that thinking they believed they were headed towards a landslide victory. Now you’re at the Republican Convention. What’s the mood there?

TIM ALBERTA: I would say the mood feels like a very early election night victory party. And I’ve got to say, Ezra, I’ve been to a bunch of Republican Conventions. I’ve never seen anything even approaching the level of confidence, cockiness, almost arrogance that you’re picking up here.

I think in politics, when one side is winning, you really feel it, and you are feeling it here in Milwaukee. I mean, the Republicans are winning and they know they’re winning. And I don’t think the folks here are even entertaining the possibility that Biden could be reelected. I mean, it just — it really feels like it’s a celebration of a second term rather than a celebration of Trump being nominated yet again.

EZRA KLEIN: Is that overconfidence?

TIM ALBERTA: Yeah, it probably is. Because politics is crazy, and — I mean, think back to 2016. In the space of a couple of months, we have the Hillary investigation being closed, and then we have “Access Hollywood,” and then we have the investigation being reopened. I mean, 2016 was, we all thought, the craziest election we’d ever lived through.

And then fast forward four years to 2020, and we’ve got Covid, and we’ve got — suddenly he’s hospitalized at Walter Reed and nearly dies — which, by the way, talk about dodging a bullet. I mean, can you imagine the conspiracy theories had Trump died at Walter Reed under the watch of deep state doctors?

So 2020 took on its own very surreal “Twilight Zone” feel. And now here we are, four years later, and we’ve already had an assassination attempt, and we have the sitting President appearing almost incapacitated at times during that first debate and the Democratic Party trying to dump him. And we’re still four months out. So it feels like there’s an awful lot that can happen between now and November.

EZRA KLEIN: Let’s hold on the assassination attempt for a minute. What role is the assassination attempt playing there?

TIM ALBERTA: I think to the degree that it is meaningfully changed anything — in the Republican Party, at least, it’s that Trump, who already had this sort of cult of personality command over the party — over its officials, over its rank and file, over its base, there’s now almost this added aura of invincibility.

We’ve heard a number of speakers talk about this from the podium in prime time these last couple of nights, about how clearly God has his hands on Donald Trump and how he’s sort of been ordained for this moment, and not even an assassin’s bullet can stop him from carrying out God’s plan.

And I think there’s always been some of that messianic undertone around Trump, but it’s typically been found further toward the fringes of the party and a little bit more adjacent with some of the populist evangelical movement leaders who he’s surrounded himself with. But now it’s sort of getting mainstreamed in a way that is pretty noteworthy.

And that, more than anything, has been really the major — at least the major rhetorical impact, the vibe shift that you sense here is that people who were already crazy about Trump and were already going to be voting for Trump, now they find themselves sort of in awe of Trump, and that does feel different.

EZRA KLEIN: Mike Donilon, who is President Biden’s key strategists, one of his sayings about politics and about elections is that the key question is always what an election is about fundamentally. And political conventions are efforts by parties to frame what an election is about. Donilon has been saying from the beginning that 2024 is going to be about democracy. It is going to be about, in a way, Jan. 6. That’s how they started the Biden re-election campaign. I would say it’s pretty clear that that is not working.

From the Republican side, from what you’re feeling in the convention, from the themes that are running through the speakers, what do Republicans believe this election is about?

TIM ALBERTA: It’s a really simple concept, Ezra. And if you hear it and think, wow, that’s kind of reductive, it’s because it is.

The key contrast in this campaign that the Trump people have been trying to engineer and optimize and operationalize from day one is strength versus weakness. Talking about the Southern border. Talking about the world on fire and Biden misplaying various geopolitical hands. Talking about the economy and inflation.

The Trump people believe, even setting aside the question of Biden’s age and visible decline and some of his fragilities, they believe that in all the focus grouping they do, the polling they do, that the question of Biden being weak, the notion of Biden being weak, is, time and time again, the most effective line of attack on him.

And I should note that all of this, what I’m describing, it predates the debate. It predates the assassination attempt. So now you already had this existing theory of the case about what this election was going to be about from the Trump perspective. And then you get into the debate and you get to Saturday with the assassination attempt, and you recognize, Ezra, that political campaigns, especially presidential campaigns, really wind up being about a couple of key moments, a couple of key images, a couple of key exchanges or occurrences that sort of pierce the fog of the campaign and break through in a way that voters who are mostly disengaged otherwise, they suddenly are attuned to what’s happening in that moment.

And you would have to say that in this campaign, the two moments that have done that are the debate and the assassination attempt. And I think what’s most problematic for Biden and his team at this point is that those two moments, both are almost tailor-made to fit the Trump campaign’s key narrative of strength versus weakness.

Biden, looking like he had one foot in the grave at the debate and looking almost entirely incapable of executing on any of his strategy coming in against Trump and just looking lost and confused and pale and sounding very weak, versus Trump, surviving a bullet shot at his head and standing up and pumping his fist with blood running down his face.

I mean, what could better, from their perspective, encapsulate the strength-versus-weakness argument? So that’s very much the world that they were already living in before these events. And now, I think that’s why they believe they’re in a position to win at a scale that none of us had even imagined.

EZRA KLEIN: This is something that stood out at me. In your profile of the Trump campaign. You wrote, quote, “On a stretch of wall outside the conference room, large, black letters spelled out the campaign’s mantra — ‘Joe Biden is weak, failed, and dishonest.’”

Something you write about in that piece, because you did a lot of the reporting before the debate, and then you were publishing it in the aftermath, is that the one thing that seemed to be troubling the confidence of Trump’s campaign strategists was the idea that the Democrats might replace Joe Biden. Tell me about that.

TIM ALBERTA: Yeah, Ezra, I think it’s just really important to underscore that the Trump campaign, from day one, has been built not to run against a generic Democrat. It’s been built to run a very specific race against a very specific opponent in Joe Biden.

From the very earliest conversations I’ve had with Chris LaCivita and Susie Wiles, who are the co-architects, the co-managers of Trump’s campaign, from our very earliest conversations, almost every exchange we had, every question I was asking about mechanics and strategy and tactics, kept returning to the subject of Joe Biden. And they weren’t just trying to use him as a pinata for fun in those conversations. They were making points, very specific points, about how they were tailoring their operations.

Everything from the young guys who work upstairs in their war room, cutting video clips that they can turn into quick viral memes and blast around their social networks and get amplified by their allies on the outside, to their microtargeting strategies that they were implementing to pursue very particular demographic groups who they had data to suggest were moving away from Biden in ways that they wouldn’t have been moving away perhaps from another Democrat. Everything that they were engineering inside of this campaign, going back months and months and months, it was all very specific to defeating Biden.

And so once you’ve done that work, once you’ve built out this campaign that is, in many ways, quite sophisticated, quite professionalized, especially compared to Trump’s previous two efforts, which were a joke in a lot of ways, once you’ve done that work, the only thing that could ruin your best-laid plans is if that guy who you’ve been preparing to run against suddenly isn’t on the ballot anymore. And it’s caused a bit of a freakout in Trump world over these last couple of weeks.

And as I write in the piece, they are all but praying at this point that Democrats don’t find an alternative because they really believe that if Biden stays on the ballot, they’re going to win the biggest Republican election since Reagan.

EZRA KLEIN: I want to pick up on that idea that this Trump campaign is professionalized in a way the others had not been. Let’s begin with Chris LaCivita and Susan Wiles, who you profiled in this piece. Who are they? What’s their story and approach?

TIM ALBERTA: So Susie Wiles is a really interesting person. Her father was actually Pat Summerall, the legendary play-by-play man who was in the booth with John Madden for so many years. And Susie has kept a low profile over the years. She’s worked in Florida Republican politics for a very, very long time, has a great reputation, but was never necessarily known at the national level until more recently.

I guess the best way to describe Susie, and to give a window into her competency, Ezra, is you may have noticed this year that we are not talking about Florida. The great Tim Russert, of course, used to always joke Florida, Florida, Florida. Like, that’s all the election was going to be about, was Florida. But this year, we’re not talking about Florida. Why?

The simplest answer to that is Susie Wiles. Susie has, over the past decade or so, so effectively increased the Republican Party’s vote share among nonwhite, traditionally left-leaning demographic groups that Democrats have now cried uncle and conceded the state.

EZRA KLEIN: Let’s hold there because I keep hearing this about Wiles, but it never comes with very much in the way of detail about what she did. Like, what did she do? How did Florida politicians under her tutelage reposition or offer something different that changed the dynamics of Florida politics?

TIM ALBERTA: What Susie has really been adamant about doing in recent years — because she ran the Trump 2016 Florida operation and then ran the Trump 2020 Florida operation. And in both of those campaigns, what Susie was really insistent on was we are not just going to make a symbolic show of engaging these communities.

We’re not just going to go open some office in a Latino neighborhood and do a ribbon-cutting and hope for a couple of friendly headlines and then go away. Susie has been insistent on, we are going to make a sustained engagement of these voters, we’re going to knock on their doors, we’re going to call them, we’re going to target them with advertising that’s going to cost money.

And by the way, when we target them, we’re not going to target them the same way that we reach out to wealthy white Republicans in Boca Raton or Jacksonville or wherever. What Susie and some of her allied Republicans in Florida have been able to do is figure out ways to message very specific things to very specific groups. And by the way, this is not reinventing the wheel, Ezra. Like some of this, in different ways, has been done before, including by the Obama folks, but Republicans had really never done it well.

Susie figured out a formula in Florida to try when they’re in Miami-Dade County targeting Latino voters, particularly first - and second-generation immigrants, they’re airing ads talking about the Democratic Party is trying to import socialism from Venezuela or Cuba or Colombia or wherever to the United States. So it’s been a really tightly targeted engagement strategy that has paid great dividends for the party down in Florida.

EZRA KLEIN: So then tell me about Chris LaCivita.

TIM ALBERTA: So Chris is more of your throwback hatchet man-style Republican operative. And I think he would wear that label with pride. Chris is best known as, Ezra — rather, famously known for having spearheaded this campaign in 2004 — this is called Swift Boat Veterans for Truth, which, in many ways, was responsible, many people think, for John Kerry ultimately losing that election to George W. Bush.

And of course, it should be noted that the Swift Boat Veterans campaign was dirty, it was deceptive, it was, in many ways, representative of the very worst of political practitioners and the dark arts.

EZRA KLEIN: Just for younger listeners. So John Kerry ran in 2004 in a national security election as a war hero, which George W. Bush very much was not. And the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth campaign against him was built on people who had served, either with him or on boats like his, questioning both his war heroism and whether he had betrayed people like them in becoming maybe the most prominent antiwar activist as a veteran in that era.

And it was built on a lot of BS that was did not survive any kind of fact-checking, but it muddied the central contrast that he was drawing between his patriotism and his willingness to serve and put himself in danger, and build on that into a presidential campaign, and George W. Bush’s tendency to launch wars that he had no sense of what it would mean to fight in them.

TIM ALBERTA: That’s exactly right. And I would even take it a step further, Ezra. He executed brilliantly — I mean deviously, but brilliantly — on the classic “Art of War” strategy — that you take your opponent’s great strength, which, for Kerry, was his decorated service in the Vietnam War, and you turn it into a vulnerability, you turn it into a weakness.

And that’s what, I think, Chris tries to do in his campaigns. Chris is an operative who is always on the attack. And it comes back to bite him at times. Chris has made some enemies in politics. Chris is a guy who plays for keeps and he plays to win and doesn’t make any apologies for it. He is a very hard-charging, “always on offense” type.

I think what’s interesting is that when he joined forces with Susie Wiles, there were a lot of Republicans who thought there was no way this partnership is going to work. There’s no way it’s going to last because they’re just very, very, very different people. Susie is very quiet, very self-possessed. She’s a grandmother. She never raises her voice. Chris is this big former marine. Wounded in combat in the Gulf War. He curses a lot. He is loud and boisterous. And the two of them would seem to just be the oddest of couples on paper.

And yet, somehow, some way, the two of them together have been able to not just professionalize a political operation that had been pretty disorganized, and in some ways, just sort of downright clownish over the years. But they’ve also been able to — I don’t want to say tame Donald Trump, because nobody can tame Donald Trump, but they’ve been able to reach him and bring him along in evolving in some pretty important ways that have made him much more effective as a political candidate.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

EZRA KLEIN: You’ve talked about how LaCivita and Wiles have managed not to tame Trump, but at times, to channel him. And I wanted to look at this in two directions, one where it seems to me they’ve really failed and submitted to him, and one where they’ve succeeded and moved him.

The one where it seems to me, from your story, that they have submitted to something really weird with him is in agreeing to shift their and the R.N.C.’s priorities away from Get Out the Vote and towards this thing called election integrity, which I would like you to describe what they understand election integrity to be. But then one where they seem to have moved him is on vote by mail. So could you talk about those two examples and what they may reveal?

TIM ALBERTA: Sure. So two the first one, Trump has this expression that he’s said more and more over these last few years. and he said it to Chris and Susie when they sort of officially stepped in to take over the campaign for 2024. Trump said to them, listen, I’ll turn out the vote. You guys just spend that money protecting it.

In other words, Trump believes that he is a one-man mobilization machine. That he supplies the energy, he supplies, the intensity. That he’s the one who is ultimately going to be responsible for turning out voters come Election Day. And what he’s much more interested in, because it obviously helps to save face from the last election, helps to stroke his ego about continuing to insist that the last election was stolen from him.

And, I should add, it gives him and his party an early foothold on being able to contest the results if, in fact, this fall, things are very tight or if things go against him by some narrow margin somewhere, Trump has basically diverted much of those previously earmarked resources that the Republican Party had for ground operations and he’s sent all that money to create this massive new election integrity unit.

Which is, in its simplest explanation, Ezra, a network of thousands and thousands of lawyers and volunteers all around the country who are, in real-time, going to be monitoring every voting precinct, every tabulation center, even every drop box. You’re going to have physically eyes on those places from the Trump world, and they are going to be able to document, as it happens, any sort of confusion, any irregularity, anything that seems amiss, the Republican Party is going to be on it in real-time.

That is an enormously expensive proposition. And for a Trump campaign that was already bleeding $0.25 on the dollar that they were raising going to Trump’s legal fees, for him to suddenly insist on this massive election integrity unit, Chris and Susie are looking around saying, well, there’s only so many dollars that we have. We can’t do this election integrity thing that you’re insisting upon and run a traditional ground game. And that’s where Trump basically said, well, forget about the ground game. Just do the election integrity thing.

And Ezra, I just can’t overstate what an enormous risk this poses, not even necessarily to Trump himself, but to a lot of down-ballot Republicans who are in really tight races, who are accustomed to having some sort of an organized footprint on the ground in their communities that can help them to knock doors and to phone bank and to raise some more money. These Republicans are looking around right now realizing that the cavalry isn’t coming and it’s really freaking them out.

EZRA KLEIN: And then the vote-by-mail side?

TIM ALBERTA: So on the vote-by-mail side, this probably represents the most significant tactical evolution in Trump’s political world over the past eight years. And when you think back to 2020, Ezra, this was an election decided by 42,918 votes spread across three states.

EZRA KLEIN: He might have won if he had encouraged his supporters to vote by mail.

TIM ALBERTA: I mean, I think he almost certainly would have. I mean, it’s, of course, a counterfactual, but it’s one thing to just remain neutral on the vote-by-mail thing, but Donald Trump went out of his way to forbid people for voting for him by mail. I mean, it’s a pretty extraordinary thing.

And so it’s funny because Susie Wiles had really led the charge over a period of months to get Trump to see the light on this. And she talked to him about Florida. She talked to him about how the Republican Party in Florida had really mastered the vote-by-mail operation, and it was a huge part of their success and how it was safe and secure and not fraudulent.

And she had some success, and she was working him, working him, working him over a long period of time this spring into the summer. And really, though, she told me what happened was that Trump was having this off-the-cuff, serendipitous conversation with somebody who made this just random out-of-left-field remark about why he enjoyed voting by mail and why he thought it was a good idea. And Trump said, oh, OK. All right, good. I’m on board. Let’s do it. And so that was that.

And you have to think, Ezra, if Trump winds up winning this fall, and especially if he wins by a narrow margin and vote by mail makes the difference, this random person who made this off-the-cuff remark to Trump is going to go down as a pretty consequential figure in our political history.

But Trump has not just embraced it rhetorically. His campaign now is building out a very sophisticated apparatus that is able to create a customizable engagement program for anyone who makes any sort of contact with the Trump people digitally, physically, by mail, whatever, those people are now given personalized, deeply customized instructions on how they should vote, where they should vote, what their different options are.

So the Trump people, again, have not just gotten him to a better place mentally or rhetorically, but they’re actually operationalizing it in a way that is going to help him at the ballot box.

EZRA KLEIN: Right now if you listen to the Biden campaign’s best argument for itself, what they will tell you is that they do better than a lot of the polling suggests among the kinds of voters who turn out very reliably. It’s why Democrats have been doing better than expected in midterms, why they’ve been doing better than expected in special elections.

So their argument is, look, in the general election, we are relying on the voters who turn out. Donald Trump is relying on the voters who don’t turn out and he doesn’t have a great get-out-the-vote operation. And that’s going to work in our favor and might be the way we win this thing.

And in a way, Trump is saying something not so dissimilar — or his campaign leaves are saying something not so dissimilar, but with a different expected outcome, which is that Trump is making huge gains, if you look at polling, among the kinds of voters you would not expect to turn out for Trump — younger voters, Black men, that kind of thing.

And they believe that at the end of the day, not only can they turn out, but by the way, if they do turn out, it’s very likely the polling is not going to capture this correctly and they might have a significantly bigger win than polls currently suggest, which, by the way, we’ve seen with Donald Trump before.

So tell me how you think about this question of the low-propensity Trump voters, what we’ve seen from them in the Primary, and how you rate the arguments or theories of the two campaigns here.

TIM ALBERTA: Yeah, so OK, let me put it into two different buckets if I can, Ezra. I think in the first bucket, when the Trump campaign talks about locating, identifying and ultimately mobilizing low-propensity MAGA sympathetic voters, they, in that context, are primarily talking about white, exurban / rural men — or women — who have stayed on the sidelines, who have, for whatever reason, been unwilling to actually get out and vote for Trump even though they are, in fundamental ways, sympathetic to him.

And the Trump campaign did spend some time and some money trying to pressure-test this idea in Iowa, this idea that some of these people, believe it or not, do still exist. Because I think for a lot of us, Ezra, we really did look at 2020 and the massive turnout that we saw and we figured, OK, well, Trump’s base is pretty well maxed out now. There’s not a lot of people who like Trump who are still on the sidelines, but his campaign disagrees.

And so this first bucket that they’ve really been focusing on since Iowa and that they’re investing their new version of a ground game from the Trump campaign in partnership with the Republican National Committee is primarily focused on identifying some of these people who have not voted for Trump before, but that if they can be found and if they can be engaged on the ground, at their doors, on their front porches, that they will vote in this election for Trump.

The second bucket of the low-propensity voters are actually people who have, in the past, voted, but they’ve been reliably Democratic. So here’s where we’re talking about young people, where we’re talking about Black men ages 18 to 34, Latino men, potentially even Latino women to some degree — again, depending on the modeling that they’re looking at.

And I think what’s interesting in this second bucket is that the Trump folks are not going to spend a dime on a traditional ground game trying to build a field operation around finding these people and getting them to the polls. They believe that that’s a waste of money.

They think that ultimately, the much more effective way to reach these people is with the narrowly tailored microtargeting approach that Wiles had done so effectively in Florida to reach some of these same nontraditional constituencies and convince them not even so much that the Republican Party is their friend, but that the Democratic Party is their enemy, and to fuel a disillusionment with Democratic politics that they think is already pretty ripe in those areas, in those communities.

So this, I think, is probably going to be the first election in our lifetimes, if you believe the polling — Dave Wasserman at the Cook Political Report has written extensively about this based on the polling project that they’ve been doing — that this is probably going to be the first election where the low-engagement, low-propensity voters are overwhelmingly breaking towards the Republican Party, and that really could represent a sea change in our politics.

EZRA KLEIN: We’ve been talking about this in terms of campaign mechanics, but I want to bring it back to what we’re seeing at the convention because the most powerful tool a campaign has is not its GOTV effort, it is how it is seen overall. It is what the election is understood to be about, what the parties are understood to be representing.

And it does feel to me, as somebody who has watched a lot of Republican Conventions, who has attended Republican Conventions, that Trump is trying, even more so than he really did in 2016 or 2020, to reposition the Republican Party. That the J.D. Vance pick is part of this. That having the Teamster President in a keynote speaking slot on the first night of the RNC is part of this. Having Amber Rose up there.

That it feels like I am watching the Republican Party turn into the YouTube version of itself from the Fox News version of itself. But you’re there, you’re feeling it, you’re also seeing how people are reacting in the stands. What feels different to you from 2016 substantively, and in terms of messengers this year?

TIM ALBERTA: You know, Ezra, a lot has changed since 2016. I can vividly remember being on the convention floor there in Cleveland. And it was probably about half of all the delegates who were there to ultimately nominate Donald Trump were not happy about doing so.

There were really intense factional fights there between the never-Trumpers and the pro-Trumpers, and Trumpers then a lot of people were sort of caught in the middle and feeling like, well, he did win, and we are here to nominate him, but I think this guy is kind of a scoundrel and I’m not sure he’s a Republican. You saw very few MAGA hats back in 2016. There was not at all a sense that this was his party.

I think at best, some of the Trumpers then thought that they had a chance to make it his party, but a lot of us felt like, well, maybe this is just sort of a blip and kind of a freak black swan thing that he won the nomination, and he’s going to lose in November and then he’ll go away and things will go back to normal.

Well, fast forward to 2024. This is the third time that Trump has been nominated. I mean, if you go back through American history and look, there’s not a lot of people who capture a party’s presidential nomination three times. I think we have to recognize that this is entirely, in every way, Donald Trump’s party.

And the message this week, supposedly, has been unity, but it almost feels more like surrender in a lot of ways, Ezra. If you think about Nikki Haley’s speech, even Ron DeSantis’s speech, I mean, these are people who, like so many who came before them, had really passionately made the case that this guy really isn’t fit to be President, and certainly isn’t fit to be the leader of their party. And yet, here they are falling in line and standing and saluting, and ultimately pledging their allegiance to Trump.

So something has changed in the party, obviously, just in terms of its image, in terms of its makeup. Even at the delegate level, at the risk of getting too far into the weeds, Ezra, I would just say that I’ve covered the Republican National Committee for a long time. I’ve been to a number of conventions. There are so many people here who I just don’t recognize. And I think it’s in part because the forces of Donald Trump have remade the party literally down to the precinct level.

I mean, when you think about local Republican groups, county Republican groups, state Republican commissions and conventions, these institutions of the party have just been completely overhauled by Trump and by his allies. And so that change to the party is very apparent.

And I think the other change that you were referencing in the first part of your question, that is at the heart of what Chris LaCivita and Susie Wiles are envisioning. When they talk about this being a realignment election and an election that could potentially, really, change the ways in which the Republican Party is perceived, they think about the Republican Party moving forward as a populist, ***working class***, multiracial coalition that is no longer the party of The Wall Street Journal Editorial Page and of the old stuffy Heritage Foundation with its policy white papers.

They want to create a party that is both edgier and also more inclusive, but a party that is, frankly, not beholden to some of the conventional pieces of the Republican coalition — i.e., the Evangelicals, as we saw at the platform fight, or even some of the traditional defense hawks as we see with the J.D. Vance pick because the calculus made by Trump and by Chris and Susie running the campaign is that those people are ultimately going to fall in line and vote anyway.

They just believe that these Republican voters are never going to defect and vote for Joe Biden, and so that they have this opportunity to play with house money and see if they can’t expand the coalition and bring in all sorts of people who would have never thought to be attainable in previous elections.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

EZRA KLEIN: Well, let’s try to look at this through J.D. Vance. I find a number of my liberal friends are so focused on who he was that they have trouble asking the question of who he now is. How do you read the thinking behind Trump’s thinking behind? And then to the extent that it is different, the meaning or importance of Vance being the vice-presidential nominee?

TIM ALBERTA: The best way I can answer that, Ezra, is to explain how, for many months inside of Trump world, there have been parallel tracks of thinking about Trump picking a Vice President.

On the one track is the idea that you pick someone who is safe and vanilla and noncontroversial and older. So this was where Trump had really become quite enamored with Doug Burgum, who checked all the boxes. And he’s independently wealthy, and he’s handsome and he’s got a beautiful wife. And there’s — and he’s not going to offend anyone.

EZRA KLEIN: And he might reassure people?

TIM ALBERTA: Yes, exactly. He might reassure people like Mike Pence did back in 2016. That, OK, there’s going to be a responsible adult in the room with Donald Trump at all times.

EZRA KLEIN: Like Doug Burgum is the kind of person who would certify the 2020 election.

TIM ALBERTA: That’s right. And Ezra, that first argument, that Burgum argument was really carrying the day for much of the past six months. I think if you had asked people all throughout that period, people close to Trump would have gone to Vegas and put their money on Doug Burgum. Or if not Burgum, then certainly on a Burgum type.

If, for no other reason, Ezra, than the fact that they all recognize — everyone recognizes that Donald Trump does not like to have competition. He does not like to be upstaged. He does not like the idea that anyone could be seen as potentially usurping him.

And yet, the second track running parallel, this idea of picking an heir-apparent to the MAGA empire, of hand-selecting his successor to lead the movement and the party going forward, that was always seen as kind of a long shot. Most of the people around Trump just did not believe that that was ultimately what he would decide to do.

And it’s really remarkable that not only did Trump come around and warm up to this idea, but that he really came around and warmed up to a guy who was the unlikeliest heir-apparent. As your colleagues, Jonathan Swan and Maggie Haberman wrote in their piece yesterday, there’s been some real tension going back to the very first time that Trump ever met with J.D. Vance and basically told him, hey, you’ve been saying some nasty stuff about me, except he didn’t say stuff.

And for Trump to do such a 180 on J.D. Vance and to really come to view him as not just an ally, not just as a kindred spirit, but as someone who was almost supernaturally attuned to this visceral populist impulse that animates Trump’s political thinking, it’s quite remarkable.

And Vance, I think, was able to impress upon Trump in a sort of diplomatic way that all of those raw, visceral, populist impulses that you feel, Donald Trump, you aren’t always able to articulate them. You’re not always able to present them in a coherent, organized fashion. I can do that for you. I can help you actually put meat on those bones.

I can help you to craft a governing vision that is not going to be derailed by the RINOs like Paul Ryan and Mitch McConnell and the others who are in your cabinet during that first term. If you want to really remake the country, then you need someone who can help you translate those abstract ideas into something real. And I think that was really compelling to Trump.

EZRA KLEIN: But two things can be true here. One is that there’s this other strain of both Trump and Vance, it feels to me like it connects, which is this populist aesthetic, populist resentment, populist anger strain. The main thing Vance did, I think, is in his own political makeover was go from a soft-spoken, openhearted, temperamentally gentle person to somebody who was the most contemptuous, the most conflictual, the most antagonistic figure towards liberals in his public speaking that, functionally there, really even is in the Republican Party.

So on the one hand, I think he is much more in the populist aesthetic than a Rubio, than a Burgum, and that is something I think Trump has deeply understood the power of. Even as, I wonder, how much the people saying this is an ideological pick, which is something even I have said, because — I mean, it is a much more ideological pick than I was expecting.

How much that may or may not actually prove to be true in Trump’s presidency because Trump listens to a lot of people and ultimately goes wherever he goes and goes in different directions at the same time. The reason Trump is confusing in many ways to cover is that he’ll say something and then say something that points in the opposite direction in the same answer.

I think it’s very funny that at the same time, he is naming J.D. Vance, this angry populist figure and MAGA political thinker who’s railing against the globalists, to be his vice-presidential pick, he’s musing to Bloomberg about making Jamie Dimon, the head of JP Morgan and the icon of the globalist banker class, his Treasury Secretary.

So there’s this weird way, to me, in which Vance’s populist aesthetic is a very clear throughline here. And the ideological dimension of him, the guy who can create a governing philosophy, I don’t know. I wonder if that’s more legible to people like me because it’s how we think about politics, but that’s a mistake we keep making about thinking that we can predict Donald Trump.

TIM ALBERTA: It’s a totally fair question, and we could be making that mistake, Ezra. With J.D. Vance, you do just get a sense — and I was just having this conversation with a very plugged-in Republican a couple of days ago. And this is someone who spent a lot of time with Trump. Also spent time with Vance, knows them both.

And this person said to me, he said, look, don’t underestimate the degree to which Trump and the people around Trump are thinking to themselves, especially now that they really know that they’re winning — like if it wasn’t clear a few weeks ago, it’s really clear now. They’re winning. They think that they’re cruising. They think there’s nothing that can stop them.

And he said, don’t underestimate the degree to which they’re all looking around now and saying, OK, the revolution is on. And if the revolution is on, then you have to have the true believers on the inside, starting with the vice president, who are going to, from day one, be all in on executing whatever the X’s and O’s wind up looking like of a populist, America-first, start rebuilding at home and get us out of these foreign entanglements.

Whatever the policy actually winds up looking like, that from day one, it’s going to be coherent, and it’s going to be cohesive, and it’s going to be effective in ways that Trump could never be effective in his first term because as —

I mean, I’ve reported on this at length, but like even before Trump was sworn in, he was basically shuffled into conference rooms where Paul Ryan and Mitch McConnell were going over entire flow charts of what they were going to do and when they were going to do it, and Trump was just sitting there nodding and saying, yeah, OK, sure. OK, whatever you guys want.

Like, if you believe that they are, this time around, really intent on trying to deliver policy that actually aligns itself with that populist aesthetic, then Vance makes all the sense in the world. And you can expect him to be really, in many ways, the sort of intellectual architect of a second Trump term.

EZRA KLEIN: So Chris Rufo, the right-wing activist, had a tweet that I thought was quite sharp where he said, “The difference between Trump 2016 and Trump 2024 is that there is now an emerging right-wing counter-elite with sufficient knowledge, wealth, power, and prestige to advance a President’s agenda through the institutions. Trump 2.0 will be an order of magnitude more effective.”

And if you think of administrations as fractious, as having different power bases within them, Mike Pence’s vice presidency was a power base of the traditional Republican Party inside the Trump administration. I mean, Mike Pence was a choice Donald Trump made to comfort Fox News and Murdoch and The Wall Street Journal and the Heritage Foundation, and all these figures who, in his view, had power — and Evangelical voters and so on, but might not trust him.

And in choosing Vance, he’s shown he does not need to kowtow to any of them. For a competent Democratic ticket that, say, had a standard-bearer who could clearly make an argument against Republicans, J.D. Vance opens up a lot of lines of attack. He’s not a graceful politician in the way Marco Rubio tries to be. He really opens himself to a counter-mobilization. I’m not sure if the Democratic ticket is going to be able to do what it needs to do here. But there is both the possibilities for Trump of coherence and the problems of coherence because he’s not left himself a lot of outs, either as a governing force or as a campaigning figure.

TIM ALBERTA: That’s exactly right, Ezra. I think what you just said there is really important because let’s face it, a lot of us have spent our time and spilled our ink on this notion of a second Trump administration being staffed by characters out of the Star Wars bar scene and how it would be chaotic and it would be one catastrophe after the next.

Because gone are the establishment friendly figures like Paul Ryan, Mitch McConnell. But then even in — Reince Priebus is chief of staff and Betsy DeVos is education secretary and — all down the line. And that this time around, it’s just going to be the true believers; therefore, it’s going to be that much more chaotic.

And I’m not sure that that’s necessarily true. It could be, sure. But I actually think that if we’ve learned something from this campaign, it’s that if you put people around Trump who better understand his gut instincts and who are able to build out around those instincts rather than trying to tame them —

Trying to weaponize them and trying to best operationalize them and then build something out from them that works, what you could see, to the point of Rufo’s tweet, is a lot of people in Trump’s second administration who share his vision, broadly speaking, share if not his impulses, then certainly some of his gut-level disdain for the left and for some of his opponents in the Democratic Party, and who are, therefore, able to work much more efficiently, much more effectively and actually get a lot more done. I think that’s a very likely scenario that we haven’t spent nearly as much time thinking about.

This time around, you could have sort of all oars rowing in the same direction, and that could make for a very, very different administration from the one that some of us have been, I think, conceptualizing.

EZRA KLEIN: And then always our final question. What are three books you would recommend to the audience?

TIM ALBERTA: So the first book I’d recommend is from my friend Jonathan Karl over at ABC News, and it’s the final book that he wrote about Donald Trump, the most recent book. It’s called “Tired of Winning.” And it’s just a terrific psychological window into Donald Trump in exile after Jan. 6, after leaving office when he’d become a pariah and was toxic and nobody in the party really wanted anything to do with him.

And Jonathan, really, in a compelling way, chronicles Trump in those months between leaving office and before he actually begins to regain some of his old political power and moves toward another run in 2024. I think that was a very formative and, in some ways, deeply impactful period for Trump as he thought about his own future, about the party’s future, about what had gone wrong and how he might try to fix it. So Jonathan’s book is the best thing I’ve read on that period.

The second book, especially in light of what we saw on Saturday with the assassination attempt, is a book by Elizabeth Neumann called “Kingdom of Rage.” And Elizabeth, who’s a former counterterrorism official, she writes really beautifully and eloquently about the threat of domestic terrorism. And specifically looking at right-wing Christian nationalism and the ways that some of the more militant blood-and-soil, God-and-country rhetoric from the religious right has gone beyond just unsettling to the church and disruptive to American Christianity, but has actually manifested in a clear-and-present danger to the country, and that religious extremism being on the rise is a threat to both parties. So Elizabeth’s book is fantastic.

And my third book is actually by a colleague of mine at The Atlantic, McKay Coppins. He wrote this biography called “Romney: A Reckoning” and spent a ton of time with Mitt Romney, really had amazing access to him and his family and his journals and everything else. And I think for anyone trying to understand the transformation we were discussing earlier from the Convention in 2016 to the Convention in 2024, and what exactly has happened inside the Republican Party. And how Donald Trump has effectively steamrolled any opposition that got in the way of his remaking of the G.O.P., McKay’s book is a great resource just to understand through the eyes of one man who probably knows that story better than anyone, Romney being the nominee and becoming the foil to Trump in those years, and now on his way out as Trump is potentially set to return to the White House. So that’s another terrific read that gives you a great perspective on this moment we’re in.

EZRA KLEIN: Tim Alberta, thank you for taking time away from the convention floor to talk with us. I really appreciate it.

TIM ALBERTA: Hey, Ezra, it’s my pleasure, man. Thanks for having me.

EZRA KLEIN: This episode of “The Ezra Klein Show” is produced by Rollin Hu. Fact-checking by Michelle Harris with Kate Sinclair and Mary Marge Locker. Our senior engineer is Jeff Geld with additional mixing by Aman Sahota. Our senior editor is Claire Gordon. The show’s production team also includes Annie Galvin, Elias Isquith and Kristin Lin. We have original music by Isaac Jones. Audience strategy by Kristina Samulewski and Shannon Busta. The executive producer of New York Times Opinion Audio is Annie-Rose Strasser. And special thanks to Sonia Herrero.

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The New York Times

October 15, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section SR; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 11; LETTERS

**Length:** 1427 words

**Body**

Here is a second round of readers' choices beyond the announced candidates.

To the Editor:

Re ''More Hats in the Ring?'' (Letters, Sept. 29):

I'd like to see Gavin Newsom enter the presidential race.

He's intelligent and experienced, governing the most populous state in the country and one of the largest economies in the world.

As governor of California, he's aware of the important issues facing our country today: unchecked immigration, climate change, homelessness, polarization of society, etc.

He's young and charismatic, and presents an air of confidence and stability that our country and our allies desperately need.

He would be an interesting and exciting candidate who could motivate voters. He could win the presidency, and many Americans would breathe a sigh of relief and have hope for the future.

Mary Ellen RamirezHoffman Estates, Ill.

To the Editor:

If Caroline Kennedy joined the presidential race, she would receive my support. Unlike the current Kennedy who is vying for the presidency (Robert F. Kennedy Jr.), she is not mired in controversy and conspiracy theories.

She served as the U.S. ambassador to Japan during President Barack Obama's administration and is now the ambassador to Australia, showcasing her experience in diplomacy and politics. She has spent her life devoted to politics, educational reform and charitable work. She has continued her father's legacy with class.

Ms. Kennedy has never been driven by the spotlight, which proves that she would not be interested in boasting about accomplishments or putting personal interests ahead of the needs of the country.

We have yet to elect a woman as president in this country. If we were to find Camelot again, Caroline Kennedy would be our leader.

Kristina HopperHolland, Mich.

To the Editor:

Our commerce secretary, Gina Raimondo, has exceptional credentials to appeal to the electorate and to lead our nation.

She earned a B.A. degree in economics at Harvard while graduating magna cum laude (and played rugby, an ideal foundation for politics, she says). She then became a Rhodes scholar, got a law degree from Yale Law School and worked as a venture capitalist.

As general treasurer of Rhode Island, she reformed the state's pension system. From there she became governor of Rhode Island, and cut taxes every year and removed thousands of pages of regulations. She is now the nation's commerce secretary.

Gina Raimondo has an excellent educational foundation, solid business qualifications and experience on the federal level as a cabinet member. Gina Raimondo checks a lot of boxes.

David PastoreMountainside, N.J.

To the Editor:

There are numerous plain-speaking, pragmatic governors who eschew divisive culture wars and focus on results-oriented governance, job creation and fiscal responsibility. What distinguishes Gov. Brian Kemp of Georgia is not only his courageous stand against Donald Trump's election denialism, but his attention to re-establishing Republican Party unity.

Only a Republican governor who can attract support from conservative Republicans, crossover Democrats and independent voters can realistically hope to build the gridlock-busting coalition the nation so desperately needs at this time. That makes Governor Kemp a most attractive presidential candidate in 2024.

John R. LeopoldStoney Beach, Md.

To the Editor:

The best choice for another Democratic presidential candidate is Gov. Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan, a progressive Democrat focusing on health care, universal pre-K and infrastructure.

Ms. Whitmer knows what voters want. Her campaign to ''fix the damn roads'' in cold hilly Michigan helped get her elected governor. She is fearless against insurrectionists and homegrown militias, and did not back down about her government's pandemic restrictions. She spooks Donald Trump, who calls her ''that woman from Michigan.'' She knows how to kick the G.O.P.'s butt, winning the governorship with an over 10-point margin and inspiring voters to elect a Democratic-controlled House and Senate.

Ms. Whitmer is smart and energetic, and projects a down-to-earth Midwestern sensibility.

Big Gretch for the win!

Karla JenningsDecatur, Ga.

To the Editor:

I hereby nominate Gen. Mark Milley for the presidency. Just retired from his post as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Milley is well qualified to become commander in chief.

His 43-year Army career, during which he served in command positions across the globe, was exemplary. He is well versed in the functioning of government and in the politics of Washington. He holds degrees from Princeton and Columbia.

His reverence for the American system of government is unwavering -- perhaps most tellingly in a speech following the 2020 election, when our system of government hung in the balance. ''We do not take an oath to a king or a queen, a tyrant or a dictator. We do not take an oath to an individual,'' he said. ''We take an oath to the Constitution.''

Arguably his biggest mistake was following President Donald Trump to St. John's Church in Washington after protesters objecting to the killing of George Floyd were cleared from the area. ''My presence in that moment and in that environment created a perception of the military involved in domestic politics,'' he later acknowledged. ''It was a mistake that I have learned from.'' How refreshing, a public figure apologizing. We could use more of that.

Henry Von KohornPrinceton, N.J.

To the Editor:

I would like to see Nikki Haley be the Republican candidate against a female Democrat -- Amy Klobuchar, Gina Raimondo or Gretchen Whitmer. All are qualified. We would have our first woman president regardless of which party won.

Arleen BestArdsley, N.Y.

To the Editor:

Senator Michael Bennet of Colorado.

He's engaged, honest, eloquent, passionate and cut from a cloth that might not even exist anymore. His biggest flaw is that he's not flashy or dramatic, but he knows policy, can come up with solutions, and is in touch with the real problems facing our nation. He is the moderate and principled human being that this country needs.

Ken RizzoNew York

To the Editor:

I like President Biden's policies and his accomplishments, but I think he's too old. So I'd like to see Senator Sherrod Brown of Ohio run for the Democratic Party nomination.

Mr. Brown is a progressive, F.D.R.-style Democrat who has focused on economic policies that have improved the lives of ***working-class*** Americans. He is pro-union and helped President Biden pass the CHIPS and Science Act, which had broad labor support.

He's also principled: He was the second Senate Democrat to call for the resignation of the disgraced senator Bob Menendez. And he's been able to win, and keep, his Senate seat in swing-state Ohio, which the Democrats will need to win in 2024.

I'm not from Ohio and I've never met Sherrod Brown, but every time I see him interviewed I think, ''Why doesn't this guy run for president?'' I think he'd stop the slide of ***working-class*** Americans away from the Democratic Party, and as president, he'd continue to advance the successful Biden economic agenda.

He could definitely beat Donald Trump. And if he's not at the top of the ticket, I think he'd make an excellent V.P. choice for Gretchen Whitmer.

Charles McLeanDenver

To the Editor:

Tom Hanks.

We've had actors before as president (aren't they all?), but none as talented, well respected, intelligent, multidimensional, centered, compassionate and, well, genuine. He projects steel when necessary and is nobody's fool -- politically astute and cross-party electable.

Bob CarrChicago

To the Editor:

I believe that Senator Chris Murphy of Connecticut should consider running. He has vast experience in both domestic issues and foreign policy. His passion for classic, progressive issues is based on a concern that all Americans have a high quality of life.

His bipartisan efforts, especially on gun control, are impressive. Age, eloquence and demeanor matter a great deal on a world stage; he is young, composed, thoughtful and articulate.

Christopher NilsonChandler, Ariz.

To the Editor:

For the Democrats: Jared Polis, governor of Colorado, is the first name that comes to my mind. He's an intelligent, honest, hard-working moderate.

For the Republicans: No name comes to me, but I could support anyone who's intelligent, honest and has the courage to stop being a fearful apologist for Donald Trump.

The fact that I see no one fitting that bill makes me worry for the fate of my country.

Jim HollestelleLouisville, Colo.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/14/opinion/letters/candidates-president.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/14/opinion/letters/candidates-president.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page SR11.

**Load-Date:** October 15, 2023

**End of Document**



[***A Big Year for Women’s College Basketball in New York; New York Today***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BM3-M951-DXY4-X1RG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 22, 2024 Friday 05:05 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1544 words

**Byline:** James Barron James Barron writes the New York Today newsletter, a morning roundup of what&amp;#8217;s happening in the city.

**Highlight:** Both the Columbia and N.Y.U. women’s teams made it to postseason tournaments.

**Body**

Both the Columbia and N.Y.U. women’s teams made it to postseason tournaments.

Good morning. It’s Friday. We’ll look at why this season was a first for women’s college basketball in New York City. We’ll also find out how LaGuardia Community College will spend a $116.2 million grant from a foundation run by Alexandra Cohen, whose billionaire husband bought the New York Mets in 2020.

This was the first season that Columbia University’s women’s basketball team made it to the N.C.A.A. Division I tournament.

New York University’s women’s team, undefeated in 31 games, also made it to the postseason, making this the first year that the two colleges have done so at the same time — Columbia in Division I, with an at-large place in the Big Dance, and N.Y.U. in Division III. N.Y.U. won the national title in Division III by ending Smith College’s 16-game winning streak, 51-41.

“We kind of pulled away in the end, and one of the officials congratulated me on winning,” said Meg Barber, the coach of the N.Y.U. team. “This was probably with about 45 seconds left. I said, ‘Not yet.’ I was like, ‘It’s not over yet,’ and he was like, ‘Yes it is.’”

And next season?

“I’ve barely processed that we won the national championship,” Barber told me on Thursday, “so I haven’t really thought about next year.”

Columbia’s season ended on Wednesday with a 72-68 loss to Vanderbilt in a play-in game preceding the first round of the N.C.A.A. Division I tournament.

When I asked Sabreena Merchant, who covers women’s basketball, for an assessment, she said Columbia had been outplayed. The game was one of the rare occasions this season when Abbey Hsu, Columbia’s star senior guard, wasn’t the best player on the court.

“The first thing you think of with Abbey is shooting,” Merchant said. “She uncharacteristically missed a few free throws. For her to go 2 of 11 on 3s and miss three free throws is surprising.” Hsu is the Ivy League’s top career scorer on 3-pointers, with 375.

Columbia has had less experience playing teams like Vanderbilt that have long postseason histories — this was, after all, Columbia’s first appearance in the tournament. “You could tell the athletic advantage that Vanderbilt had over Columbia,” Merchant told me. “As well as Abbey Hsu has done in Ivy League games, there was a different level of defense that she was facing against Vanderbilt — and her game didn’t elevate as had been hoped, or as Princeton does when they get in these situations.” Princeton, which beat Columbia to win the Ivy League title last week, will play West Virginia in the first round of the tournament on Saturday.

Even if Hsu had an off night against Vanderbilt, she has had a remarkable career playing for Columbia. She holds Columbia’s career scoring record in basketball, men’s or women’s, with 2,126 points.

She also has a remarkable personal story. She [*tore the anterior cruciate ligament in her right knee*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings) when she was a junior in high school.

A couple of weeks later, when she heard popping noises from an adjacent building at the school and the teacher directed her class to leave, she was on crutches. She worked her way down the stairs and out of the school — Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., where the deadliest mass shooting at a high school in American history was unfolding.

Her first season at Columbia was interrupted by the pandemic, and her father, a physician, died from complications related to Covid-19.

Still, Hsu has been Columbia’s defining player in women’s basketball under the coach, Megan Griffith, who arrived in 2016. Before Hsu joined the team, Columbia had won 31 percent of its games and 26 percent of its Ivy League games. Since then, the team has won 80 percent of its games.

Enjoy a sunny day in the mid-40s. In the evening, prepare for a chance of rain with temperatures in the upper 30s.

In effect until Sunday (Purim).

The latest New York news

* Bragg wants Trump trial to proceed: Alvin Bragg, the Manhattan district attorney, said most of the documents in a newly disclosed cache [*contained little that might influence or delay the criminal trial of Donald Trump, scheduled to start on April 15.*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings)

1. Not running for re-election as a Democrat: Bowing to political pressure and federal charges that put him at the center of a bribery scheme, Senator Robert Menendez of New Jersey said he would not run for re-election as a Democrat. [*But he left the door open to running as an independent if he is cleared.*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings)

* Opposition as congestion pricing nears: As the first-in-the-nation plan finally takes shape, a growing number of opponents are waging [*last-ditch efforts to water it down or derail it.*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings)
* A real estate shake-up and what it means for New Yorkers: Here’s how the National Association of Realtors’ recent blockbuster settlement will [*affect buying and selling homes in New York City*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings).

1. What we’re watching: On “The New York Times Close Up With Sam Roberts,” Ashley Southall, a Metro reporter for The New York Times, will discuss New York’s cannabis licensing rollout, and Dana Rubinstein, who covers politics, will talk about a recent survey of New Yorkers leaving the city. The program is broadcast at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. [[*CUNY TV*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings)].

A $116 million grant to LaGuardia Community College

Steven A. Cohen, the hedge fund billionaire who bought the Mets three and a half years ago, is putting more money into Queens — a $116.2 million grant to LaGuardia Community College for a work force training center.

But his wife, Alexandra Cohen, gets the credit for the vision behind the grant, for a 160,000-square-foot vocational training facility, said Kenneth Adams, the president of LaGuardia.

“This is 100 percent Alex,” Adams said. “It isn’t just that it increases our instructional space by 25 percent, which it does, it’s that it’s geared to Alex’s vision of career and technical education.”

LaGuardia officials said [*the grant, from the Steven &amp; Alexandra Cohen Foundation,*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings) was the largest ever awarded to a community college. Adams said it would pay for the construction of 67 classrooms, enough to add 6,000 students to LaGuardia’s enrollment. LaGuardia will use the space to train students hoping to earn associate degrees, industry certifications and other credentials.

“I wanted to create a place where students have access to high-quality programs and facilities and can learn the skills they need to succeed in a rapidly changing world,” Alexandra Cohen said in a statement. LaGuardia said the center, to be called the Cohen Career Collective, would be the largest career and technical facility of its kind in the New York region.

Adams said the foundation had given the college a far smaller grant during the pandemic for a training program called Jobs Direct. It was intended to provide short-term vocational training for people from Queens who had lost their jobs in the pandemic. After that, he said, Alexandra Cohen “made it clear she wanted to do something else.”

“Alex was born in Harlem, she grew up in Washington Heights, and she really identifies with our students” — many of whom are foreign-born, ***working-class*** students and the first in their families to go to college, Adams said.

Félix Matos-Rodríguez, the chancellor of the City University of New York, said the grant would multiply LaGuardia’s standing “as an engine of upward mobility.”

The center will offer language classes for foreign-born students who need to improve their English before taking vocational programs. It will also offer high school equivalency classes for students who want to earn a G.E.D.

Adams said the new center would occupy two floors in a former bakery overlooking the Sunnyside Yards railroad depot.

“We’re getting more and more requests to train students for green jobs, in particular solar panel installation and maintenance,” Adams said. “We don’t have, today, any classrooms equipped to teach that. We will.” He also said the center would let LaGuardia provide courses in energy retrofitting — entry-level electrical jobs with contractors. Some of the laboratories can be used to teach courses involving cloud computing and artificial intelligence.

He said the “basically 1980s-level classrooms” used for LaGuardia’s nursing programs would also be upgraded. The center can also provide space for classes to train students for jobs in the hospitality industry.

“All of these programs are driven by labor dynamics and employer needs,” he said.

The Cohens’ foundation has provided more than $1.2 billion to nonprofit groups since 2001, including more than $185 million in Queens. Separately, Cohen is bidding with Hard Rock for a casino next to Citi Field, where the Mets play.

(Queens, 3 a.m.)

Dear Diary:

I woke when

the city

stopped

talking

Stepped

from my bed

Other un-

dressed men

in windows

listened

relishing

nothing’s

something

Lightly I

lit

a cigarette

and listened

— Rolli Anderson

Illustrated by Agnes Lee. [*Send submissions here*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings) and [*read more Metropolitan Diary here*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings).

Glad we could get together here. See you on Monday. — J.B.

P.S. Here’s today’s [*Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings) and [*Spelling Bee*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings). [*You can find all our puzzles here*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings).

Melissa Guerrero and Ed Shanahan contributed to New York Today. You can reach the team at [*nytoday@nytimes.com*](mailto:nytoday@nytimes.com)

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

**Load-Date:** March 22, 2024

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[***Andrea Riseborough Has a Hidden Agenda***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BM4-KXN1-DXY4-X1VJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 22, 2024 Friday 21:54 EST

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**Section:** ARTS; television

**Length:** 1593 words

**Byline:** Alexis Soloski Alexis Soloski has written for The Times since 2006. As a culture reporter, she covers television, theater, movies, podcasts and new media.

**Highlight:** Currently in two series, “The Regime” and “Alice &amp; Jack,” this versatile actress has played dozens of characters. What connects them? Not even she knows.

**Body**

Currently in two series, “The Regime” and “Alice &amp; Jack,” this versatile actress has played dozens of characters. What connects them? Not even she knows.

“I really do wish sometimes that I could do all of this a different way,” Andrea Riseborough said. “But I suppose I just do it the way that I do it. And there are consequences.”

She paused then, pressing her lips into a thin smile. “That all sounds a bit dramatic,” she added.

This was on an afternoon in early March, and Riseborough, 42, a metamorphic actress with a worrying sense of commitment, was seated at a West Village cafe, a basket of vinegar-doused French fries in front of her. She is often unrecognizable from one project to the next, a combination of makeup, hairstyle (what Meryl Streep is to accents, Riseborough is to coiffure) and marrow-deep transformation. Here, offscreen, she wore a Mickey Mouse sweatshirt under a busy leather jacket. Her hair, still growing out from the dismal pixie cut she got for the HBO series “The Regime,” was pulled back with an elastic.

In person, she is a particular mix of gravity and nonchalance. She knows that she has a reputation for seriousness, which she rejects. “It would be pretty strange to apologize for being serious when you’re giggling so much,” she said. But I rarely heard her laugh. She considered each question carefully and her responses were often philosophical rather than personal. “People,” she might say in place of “I.” Or “most people.” Or “everyone.” Her face, at rest and free of makeup, isn’t especially restful. There is a watchfulness to her, a sense of thoughts tumbling behind those eyes.

In her two decades in the business, goaded by a tireless work ethic that sometimes saw her completing as many as five projects per year, she has amassed credits across stage, film and television. It can be hard to find a through-line among those enterprises, mainstream and independent, comedy and tragedy and horror.

In 2022, for example, she starred in the sex-addled queer musical [*“Please Baby Please,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/27/movies/please-baby-please-review-hyper-masculinity-on-its-head.html) produced by her production company; the cockeyed interwar drama [*“Amsterdam”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/27/movies/please-baby-please-review-hyper-masculinity-on-its-head.html); the boisterous children’s film “Matilda: the Musical”; the bleak Scandinavian thriller “What Remains”; and the wrenching Texas-set indie, [*“To Leslie,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/27/movies/please-baby-please-review-hyper-masculinity-on-its-head.html) for which Riseborough received her first Academy Award nomination. ([*That nomination was complicated*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/27/movies/please-baby-please-review-hyper-masculinity-on-its-head.html) by [*perceived campaigning irregularities*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/27/movies/please-baby-please-review-hyper-masculinity-on-its-head.html), though the Academy ultimately concluded that no guidelines had been violated.) Try to connect those dots.

Riseborough can’t. She disclaims any strategy and if she has an agenda in the roles she chooses, it is hidden very well, maybe even from herself. When I suggested she must have some strong inner core to fling herself so entirely into so many stories, so many lives, she disagreed.

“To say that I have a very stable sense of self would be a sweeping statement,” she said.

She does seem drawn to sad women, troubled women, women in extreme circumstances. That would describe her current projects: the HBO mini-series [*“The Regime,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/27/movies/please-baby-please-review-hyper-masculinity-on-its-head.html) in which she plays Agnes, a dictator’s handmaiden, and the PBS romantic drama [*“Alice &amp; Jack,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/27/movies/please-baby-please-review-hyper-masculinity-on-its-head.html) in which she stars as Alice, a whiz financier who overcomes past trauma only to face it in the present. Her role in the movie “Lee,” which will be released later this year, may seem like a departure: She plays an editor of British Vogue. But that editor, as it happens, is instrumental in a decision about whether to publish photos of Dachau.

Riseborough didn’t see the pattern. “For the average person, there’s a lot of pain in the human experience,” she said. “It’s not so easy just to live, no matter the privileges you have or don’t. It seems that the human experience for everyone is incredibly challenging. Have I played lots of people in a lot of pain? Or have I just played a lot of people going through things?” Then she relented slightly. An actor, she admitted, could choose not to go to those places, not to take on those roles, to pursue a blither version of her craft. Riseborough has never made those choices.

She grew up in Newcastle, an industrial town in the Northeast of England. Her ***working-class*** parents were passionate about theater and film, and they passed that passion on to Riseborough and her younger sister. Riseborough was an avid dancer, in class more than 20 hours each week, and in elementary school she became involved with the [*People’s Theater*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/27/movies/please-baby-please-review-hyper-masculinity-on-its-head.html), a prominent amateur theater company and “a wonderful, joyful thing to be a part of,” she said.

She continued acting all through middle school and high school, before dropping out at 17 to work a series of odd jobs. Riseborough is somewhat oblique in conversation, tending to answer specific questions generally. But this was the one moment — when asked why she had left school — in which she consciously avoided a direct response.

“At the time, it was untenable,” she said. “That’s what I feel comfortable saying.”

That decision removed her from acting for a while. Plays happen at night; so did her restaurant work. But two years later, she auditioned and was accepted to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. While much of the training was psychological, the course also emphasized breath work, speech and movement, physical techniques that she still relies on.

“She has a beautiful, beautiful vocal instrument and incredible control of her body,” said Victor Levin, the showrunner of “Alice &amp; Jack.” “She can express story with her limbs, the position of her head, what she does with her eyes.”

But Riseborough would never rely on technique alone. And the idea of coasting or phoning it in or falling back on the merely physical during an off day repels her. “I don’t know how to do it if it’s not true,” she said.

Will Tracy, who created [*“The Regime,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/27/movies/please-baby-please-review-hyper-masculinity-on-its-head.html) confirmed this. “She’s one of the most honest performers you can get,” he said. “That type of emotional truth in acting, I don’t understand how it works. I wonder if she does.”

She began her professional career before she’d graduated and after a few years working in theater, she began to rack up film credits: [*“Never Let Me Go,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/27/movies/please-baby-please-review-hyper-masculinity-on-its-head.html) [*“Brighton Rock,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/27/movies/please-baby-please-review-hyper-masculinity-on-its-head.html) [*“Made in Dagenham.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/27/movies/please-baby-please-review-hyper-masculinity-on-its-head.html) She played a young Margaret Thatcher in the television movie “The Long Walk to Finchley” and starred as Wallis Simpson in [*“W.E,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/27/movies/please-baby-please-review-hyper-masculinity-on-its-head.html) directed by Madonna.

If American audiences recognize her — and given the wigs this is a considerable “if” — it is likely for “To Leslie,” in which she starred as an alcoholic single mother. The film, directed by Michael Morris, [*made just $27,000*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/27/movies/please-baby-please-review-hyper-masculinity-on-its-head.html) during its initial theatrical release, but Riseborough earned a Best Actress nomination, aided in part by the many Hollywood A-listers who tweeted in support. Riseborough wouldn’t say precisely whose idea it was to rally these boosters (“There wasn’t one person,” she said) or if the subsequent investigation tarnished the nomination. She is proud of having made the movie and happy for people to have seen it.

“What was really clear was that it touched so many people who have been touched by alcoholism so deeply,” she said.

This resonated with [*Marc Maron*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/27/movies/please-baby-please-review-hyper-masculinity-on-its-head.html), her co-star in the film. “When you see her work, you realize that’s all she’s living for,” he said. Other actors, he said, have a practiced interview patter, a facility with the red carpet. Not Riseborough.

“There’s a whole other part of an actor’s job that she really didn’t care about, which is kind of a beautiful thing,” he said. “I don’t know what her life looks like. But the intensity she brings to the work, it feels like life or death, and that’s an amazing way to live in your art, you know?”

That way has its consequences. Riseborough broke both her legs in a stunt rehearsal for the Amazon series [*“Zero Zero Zero”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/27/movies/please-baby-please-review-hyper-masculinity-on-its-head.html). (The timing went awry.) Other projects have made her physically ill. “It’s just a very odd profession, because it does affect you, of course, on a cellular level,” she said.

In her current series, the risks are mostly emotional. In “The Regime,” Agnes is forced to share her own child with a despot. Her face is a mask of neutrality, with horror just underneath. In “Alice &amp; Jack,” Alice, as prickly as a porcupine, hungers for love even as she pushes Jack (Domhnall Gleeson) away. In both roles she must feel and feel and feel, and those feelings are rarely happy or easy.

Here, at least, she would admit to some continuity. “The thing that I’m really drawn to is complexity,” she said, moving swiftly from the specific to the general. “It’s wonderful when you see human experience captured in a way where it embraces the vastness and the complication of what it is to be human.”

Her private life is perhaps less complicated. She and her partner, the actor Karim Saleh (they met on the set of [*“Luxor”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/27/movies/please-baby-please-review-hyper-masculinity-on-its-head.html)), split their time between Los Angeles and Paris, though she isn’t often home for long. In her rare downtime, she likes to read, to write, to wander. She is an inveterate people watcher. “Sometimes it’s creepy,” she said. “I try not to be creepy.”

She has spent two decades without particular plans for her career. She won’t claim any plan going forward. “I feel very much at the beginning,” she said.

PHOTOS: PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY JINGYU LIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (C1); Andrea Riseborough, above. Her recent roles include, below from left, a palace master for a despot, portrayed by Kate Winslet, in “The Regime”; the conflicted lover of Domhnall Gleeson’s character in “Alice &amp; Jack”; and an alcoholic mother in “To Leslie.” (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JINGYU LIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; MIYA MIZUNO/HBO; FREMANTLE; MOMENTUM PICTURES) (C7) This article appeared in print on page C1, C7.

**Load-Date:** March 25, 2024

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[***Who Else Should Run for President?; letters***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69D0-M361-JBG3-61G6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 14, 2023 Saturday 17:28 EST

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**Section:** OPINION; letters

**Length:** 1411 words

**Highlight:** Here is a second round of readers’ choices beyond the announced candidates.

**Body**

Here is a second round of readers’ choices beyond the announced candidates.

To the Editor:

Re “[*More Hats in the Ring?*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/28/opinion/letters/2024-election-candidates.html)” (Letters, Sept. 29):

I’d like to see Gavin Newsom enter the presidential race.

He’s intelligent and experienced, governing the most populous state in the country and one of the largest economies in the world.

As governor of California, he’s aware of the important issues facing our country today: unchecked immigration, climate change, homelessness, polarization of society, etc.

He’s young and charismatic, and presents an air of confidence and stability that our country and our allies desperately need.

He would be an interesting and exciting candidate who could motivate voters. He could win the presidency, and many Americans would breathe a sigh of relief and have hope for the future.

Mary Ellen Ramirez

Hoffman Estates, Ill.

To the Editor:

If Caroline Kennedy joined the presidential race, she would receive my support. Unlike the current Kennedy who is vying for the presidency (Robert F. Kennedy Jr.), she is not mired in controversy and conspiracy theories.

She served as the U.S. ambassador to Japan during President Barack Obama’s administration and is now the ambassador to Australia, showcasing her experience in diplomacy and politics. She has spent her life devoted to politics, educational reform and charitable work. She has continued her father’s legacy with class.

Ms. Kennedy has never been driven by the spotlight, which proves that she would not be interested in boasting about accomplishments or putting personal interests ahead of the needs of the country.

We have yet to elect a woman as president in this country. If we were to find Camelot again, Caroline Kennedy would be our leader.

Kristina Hopper

Holland, Mich.

To the Editor:

Our commerce secretary, Gina Raimondo, has exceptional credentials to appeal to the electorate and to lead our nation.

She earned a B.A. degree in economics at Harvard while graduating magna cum laude (and played rugby, an ideal foundation for politics, she says). She then became a Rhodes scholar, got a law degree from Yale Law School and worked as a venture capitalist.

As general treasurer of Rhode Island, she reformed the state’s pension system. From there she became governor of Rhode Island, and cut taxes every year and removed thousands of pages of regulations. She is now the nation’s commerce secretary.

Gina Raimondo has an excellent educational foundation, solid business qualifications and experience on the federal level as a cabinet member. Gina Raimondo checks a lot of boxes.

David Pastore

Mountainside, N.J.

To the Editor:

There are numerous plain-speaking, pragmatic governors who eschew divisive culture wars and focus on results-oriented governance, job creation and fiscal responsibility. What distinguishes Gov. Brian Kemp of Georgia is not only his courageous stand against Donald Trump’s election denialism, but his attention to re-establishing Republican Party unity.

Only a Republican governor who can attract support from conservative Republicans, crossover Democrats and independent voters can realistically hope to build the gridlock-busting coalition the nation so desperately needs at this time. That makes Governor Kemp a most attractive presidential candidate in 2024.

John R. Leopold

Stoney Beach, Md.

To the Editor:

The best choice for another Democratic presidential candidate is Gov. Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan, a progressive Democrat focusing on health care, universal pre-K and infrastructure.

Ms. Whitmer knows what voters want. Her campaign to “fix the damn roads” in cold hilly Michigan helped get her elected governor. She is fearless against insurrectionists and homegrown militias, and did not back down about her government’s pandemic restrictions. She spooks Donald Trump, who calls her “that woman from Michigan.” She knows how to kick the G.O.P.’s butt, winning the governorship with an over 10-point margin and inspiring voters to elect a Democratic-controlled House and Senate.

Ms. Whitmer is smart and energetic, and projects a down-to-earth Midwestern sensibility.

Big Gretch for the win!

Karla Jennings

Decatur, Ga.

To the Editor:

I hereby nominate Gen. Mark Milley for the presidency. Just retired from his post as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Milley is well qualified to become commander in chief.

His 43-year Army career, during which he served in command positions across the globe, was exemplary. He is well versed in the functioning of government and in the politics of Washington. He holds degrees from Princeton and Columbia.

His reverence for the American system of government is unwavering — perhaps most tellingly in a speech following the 2020 election, when our system of government hung in the balance. “We do not take an oath to a king or a queen, a tyrant or a dictator. We do not take an oath to an individual,” he said. “We take an oath to the Constitution.”

Arguably his biggest mistake was following President Donald Trump to St. John’s Church in Washington after protesters objecting to the killing of George Floyd were cleared from the area. “My presence in that moment and in that environment created a perception of the military involved in domestic politics,” he later acknowledged. “It was a mistake that I have learned from.” How refreshing, a public figure apologizing. We could use more of that.

Henry Von Kohorn

Princeton, N.J.

To the Editor:

I would like to see Nikki Haley be the Republican candidate against a female Democrat — Amy Klobuchar, Gina Raimondo or Gretchen Whitmer. All are qualified. We would have our first woman president regardless of which party won.

Arleen Best

Ardsley, N.Y.

To the Editor:

Senator Michael Bennet of Colorado.

He’s engaged, honest, eloquent, passionate and cut from a cloth that might not even exist anymore. His biggest flaw is that he’s not flashy or dramatic, but he knows policy, can come up with solutions, and is in touch with the real problems facing our nation. He is the moderate and principled human being that this country needs.

Ken Rizzo

New York

To the Editor:

I like President Biden’s policies and his accomplishments, but I think he’s too old. So I’d like to see Senator Sherrod Brown of Ohio run for the Democratic Party nomination.

Mr. Brown is a progressive, F.D.R.-style Democrat who has focused on economic policies that have improved the lives of ***working-class*** Americans. He is pro-union and helped President Biden pass the CHIPS and Science Act, which had broad labor support.

He’s also principled: He was the second Senate Democrat to call for the resignation of the disgraced senator Bob Menendez. And he’s been able to win, and keep, his Senate seat in swing-state Ohio, which the Democrats will need to win in 2024.

I’m not from Ohio and I’ve never met Sherrod Brown, but every time I see him interviewed I think, “Why doesn’t this guy run for president?” I think he’d stop the slide of ***working-class*** Americans away from the Democratic Party, and as president, he’d continue to advance the successful Biden economic agenda.

He could definitely beat Donald Trump. And if he’s not at the top of the ticket, I think he’d make an excellent V.P. choice for Gretchen Whitmer.

Charles McLean

Denver

To the Editor:

Tom Hanks.

We’ve had actors before as president (aren’t they all?), but none as talented, well respected, intelligent, multidimensional, centered, compassionate and, well, genuine. He projects steel when necessary and is nobody’s fool — politically astute and cross-party electable.

Bob Carr

Chicago

To the Editor:

I believe that Senator Chris Murphy of Connecticut should consider running. He has vast experience in both domestic issues and foreign policy. His passion for classic, progressive issues is based on a concern that all Americans have a high quality of life.

His bipartisan efforts, especially on gun control, are impressive. Age, eloquence and demeanor matter a great deal on a world stage; he is young, composed, thoughtful and articulate.

Christopher Nilson

Chandler, Ariz.

To the Editor:

For the Democrats: Jared Polis, governor of Colorado, is the first name that comes to my mind. He’s an intelligent, honest, hard-working moderate.

For the Republicans: No name comes to me, but I could support anyone who’s intelligent, honest and has the courage to stop being a fearful apologist for Donald Trump.

The fact that I see no one fitting that bill makes me worry for the fate of my country.

Jim Hollestelle

Louisville, Colo.

This article appeared in print on page SR11.

**Load-Date:** October 14, 2023

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[***Far From a Deterrent, Fetterman's Health Battle Inspired Pennsylvanians***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66TW-Y6J1-DXY4-X16C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 10, 2022 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section P; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 11

**Length:** 1181 words

**Byline:** By Trip Gabriel

**Body**

By reinventing his Senate campaign after a stroke, Lt. Gov. John Fetterman ended up connecting with voters who responded to his saga of loss and comeback.

PITTSBURGH -- The morning after Lt. Gov. John Fetterman won Pennsylvania's Senate race, Alberta Wilkes was in a radiant mood as she waited for a bus to the post office to buy money orders for bills.

''I love it,'' Ms. Wilkes, 71, a retired hospital cook, said on Wednesday. ''John overcame a lot of obstacles.''

A resident of the Squirrel Hill neighborhood of Pittsburgh, Ms. Wilkes said that her sister used to work at the Edgar Thomson steel mill near Braddock, Pa., where Mr. Fetterman was mayor for 13 years. ''He would come down there and talk to the steelworkers,'' Ms. Wilkes said. ''John is for the people, and it doesn't matter if you're rich, poor, white, Black.''

By reinventing his campaign after a near-fatal stroke, appealing to anyone who ''got knocked down and had to get back up,'' as he put it, Mr. Fetterman appeared to connect with many Pennsylvanians who responded to his saga of loss and comeback.

Rather than seeing his difficult recovery and uneven debate performance as evidence of lack of fitness for office -- as Mr. Fetterman's Republican opponent, Dr. Mehmet Oz, tried to frame it -- voters said they found Mr. Fetterman relatable, even an inspiration. His personal revitalization, however incomplete, echoed a promise he campaigned on -- the resurgence of Pennsylvania communities that feel left behind, a left-wing response to the appeal that Donald J. Trump made in winning Pennsylvania and other industrial states in 2016.

''For every job that's ever been lost, for every factory that was ever closed, for every person that works hard but never gets ahead,'' Mr. Fetterman said at his election party early Wednesday morning. ''I'm proud of what we ran on.''

In Pittsburgh, a liberal city with roots in steel that has been reborn as a technology and medical center, Fetterman supporters expressed a rush of hopes on Wednesday that his progressive politics would lift struggling people and become a national template for the Democratic Party. They also spoke personally, even intimately, of how they saw in his health struggles a reflection of their lives.

Kim Kifer, 59, a banker who has family members who were stroke victims, said Mr. Fetterman's performance in the debate last month, when he struggled for words and left sentences unfinished, was ''not good.'' Still, she added, the performance showed courage.

''I found it inspiring,'' Ms. Kifer said. ''I admired that he actually showed up for the debate. I think it takes tremendous courage to get back on the horse.''

Jena Bence, 33, a nanny pushing a stroller, agreed. ''I didn't think that Fetterman did great'' in the debate, she said, ''but I think it was great that he still went out there and did it.''

For many Democrats, the reaction on Wednesday was simply huge relief -- for Mr. Fetterman's victory, and for a night in which the party nationwide largely escaped a drubbing at the hands of Republican candidates and leaders many see as extremist.

''I'm really pleased -- very, very pleased, relieved, exhausted,'' said Dianne Lassman, 66, a yoga teacher who belongs to a grass-roots group, the Order of the Phoenix, that formed after Mr. Trump's 2016 victory to help progressives win elections.

For the 2022 midterms, Ms. Lassman registered voters and canvassed for Democrats relentlessly as the election neared. At 4 a.m. on Wednesday morning, her husband woke with a start, unable to sleep without knowing who had won the Senate race. ''So we got on, and we learned,'' she said.

Republican voters were hardly elated. Many were crestfallen about the defeat of Dr. Oz, a TV celebrity doctor endorsed by Mr. Trump.

Mr. Fetterman won by only about 182,000 votes out of more than five million cast, as of late Wednesday. Shana Smith, 59, who voted for Dr. Oz, said she was surprised more people didn't vote their pocketbooks and elect the Republican.

''With the price of gasoline and the price of food, people can't live,'' said Shana Smith, 59, who was crossing Market Square downtown on her way to work for the county criminal courts. ''So many homeless people. There's so many people that can't afford their prescriptions.''

A number of voters hoped that Mr. Fetterman's victory provided an answer in the perennial debate among Democrats about whether progressive or moderate candidates held the best hopes for winning battleground states like Pennsylvania. They said it showed there was indeed support for progressives.

For Paula DeCarlo, 56, a former teacher and flight attendant who said she had to quit work because of cancer, the takeaway from Mr. Fetterman's win was, ''We need help.''

''The message would be helping people with health care, universal health care, single-payer system,'' she said. ''We need that in this country.''

A couple in their 20s, Max Snyder and Anastasia Hons-Astle, who identified themselves as ***working class*** and ''hard left,'' said they had voted enthusiastically for Mr. Fetterman, after casting reluctant votes for Joseph R. Biden Jr. in 2020.

''I think a lot of people weren't excited to vote for Joe Biden,'' said Ms. Hons-Astle, 27, who was recently laid off from a tech start-up. ''I can identify with Fetterman. I can't identify with Joe Biden.''

Ms. Hons-Astle's father is a steelworker who supported Mr. Trump, she said. Democratic candidates like Mr. Fetterman, who have at least some appeal to white ***working-class*** voters, ought to be seen as the future of the party, she said.

''The Democrats tend to elect more centrist Democrats, and in theory, that would appeal to a larger audience, but it does exclude the ***working class***,'' Ms. Hons-Astle said. ''The ***working class*** feels alienated by Democrats or Republicans.''

Mr. Snyder, 28, a tattoo artist, said Democrats had failed at speaking to ***working-class*** voters and ''the very real material problems that people have.''

Mr. Fetterman's path to victory statewide was blazed largely through rural counties that lean heavily red. He was able to win higher margins in those counties than Mr. Biden did in 2020 in his contest with Mr. Trump. Michelle McFall, the Democratic chair in one of those deep-red places, Westmoreland County, east of Pittsburgh, attended Mr. Fetterman's election night party in the city.

''I was tired but needed to be there,'' she said.

When results were announced, she described realizing that his victory came not only because he racked up votes in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, but, she said, ''because of Westmoreland and Erie and Washington and Fayette and Butler and Beaver and Indiana'' -- all rural counties in western Pennsylvania. Many were Democratic strongholds in the past but have swung hard for Republicans in recent years.

Ms. McFall cited the Fetterman campaign slogan -- ''Every county, every vote.''

''Those words were the anthem of this cycle,'' she said, ''but they must become the model we use in every statewide election. This is how we win elections in Pennsylvania.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/09/us/politics/fetterman-midterms-pennsylvania.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/09/us/politics/fetterman-midterms-pennsylvania.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Lt. Gov. John Fetterman and his family in Pittsburgh after declaring victory early Wednesday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY RUTH FREMSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Pennsylvania Senate John Fetterman, the lieutenant governor of Pennsylvania, defeated the celebrity doctor Mehmet Oz.

John Fetterman Democrat

Mehmet Oz Republican This article appeared in print on page P11.

**Load-Date:** November 10, 2022

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[***What Many Pennsylvanians Saw in Fetterman***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66TS-J831-JBG3-63K0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 9, 2022 Wednesday 11:01 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1220 words

**Byline:** Trip Gabriel

**Highlight:** By reinventing his Senate campaign after a stroke, Lt. Gov. John Fetterman ended up connecting with voters who responded to his saga of loss and comeback.

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PHOTOS: Lt. Gov. John Fetterman and his family in Pittsburgh after declaring victory early Wednesday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY RUTH FREMSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES); Pennsylvania Senate John Fetterman, the lieutenant governor of Pennsylvania, defeated the celebrity doctor Mehmet Oz.; John Fetterman Democrat; Mehmet Oz Republican This article appeared in print on page P11.

**Load-Date:** November 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[***A Writer Became the Person She Longed to Be***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BBD-M6B1-JBG3-6085-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 15, 2024 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2024 The New York Times Company

**Section:** Section C; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. 6

**Length:** 1154 words

**Byline:** By María Sánchez Díez

**Body**

In her memoir ''I Heard Her Call My Name,'' the author reflects on her life and embarking on a gender transition in her late 60s.

It took a lifetime.

After carrying a secret ''the size of a house'' for decades, Lucy Sante, the writer and author of, among others, ''Low Life,'' a cult book about the grittier side of New York City, began transitioning in 2021, at the age of 66.

All the subterfuges she had built to conceal her identity finally crumbled thanks to a small experiment during the pandemic. She downloaded FaceApp, an application that allows users to see how they would look if they swapped genders. She uploaded one photo, and then another until an alternative timeline of her life as a woman emerged. She was irreversibly gripped by what she saw: the person that she had most avoided and yearned for all her life.

This epiphany starts Sante's new book, ''I Heard Her Call My Name: A Memoir of Transition,'' in which she jumps between past and present, narrating her transition process while revisiting her life from a new vantage point.

The book intertwines these two timelines -- ''a cheap technique from suspense novels,'' as Sante puts it.

The past is the official tale: Her ***working-class*** family's migration from Belgium to the suburbs of New Jersey in the '60s. Her beginnings as a writer working for Barbara Epstein at The New York Review of Books. Her adventures working at the Strand bookstore and wandering around New York City's counterculture scene in the '70s alongside figures like Elizabeth Hardwick, Jean-Michel Basquiat and Nan Goldin, whose company Sante at one point avoided, afraid of Goldin's proximity to trans people.

Then there is the transition, with its ambivalence and complexity: The irrevocability and exhilaration of it -- ''All I could do was emote,'' Sante said of that time. The construction of a new person. The starts and stops. The quest for a version of femininity that would suit her. The breakup with her longtime partner. The fear of being romantically shunned by women.

Sante, who will turn 70 this year, says she is finally living as her true self, and she does not care if this sounds like a cliché. From her house in Kingston, N.Y., she talked about what it means to transition later in life, about trans rights in the United States and about the changes she has been through. This conversation has been edited for length and clarity.

What connections do you see between your gender transition and any changes in your voice as a writer?

I've wondered about that a lot, and I don't think there's that much difference. One of the under-arguments of the book is that I was never really a man at all. I'm still the same person. I'm just outwardly manifesting what was inwardly there. But there is one major difference, which is that I was carrying around the secret for 60 years. And now, having gotten rid of that secret, I have nothing left to hide.

You have mentioned that your ambition as a writer was one thing that kept you from transitioning earlier. You were scared of becoming ''the trans writer.''

I never want to have one subject, ever. After I wrote ''Low Life'' there was a pressure on me to write more New York books, and I just didn't want to do that. When I'm doing my work, the subject matter is of central importance, but it's not as important for me as the writing. It's like I'm a painter. I can paint the ballet, I can paint a war scene, and I can paint the flowers in my backyard. It's really all about the brushstrokes. That's the way I am about my writing.

As an author, you are borderline obsessed with photography: how we portray ourselves, how we portray others. It seems fitting that the thing that finally pushed you through was photography.

It was visual evidence. Once I put through a recent photograph through FaceApp, I was amazed by the results. My first impulse was to see what I would have looked like 50 years ago. I started rounding up all the photographs that I have of me. There aren't that many, but they're scattered all over the house, from the basement to the attic. It became a project. It took for at least 4 or 5 days for me to dig up all these photographs.

I had known all my life -- that's why I didn't cross-dress or anything -- I knew if I did that there was no turning back. I finally got to that point after all those years.

What do you think about the copies of your books that sit in shelves or in bookstores and that have your dead name on them?

I made my peace with that very early. I hope that my dead name never dies, because we have to get rid of the back inventory (laughs).

You point to the growing tolerance in society toward trans people as one factor that allowed you to come out, but the political climate has changed a lot in the last couple years, with a flurry of bills seeking to restrict transgender rights introduced in at least 25 states. How have you experienced this wave?

It makes me very sad. I don't feel in danger because I'm too old. Nobody cares about me as a sex object. There's been violence against trans women, especially trans women who have to do sex work, and guys whose sense of shame is expressed by violence toward their partner. Now it's joined by these people who are terrified their children are going to be trans. They want to control how their children think. It's a convenient cultural scapegoat.

Why? Do you think the challenge to the binary scares people?

People are afraid of instability, they're afraid of ambiguity, they're afraid of anything that's not clearly designated, black-and-white. Because we are relatively few -- probably many more than anybody suspects when you come down to the closeted cases -- many people, especially out in the middle of the country, have never met a trans person. They don't know what they're like, so they can just rely on some cartoon version in their head.

Movies have been very bad. Trans people have been used as comic figures or creepy villains. That awful Brian De Palma movie called ''Dressed to Kill'' or ''The Silence of the Lambs,'' movies where the murderer is a trans person and they're murdering, because they're weird and trans.

Your book is not political, but it exists in the particular context we are discussing. How do you think it will fit the conversation about trans people in the United States?

I hope that it will humanize. This is not the first trans memoir that's been written. There are dozens, but because I'm a writer known for a number of other books, this might attract a readership that would not ordinarily be reading a trans memoir, and it will help to explain how it works, how it's serious, how it'll last a lifetime. I didn't want to make it a polemic, I wanted it to be a personal story. I think that's more powerful than being a polemic, because polemic results in dead prose. It's just rhetoric. It passes through you like air. I wanted something that would stick in the mind.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/14/books/lucy-sante-gender-transition-memoir.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/14/books/lucy-sante-gender-transition-memoir.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Top, Lucy Sante at home. Her new book is ''I Heard Her Call My Name: A Memoir of Transition.'' (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIK TANNER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page C6.

**Load-Date:** February 15, 2024

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[***Visualizing Who Would Benefit From the Child Tax Credit Expansion***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B71-9D31-JBG3-600X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 30, 2024 Tuesday 15:02 EST

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**Section:** UPSHOT

**Length:** 1091 words

**Byline:** Claire Cain Miller, Alicia Parlapiano and Margot Sanger-Katz Claire Cain Miller is a Times reporter covering gender, families and education. Alicia Parlapiano is a Times reporter covering government policy and politics, primarily using data and charts. Margot Sanger-Katz is a reporter covering health care policy and public health for the Upshot section of The Times.

**Highlight:** It’s a rare area of agreement between the parties. Here’s what would change.

**Body**

It’s a rare area of agreement between the parties. Here’s what would change.

At a time when congressional Democrats and Republicans seem unable to agree on almost anything, they may soon enact an expanded child tax credit, which gives money to parents.

The credit, a rare family policy that [*has support*](https://www.nytimes.com/section/upshot) from both parties, is part of a $78 billion tax package that [*passed the House on Wednesday night*](https://www.nytimes.com/section/upshot) with a large bipartisan tally, 357 to 70. It is not guaranteed to win Senate approval, but [*the deal*](https://www.nytimes.com/section/upshot) has broad appeal across the ideological spectrum.

The biggest benefits of the child tax credit would be for the poorest families, analysts said: The payments could bring nearly half a million children out of poverty and decrease poverty for five million more, [*by some estimates*](https://www.nytimes.com/section/upshot). Research [*has shown*](https://www.nytimes.com/section/upshot) that families spend those extra dollars on food, child care and other basic needs.

Still, it would reduce child poverty by only about 5 percent by 2025, compared with a temporary reduction of 35 percent achieved by a larger child tax credit expansion passed during the pandemic, according to the Columbia University Center on Poverty and Social Policy.

“It is a fairly modest tweak in the scheme of things,” said Patrick T. Brown, a fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center, a conservative think tank. “But at the same time, it could pave the way toward a broader conversation about what the purpose of the child tax credit is and how we can make it more possible for parents across the spectrum to raise a kid.”

Here’s how the proposal would work — and why politicians like it.

How does the child tax credit work now?

Under current law, families are eligible for [*up to a $2,000 tax credit*](https://www.nytimes.com/section/upshot) for each of their children. But not every family gets the full amount: Those who do not work for pay (or who have very high incomes) do not qualify, and others get a partial credit.

In order to qualify for any credit, families must earn at least $2,500 a year, and the size of the payment increases with household income. A single parent of one child must earn about $24,800 before becoming eligible for the full credit; a married couple with two children must earn about $35,700. That structure is intended to encourage poor parents to work, and has been a key requirement for many Republican lawmakers.

What would the new child tax credit do?

The new proposal would keep that idea intact, but increase payments to poor families who meet the minimum income threshold. It would also increase the $2,000-per-child maximum credit [*to keep up with inflation*](https://www.nytimes.com/section/upshot). And it would let families choose between their current year’s income or the previous year’s when calculating the size of the credit.

The new credit, which its authors are hoping to pass in time for this year’s tax filing season, would be temporary, expiring at the end of 2025.

How would it help poor families?

In the first year, the new credit would reach an estimated 80 percent of families whose incomes are too low to receive the full amount now, including roughly 16 million children, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a left-leaning research group.

The legislation does that by increasing the amount that poor families can receive, particularly those with multiple children. For example, single parents with three children earning $15,000 would receive three times the payment in 2025 as they would under current law — $5,625 a year instead of $1,875.

During the pandemic, there was a much more [*generous one-year expansion*](https://www.nytimes.com/section/upshot) of the child tax credit. The annual payment increased to as much as $3,600 per child, and the government sent it in [*the form of monthly checks*](https://www.nytimes.com/section/upshot). For the first time, it also went to families with no incomes. That expansion lifted 2.9 million children out of poverty in 2021, decreasing child poverty to [*the lowest rate on record*](https://www.nytimes.com/section/upshot). But it expired at the end of that year, contributing to a slide back [*below the poverty line*](https://www.nytimes.com/section/upshot) for many families.

How did the idea achieve bipartisan support?

Spending on policies that help families has traditionally been a Democratic priority. But this bill — released by Representative Jason Smith of Missouri, the Republican chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee; and Senator Ron Wyden of Oregon, the Democratic chairman of the Senate Finance Committee — was written in a way that has made many Republicans embrace it.

It’s part of a broader tax package that also [*cuts several taxes on businesses*](https://www.nytimes.com/section/upshot), and won’t increase the deficit much because it gets rid of a pandemic-era business tax credit that has become a [*magnet for fraud*](https://www.nytimes.com/section/upshot).

In recent years, a contingent of the Republican Party has begun embracing government spending on certain family policies, driven by ***working-class*** voters’ movement to the G.O.P., and a concern among lawmakers about declining fertility rates. It appeals to values held by both parties, “both the anti-poverty left and the pro-family right,” Mr. Brown said.

Kristen Soltis Anderson, a founding partner of Echelon Insights, a Republican polling firm, said she had seen growing consensus among voters in both parties about the need for family policies: “You have many Republicans who are very anxious about young people saying, ‘I don’t think I want to have kids,’” she said. “There’s this culturally conservative anxiety around that.”

The [*sticking point for most Republicans*](https://www.nytimes.com/section/upshot) had been an income requirement, so that payments wouldn’t go to parents who did not work. The new bill has removed that obstacle.

Perhaps surprisingly, the bill has garnered some Democratic opposition — the major complaint being that [*it is not generous enough.*](https://www.nytimes.com/section/upshot) On Wednesday night, 23 House Democrats voted against the bill.

What do voters think about an expanded child tax credit?

The idea is popular with voters across the ideological spectrum, though it [*does not have the support*](https://www.nytimes.com/section/upshot) of a large majority. A review of 31 surveys about the pandemic-era expansion found that on average, [*six in 10 likely voters*](https://www.nytimes.com/section/upshot) supported it.

What happens next?

The bill heads to the Senate. Senator Chuck Schumer of New York, the majority leader, hopes to bring it to the floor, though [*some Republicans have voiced concerns*](https://www.nytimes.com/section/upshot).

Even if the bill became law, the additional benefits would end after 2025 — and at that point, the child tax credit would become even smaller than the amount parents receive today, to a maximum benefit of $1,000 per child. That’s because another tax credit law is also set to expire in 2025.

Without a future bill, the child tax credit is at risk of shrinking considerably.

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

**Load-Date:** June 18, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Lucy Sante Is the Same Writer She Has Always Been***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BB6-W451-DXY4-X0V0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 14, 2024 Wednesday 12:27 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS

**Length:** 1174 words

**Byline:** María Sánchez Díez

**Highlight:** In her memoir “I Heard Her Call My Name,” the author reflects on her life and embarking on a gender transition in her late 60s.

**Body**

In her memoir “I Heard Her Call My Name,” the author reflects on her life and embarking on a gender transition in her late 60s.

It took a lifetime.

After carrying a secret “the size of a house” for decades, Lucy Sante, the writer and author of, among others, “Low Life,” a cult book about the grittier side of New York City, began transitioning in 2021, at the age of 66.

All the subterfuges she had built to conceal her identity finally crumbled thanks to a small experiment during the pandemic. She downloaded FaceApp, an application that allows users to see how they would look if they swapped genders. She uploaded one photo, and then another until an alternative timeline of her life as a woman emerged. She was irreversibly gripped by what she saw: the person that she had most avoided and yearned for all her life.

This epiphany starts Sante’s new book, “[*I Heard Her Call My Name: A Memoir of Transition*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/03/books/review/lucy-sante-i-heard-her-call-my-name.html),” in which she jumps between past and present, narrating her transition process while revisiting her life from a new vantage point.

The book intertwines these two timelines — “a cheap technique from suspense novels,” as Sante puts it.

The past is the official tale: Her ***working-class*** family’s migration from Belgium to the suburbs of New Jersey in the ’60s. Her beginnings as a writer working for Barbara Epstein at The New York Review of Books. Her adventures working at the Strand bookstore and wandering around New York City’s counterculture scene in the ’70s alongside figures like Elizabeth Hardwick, Jean-Michel Basquiat and Nan Goldin, whose company Sante at one point avoided, afraid of Goldin’s proximity to trans people.

Then there is the transition, with its ambivalence and complexity: The irrevocability and exhilaration of it — “All I could do was emote,” Sante said of that time. The construction of a new person. The starts and stops. The quest for a version of femininity that would suit her. The breakup with her longtime partner. The fear of being romantically shunned by women.

Sante, who will turn 70 this year, says she is finally living as her true self, and she does not care if this sounds like a cliché. From her house in Kingston, N.Y., she talked about what it means to transition later in life, about trans rights in the United States and about the changes she has been through. This conversation has been edited for length and clarity.

What connections do you see between your gender transition and any changes in your voice as a writer?

I’ve wondered about that a lot, and I don’t think there’s that much difference. One of the under-arguments of the book is that I was never really a man at all. I’m still the same person. I’m just outwardly manifesting what was inwardly there. But there is one major difference, which is that I was carrying around the secret for 60 years. And now, having gotten rid of that secret, I have nothing left to hide.

You have mentioned that your ambition as a writer was one thing that kept you from transitioning earlier. You were scared of becoming “the trans writer.”

I never want to have one subject, ever. After I wrote “Low Life” there was a pressure on me to write more New York books, and I just didn’t want to do that. When I’m doing my work, the subject matter is of central importance, but it’s not as important for me as the writing. It’s like I’m a painter. I can paint the ballet, I can paint a war scene, and I can paint the flowers in my backyard. It’s really all about the brushstrokes. That’s the way I am about my writing.

As an author, you are borderline obsessed with photography: how we portray ourselves, how we portray others. It seems fitting that the thing that finally pushed you through was photography.

It was visual evidence. Once I put through a recent photograph through FaceApp, I was amazed by the results. My first impulse was to see what I would have looked like 50 years ago. I started rounding up all the photographs that I have of me. There aren’t that many, but they’re scattered all over the house, from the basement to the attic. It became a project. It took for at least 4 or 5 days for me to dig up all these photographs.

I had known all my life — that’s why I didn’t cross-dress or anything — I knew if I did that there was no turning back. I finally got to that point after all those years.

What do you think about the [*copies of your books*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/03/books/review/lucy-sante-i-heard-her-call-my-name.html) that sit in shelves or in bookstores and that have your dead name on them?

I made my peace with that very early. I hope that my dead name never dies, because we have to get rid of the back inventory (laughs).

You point to the growing tolerance in society toward trans people as one factor that allowed you to come out, but the political climate has changed a lot in the last couple years, with [*a flurry of bills seeking to restrict transgender rights*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/03/books/review/lucy-sante-i-heard-her-call-my-name.html) introduced in at least 25 states. How have you experienced this wave?

It makes me very sad. I don’t feel in danger because I’m too old. Nobody cares about me as a sex object. There’s been violence against trans women, especially trans women who have to do sex work, and guys whose sense of shame is expressed by violence toward their partner. Now it’s joined by these people who are terrified their children are going to be trans. They want to control how their children think. It’s a convenient cultural scapegoat.

Why? Do you think the challenge to the binary scares people?

People are afraid of instability, they’re afraid of ambiguity, they’re afraid of anything that’s not clearly designated, black-and-white. Because we are relatively few — probably many more than anybody suspects when you come down to the closeted cases — many people, especially out in the middle of the country, have never met a trans person. They don’t know what they’re like, so they can just rely on some cartoon version in their head.

Movies have been very bad. Trans people have been used as comic figures or creepy villains. That awful Brian De Palma movie called “Dressed to Kill” or “The Silence of the Lambs,” movies where the murderer is a trans person and they’re murdering, because they’re weird and trans.

Your book is not political, but it exists in the particular context we are discussing. How do you think it will fit the conversation about trans people in the United States?

I hope that it will humanize. This is not the first trans memoir that’s been written. There are dozens, but because I’m a writer known for a number of other books, this might attract a readership that would not ordinarily be reading a trans memoir, and it will help to explain how it works, how it’s serious, how it’ll last a lifetime. I didn’t want to make it a polemic, I wanted it to be a personal story. I think that’s more powerful than being a polemic, because polemic results in dead prose. It’s just rhetoric. It passes through you like air. I wanted something that would stick in the mind.

PHOTOS: Top, Lucy Sante at home. Her new book is “I Heard Her Call My Name: A Memoir of Transition.” (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIK TANNER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page C6.

**Load-Date:** February 15, 2024

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[***Mississippi Re-elects Gov. Tate Reeves, a Republican***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69K8-X611-DXY4-X0J2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 8, 2023 Wednesday 01:10 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 710 words

**Byline:** Rick Rojas

**Highlight:** While the outcome was no surprise, given the Republican Party’s dominance in the state, it did not come quite as easily as some might have expected at the outset of the race.

**Body**

While the outcome was no surprise, given the Republican Party’s dominance in the state, it did not come quite as easily as some might have expected at the outset of the race.

Gov. Tate Reeves of Mississippi secured a second term, according to The Associated Press, fending off a vigorous challenge from Brandon Presley, a conservative Democrat whom he cast as a far-left acolyte of President Biden, and overcoming concerns about a shortage of excitement among conservatives.

Mr. Presley conceded to Mr. Reeves, a Republican, shortly before 11 p.m. Central time.

While the outcome was no surprise, given the Republican Party’s dominance in the state, it did not come quite as easily as some might have expected at the outset of the race. Mr. Presley, a little-known utilities regulator, mounted an energetic campaign that kept Mr. Reeves on his toes.

“This victory sure is sweet,” Mr. Reeves said on Tuesday night.

“This victory belongs to you,” he told supporters. “This victory is more than just who will occupy the governor’s mansion over the next four years. It’s really about the direction that our state will go over the next four years. Mississippi has momentum.”

Mr. Reeves, who was first elected governor in 2019, campaigned on his conservative credentials while constantly linking Mr. Presley to Mr. Biden and other national Democrats who are widely unpopular in Mississippi.

He boasted about tax cuts he had signed and promised to chase his unrealized ambition of eliminating the state’s income tax. Mr. Reeves also pointed to raises for teachers, which he signed into law last year and which were among the largest in state history, and to the fact that unemployment had dropped to its lowest rate in decades.

Mr. Presley traveled the state arguing for expanding Medicaid and slashing the state’s high grocery tax, which is one of the highest in the nation, saying he would bring relief to ***working-class*** families. He focused heavily on mobilizing Black voters, but he also believed that he could peel away white centrists and Republicans who were drawn to his message.

Mr. Presley, a second cousin of Elvis Presley and a former mayor of Nettleton, Miss., a town of about 2,000 in the northern part of the state, focused on his personal story of struggling through poverty as a child. He cast Mr. Reeves as disconnected from the experiences of the state’s working poor.

He also relentlessly needled Mr. Reeves for a sprawling scandal in which millions of dollars in federal welfare funds had been siphoned away from supporting the state’s poorest residents. The money was instead used for the pet projects of wealthy and connected individuals, including a volleyball stadium at the University of Southern Mississippi championed by Brett Favre, the former professional football player.

Mr. Reeves denied any involvement in the scandal, which, he noted, largely unfolded before he began his term as governor in 2020. (He had been lieutenant governor.) Still, he was criticized for his handling of the efforts to claw the money back, including his administration’s firing of a former federal prosecutor who had been hired to recoup those funds.

The Cook Political Report, a nonpartisan newsletter, [*recently found that the election*](https://www.cookpolitical.com/analysis/governors/mississippi-governor/mississippi-governor-moves-likely-lean-republican) had “morphed into a competitive fight.” It described Mr. Presley as an “unusually strong contender.”

But ultimately Mr. Presley failed to close the gap and thwart Mr. Reeves’s triumph, an outcome that underscores the strength the Republican Party has amassed in Mississippi.

“We left no stone unturned,” Mr. Presley told supporters on Tuesday night, describing the aggressive effort his campaign to crisscross the state, making stops in all 82 counties. He argued that the race had succeeded in bringing attention to urgent issues, like Medicaid expansion.

But as he conceded, he said that, however contentious the race had gotten, Mississippi had to move forward without being consumed by partisan divisions.

“This is bigger than one man,” Mr. Presley said. “We can lose this race tonight recognizing good on the other side.”

PHOTO: Gov. Tate Reeves of Mississippi, right, spoke during a news conference at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in September. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Rogelio V. Solis/Associated Press FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** November 8, 2023

**End of Document**



[***At Sundance, A Broad Mix Of Nonfiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B6T-01D1-DXY4-X199-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 29, 2024 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. 1; CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK

**Length:** 1110 words

**Byline:** By Alissa Wilkinson

**Body**

Festival documentaries ranged across the genre map, but several explored the lengths we'll go to communicate with lost loved ones.

Everyone from the academy to streaming services splits cinema into two buckets: movies (comedy, romance, horror, whatever) and documentaries, lumped into one unholy pile. Besides being obviously reductive, the division is false: Nonfiction movies can be comedies or romances or horror or any other genre, and they can create new indescribable genres, too. But American audiences still tend to be fed documentaries of only a few types: true crime stories, cult exposés, hagiographies, and educational disquisitions full of talking heads.

There's more than that to nonfiction. And though plenty of star-driven, lightweight biographies show up at Sundance -- famous folk on the carpet create much-needed social-media attention -- there's a lot of other nonfiction on offer, some of which will make its way to theaters and streaming services over the next year or two. A couple of lucky films may even eventually make their way into Oscar contention.

Documentaries at this year's Sundance, which concluded Sunday, ranged across the genre map, often playfully mixing up conventions. But it was striking how often a particular thread kept popping up: the human longing to communicate with the dead, and the lengths -- technological and otherwise -- to which we'll go to make it happen.

That was the theme of ''Love Machina'' and ''Eternal You,'' which feel picked by the programmers to complement one another. ''Love Machina'' (directed by Peter Sillen) is a romance looking at the efforts of the married couple Martine and Bina Rothblatt to create a robotic replica of Bina, powered by artificial intelligence and an extensive database of her thoughts, speech and emotions, that can communicate with her descendants when she is gone. ''Eternal You'' (directed by Hans Block and Moritz Riesewieck) takes a broader, more analytical look at the burgeoning market for ''afterlife technology'' designed to do what the Rothblatts hope to accomplish: let people communicate with their loved ones after death using A.I. If that sounds like a ''Black Mirror'' episode, you're right -- and some ''Eternal You'' participants note the humanity-altering danger in this quest.

Yet, as the eminent sociologist Sherry Turkle points out onscreen, what we see in these efforts is A.I. offering what religion once did: a sense of an afterlife, a quest for meaning, the feeling of connecting to transcendence. One of the festival's best documentaries, the sociological portrait ''Look Into My Eyes,'' taps into this same longing from a more mystical direction. Directed by Lana Wilson, the film drops audiences into the lives of several New York City psychics. The clients are hoping to communicate with the beloved dead through a literal rather than technological medium. (One participant helps people communicate with their pets, some of whom are still living.) But the focus is on the psychics themselves, the reasons they've come to their work, and what they believe they're actually doing in their sessions -- and the film is marvelously nuanced and fascinating in its examination. Is this performance? Is it ''real''? And if it brings peace to the living, does it matter?

Other documentaries centered on people trying to connect with one another across social barriers, like the much-loved ''Will & Harper,'' featuring Will Ferrell. There was the astounding, rebellious ''Union,'' directed by Brett Story and Stephen Maing, about the Amazon Labor Union's organizing work at the JFK8 fulfillment center on Staten Island. It's a radically observational documentary, capturing years of the effort amid the complex dynamics of solidarity, with ***working-class*** New Yorkers putting in the time alongside young organizers who take jobs at the center explicitly to lead the unionization campaign. And it's brilliant.

''Sugarcane,'' a sobering community portrait directed by Julian Brave NoiseCat and Emily Kassie, tracks the fallout from the Roman Catholic Church's residential school for Indigenous children in Canada by tracing generational trauma. Instead of preaching about the topic, the directors let their subjects slowly fill in the outlines while reminding us that these same stories have been replicated across North America, and have only barely begun to be investigated. On the flip side, Shiori Ito's memoirlike ''Black Box Diaries'' chronicles the director's bold and brutal investigation of her own sexual assault at the hands of a prominent Japanese journalist. The ways the investigation is thwarted by the powerful are a damning statement about why, and how, it's so difficult for such cases to be resolved. (Ito won her case, but the problems are much bigger than Japan.)

And I can't stop thinking about the remarkable ''Soundtrack to a Coup d'Etat'' (by Johan Grimonprez), a sprawling film that's a well-researched essay about the 1960 regime change in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the part the United States, particularly the C.I.A., played -- especially in harnessing the cultural cachet of jazz musicians, often without their knowledge, to promote America's image abroad.

All of these movies are worth seeking out as soon as they're available. But I'll tell you the truth: The documentary that feels most destined to live in my memory is the first one I saw this year at Sundance, a genre-defying project by any definition. ''Ibelin,'' directed by Benjamin Ree, is about Mats Steen, a Norwegian who died in 2014, at age 25, from a rare, degenerative genetic condition. He left behind a blog and a password, and when his parents logged on to post about his death, they discovered something amazing: He had a rich community and life in his World of Warcraft guild, where he played as a character named Ibelin.

Ree employed animators to recreate scenes from Steen's World of Warcraft life, drawing on a huge archive of transcripts detailing his conversations and activities. Ree also visits some of Steen's friends in real life, who range across Europe and have immensely moving stories to tell. An excellent pairing with the 2022 Sundance premiere ''We Met in Virtual Reality,'' ''Ibelin'' is a poignant counterexample to the technodoomerism that often accompanies relationships formed in virtual spaces.

It can be hard to track down some documentaries after their festival runs, since they rarely get the marketing dollars and push that their fiction cousins do. Luckily, Netflix bought ''Ibelin.'' Which means you'll be able to connect with Steen's story, too -- through the ubiquitous technology of your very own screen.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/28/movies/sundance-film-festival-documentaries.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/28/movies/sundance-film-festival-documentaries.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: From top: Andrée Blouin, center, and Patrice Lumumba, right, in ''Soundtrack to a Coup d'Etat''

''Eternal You,'' a documentary about the market for ''afterlife technology''

and Chris Smalls in ''Union,'' about labor organizing at an Amazon fulfillment center. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY TERENCE SPENCER, VIA SUNDANCE INSTITUTE

KONRAD WALDMANN, VIA SUNDANCE INSTITUTE

MARTIN DiCICCO, VIA SUNDANCE INSTITUTE) (C4) This article appeared in print on page C1, C4.

**Load-Date:** January 29, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Will Haley or a Trial Bring Trump Down? For Now, Our Poll Says No.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69X8-GX51-DXY4-X40J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 20, 2023 Wednesday 12:47 EST

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**Section:** UPSHOT

**Length:** 887 words

**Highlight:** Republican primary voters seem unbothered by a coming trial, but a new obstacle looms.

**Body**

Republican primary voters seem unbothered by a coming trial, but a new obstacle looms.

Donald J. Trump is [*still leading*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/20/us/politics/trump-cases-poll-2024.html) in the race for the Republican nomination.

By a lot.

In the latest New York Times/Siena College poll Wednesday, he holds a 64-11 lead over Nikki Haley, with Ron DeSantis in third place at 9 percent.

Does the poll provide any indication that Ms. Haley or a criminal trial will bring Mr. Trump down, as our headline asks?

No, but given the latest news, let’s look at it anyway.

Legal issues

With Mr. Trump leading his nearest rival by more than 50 points, it will probably take something unprecedented for him to lose the nomination.

But all year, there has been something unprecedented looming over the race: Mr. Trump’s legal problems. Tuesday night, the Colorado Supreme Court ruled Mr. Trump was [*ineligible to serve*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/19/us/politics/trump-colorado-ballot-14th-amendment.html) as president under the 14th Amendment. That’s unprecedented. And so is the coming trial and possible conviction of Mr. Trump, right in the heart of the Republican primary season.

I know you’re all wondering about the Colorado case, but our poll was concluded before the Colorado ruling and so we couldn’t ask people about it. Realistically, Mr. Trump will argue that the decision is only the latest example of the legal system treating him unfairly, and Republican voters will probably rally to his side, as they have done so many times before. If the Supreme Court decides that he remains eligible, it will be yet another victory in the eyes of many Republican primary voters. If the court concludes he’s ineligible, well, that’s a different story. As such, I must refer you to Adam Liptak, our Supreme Court correspondent, for the most relevant information.

What our poll did ask about was Mr. Trump’s coming criminal trial, and the poll offered few signs that it was poised to undo his candidacy.

In fact, 62 percent of Republican primary voters say he should be the party’s nominee even if he’s convicted after winning the primaries, while just 32 percent say he shouldn’t be the nominee if convicted. It’s enough support that it would be very challenging for Republicans to overturn the result of the primaries at the convention.

It’s easy to see why these voters might still back Mr. Trump, even if convicted:

* Three-quarters of Republican primary voters do not believe Mr. Trump will receive a fair trial.

1. Four-fifths say the charges against him are mostly politically motivated, not mostly because the prosecutors actually believed he committed a crime.
2. Three-quarters of Republican primary voters say Mr. Trump should be found “not guilty,” and only 30 percent say he should be sentenced to prison if found guilty.
3. Four-fifths say he genuinely believed his claims that the election was stolen.

Most voters aren’t paying attention yet, and Republicans say they don’t believe he’ll be convicted, so it’s possible their attitudes will shift once a trial gets underway.

But while things certainly could change, it’s notable that the charges themselves certainly haven’t wound up hurting him.

Nikki Haley

As we [*mentioned*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/04/upshot/nikki-haley-republicans-primary.html) a few weeks ago, Ms. Haley is becoming Mr. Trump’s primary rival, thanks to her natural appeal among Trump-skeptical, moderate and highly educated Republicans.

In this particular poll, that’s exactly how she has overtaken Mr. DeSantis to claim (an extremely distant) second place. Just consider her lopsided appeal among voters on the periphery of the Republican electorate:

* She has 56 percent of Republican primary voters who do not back Mr. Trump against President Biden in the general election, compared with 4 percent of those who prefer Mr. Trump to Mr. Biden. Mr. DeSantis has a mere 2 percent of these Not Trump voters — voters who almost by definition had to be part of a serious coalition to challenge Mr. Trump.

1. She has the support of 39 percent of college graduates compared with a mere 3 percent of those without a degree. (I think I actually said “wow” aloud when I first saw that.)
2. Ms. Haley has the support of 19 percent of moderates compared with 8 percent of conservatives.

A candidate of moderate, highly educated Never Trumpers is not a candidate who will have an easy time winning over a populist ***working-class*** MAGA party. In fact, only 42 percent of Republicans have a favorable view of Ms. Haley, while a pretty sizable 28 percent view her unfavorably.

But Ms. Haley’s narrow base of support might just let her keep things interesting in states that play to her strengths — especially states with a high percentage of college graduates and with open primaries, where independent voters and even some Democrats might just vote.

New Hampshire, where a CBS/YouGov [*poll*](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/poll-haley-trump-new-hampshire-iowa/) this past weekend gave Ms. Haley 29 percent of the vote, is one of those states. Her home state, South Carolina, is one where Democrats and independents can vote.

Plenty of primary polls limit themselves to self-identified Republican-leaning voters or people with a history of voting in Republican primaries (the Times/Siena poll allows any respondents to say they’ll vote in the Republican primary). It wouldn’t surprise me to see a candidate like Ms. Haley outperform the polls a bit in the states where other kinds of voters can participate.

PHOTO: Nikki Haley and Donald Trump in warmer times, in 2018. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Olivier Douliery/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** December 20, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Girl Power***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:691S-6WY1-JBG3-6020-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 27, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 10; NONFICTION

**Length:** 1143 words

**Byline:** By Garance Franke-Ruta

**Body**

In ''Young and Restless,'' Mattie Kahn returns young women and girls to their rightful role in the history books: as forces for change.

YOUNG AND RESTLESS: The Girls Who Sparked America's Revolutions, by Mattie Kahn

American girls are in crisis -- on that much we can all agree. In a 2021 study of young women's mental health, a vast number of respondents between ages 12 and 19 answered that they had felt ''persistently sad or hopeless''; rates of sexual assault and violence in the same population are alarmingly high. As caregivers, many of us are looking for ways to shore up our children's well-being, self-esteem and happiness. And although it is not the aim of a historical survey to be prescriptive, heartening inspiration can be found in ''Young and Restless,'' Mattie Kahn's thoroughgoing examination of the role of young women and girls in America's uprisings.

Her subjects have agitated on behalf of labor and voting rights, racial dignity and equality, sexual and reproductive freedom, freedom of speech and against climate change. The solutions she illustrates include objecting, resisting -- and, yes, acting up, rather than sinking into sadness and accepting the unacceptable. By taking direct action in the service of shared values, in alliance with beloved communities for a better future, girls throughout American history have discovered a sense of personal agency, often during eras when their opportunities were sharply circumscribed. Sometimes they even changed history.

Kahn, whose stated aim is to write girls back into the historical record, also considers her subjects' lives before and after their time in the trenches. Many of the young women who took on activist roles -- especially those who lived before the mid-20th century -- faced intense blowback, even as they inspired others to their causes. The book also examines the place of childhood itself as a battleground on which America's culture wars have historically been fought.

The author maintains an admirable ability to complicate her own assertions -- girls have been a force for progressive change, for instance, but also a force in reactionary movements. And, delightfully, she brings a onetime women's magazine editor's attentiveness to the importance of style and theatricality in the lives of young women whose sashes and hats, hairstyles and armbands and, finally, pants, have marked their movements for change.

She opens with the story of the Lowell mill, a type of ''philanthropic manufacturing college,'' as Anthony Trollope described it, that eased the burden on ***working-class*** families by educating their daughters. Like so many flash points in American history, this story is often taught at the diorama-level; but it's a crucial one, and not just because it's one of the earliest to be documented by the young female participants themselves. Lowell gave the country its first teen girl culture, even if the word ''teenager'' would not be invented, as Kahn notes, until 1941. ''Before Lowell -- with the exception of the wealthiest women's tearooms and parlors -- there were almost no spaces in which girls could gather as a group,'' she writes. Daughters of rich men had finishing schools; with the establishment of the mills, the daughters of the ***working class*** would have the factories.

Lowell was, at first, a place where Ralph Waldo Emerson and Edgar Allan Poe would come to lecture, where girls could mix work and study, smuggling John Locke treatises onto the factory floors and founding the first all-female-staffed magazine in American history. It was a place that freed them from ''domestic subjugation'' in an era when there ''were no ladders to climb or balances to strike between work and home.'' Dickens himself could find nothing to criticize in these institutions. But as the milling industry grew, downward pressure on wages meant that the model environment of the early years degraded, leading to an uprising.

Among the more than 1,000 young women who went on strike between 1834 and 1837 was Harriet Hanson, who started factory work in 1835 in order to support her widowed mother and three siblings, and, with what she later described as ''childish bravado,'' led a walkout at age 11.

The book is packed with stories of young women like her, girls whose efforts were documented but have not been popularized, and whose introductions leave you wanting more. There's Mabel Ping-Hua Lee, who at 17 led 17,000 people up New York City's Fifth Avenue on horseback in the 1912 march for women's suffrage, while her mother ''rode in a car at the march along with a delegation of Chinese women who could not march because their feet had been bound.'' ''America's Joan of Arc,'' Anna Elizabeth Dickenson, gained fame as an abolitionist orator in her teens and would become the first woman to address the House of Representatives.

After World War II came a generation of youthful reproductive rights activists. We meet Heather Tobis (later Booth), who, at 19, founded the legendary abortion referral service Jane out of her dorm room. Clyde Marie Perry, 17, and Emma Jean Wilson, 14, integrated their Grenada, Miss., schools in 1966 and then successfully sued to stop expulsions of pregnant students like themselves.

Some of the activists were forgotten because later laws, like Title IX, overrode the significance of their achievements: like Faye Ordway, 18, who was expelled for pregnancy in 1971 and took the school board of her Massachusetts town to court, winning for herself and other pregnant minors the right to an education; and Alice de Rivera, the 13-year-old ''crusader in miniskirts'' who fought for the right to take the entrance exam to Stuyvesant High School in New York, which in 1969 had never admitted a woman.

Others have seen their stories more recently resurrected and achieved some measure of recognition. Claudette Colvin was arrested at 15, in 1955, for refusing to give up her Montgomery, Ala., bus seat to a white passenger, nine months before Rosa Parks -- the leader of Colvin's local N.A.A.C.P. Youth Council chapter -- did the same. ''She didn't want to be soothed. She wanted change,'' Kahn writes of the Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg, one of the most famous young voice of our own era.

''I felt that I belonged to the world, that there was something for me to do in it, though I had not yet found out what,'' wrote Lucy Lacrom in her memoir of her time in the Lowell mills. ''Something to do; it might be very little but still it would be my own work.'' Today, in the book's words, stories of remarkable girls ''abound.'' But, as Kahn deftly shows, that's been the story of these revolutionaries from the start.

Garance Franke-Ruta is a writer and editor based in New York.

YOUNG AND RESTLESS: The Girls Who Sparked America's Revolutions | By Mattie Kahn | Illustrated | 435 pp. | Viking | $29

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/13/books/review/young-and-restless-mattie-kahn.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/13/books/review/young-and-restless-mattie-kahn.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Above: Alice de Rivera, at 14, after winning her battle to attend the then all-male Stuyvesant High School in New York. Right: Mabel Ping-Hua Lee led a march up Fifth Avenue in support of women's suffrage. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY BETTMANN ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS) This article appeared in print on page BR10.

**Load-Date:** August 27, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Bernie Sanders, Fearing Weak Democratic Turnout, Plans Midterms Blitz***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66N7-HF81-JBG3-62SC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 19, 2022 Wednesday 23:04 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 796 words

**Byline:** Shane Goldmacher and Katie Glueck

**Highlight:** Mr. Sanders said he thought the Democratic Party was “doing rather poorly” at selling itself to ***working-class*** voters.

**Body**

Mr. Sanders said he thought the Democratic Party was “doing rather poorly” at selling itself to ***working-class*** voters.

Senator Bernie Sanders is planning an eight-state blitz with at least 19 events over the final two weekends before the midterm elections, looking to rally young voters and progressives as Democrats confront daunting national headwinds.

Mr. Sanders, the Vermont senator who in many ways is the face of the American left, is beginning his push in Oregon on Oct. 27.

“It is about energizing our base and increasing voter turnout up and down the ballot,” Mr. Sanders said in an interview. “I am a little bit concerned that the energy level for young people, ***working-class*** people,” is not as high as it should be, he said. “And I want to see what I can do about that.”

The first swing will include stops in Oregon, California, Nevada (with events in both Reno and Las Vegas), Texas (including one in McAllen), and Orlando, Fla. The second weekend will focus on Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania.

And while Mr. Sanders will appear in battleground states where some of the most hotly contested Senate and governor’s races are playing out — Nevada, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania — it is unclear which if any of the statewide Democratic candidates that Mr. Sanders is rallying voters to support will actually appear alongside him.

Mr. Sanders maintains an impassioned core following and is one of the biggest draws on the stump for Democrats nationwide. But Republicans have used Mr. Sanders as a [*boogeyman in television ads*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OWsxZxUUOU8) in many races across the country and even some moderate Democrats have concerns that his campaigning in swing states could backfire.

Mr. Sanders brushed off a question about whether his presence on the trail might be used to attack Democratic candidates.

“They’ve already done it,” Mr. Sanders said. “They’re going to have to respond to why they don’t want to raise the minimum wage, why they want to give tax breaks to billionaires, why they want to cut Social Security. Those are the questions that I think these guys do not want to answer. And those are the questions I’m going to be raising.”

Throughout the tour, he plans to hold events with a mix of House candidates, a mayoral contender and liberal organizations in an effort to turn out core Democratic constituencies.

He plans to appear with the congressional candidates Val Hoyle of Oregon, Greg Casar and Michelle Vallejo of Texas, Maxwell Alejandro Frost of Florida and Summer Lee of Pennsylvania. He is also expected to appear with Representative Karen Bass of California, who is running for mayor of Los Angeles, according to a Sanders aide.

As part of the tour, Mr. Sanders will headline rallies organized by the progressive groups NextGen and MoveOn. He is an invited speaker at the events and it’s not clear if Democrats who are running this year will also appear.

Mr. Sanders said he planned to focus on an economic message in pitching Democrats in 2022. Asked to assess how his party was doing in selling itself to ***working-class*** voters, he replied, “I think they’re doing rather poorly.”

“It is rather amazing to me that we are in a situation right now, which I hope to change, where according to poll after poll, the American people look more favorably upon the Republicans in terms of economic issues than they do Democrats,” he said. “That is absurd.”

A top priority for Mr. Sanders this year has been electing Mandela Barnes, the Democratic Senate nominee in Wisconsin. Mr. Sanders has allowed the Barnes campaign to use his name to send out fund-raising emails, reaping at least $500,000, according to a Sanders adviser.

It is not clear if Mr. Barnes will appear alongside Mr. Sanders, who is planning at least three events in the state the weekend before the election, in Eau Claire, LaCrosse and Madison, the state capital and heart of Wisconsin’s progressive movement. A spokeswoman for Mr. Barnes declined to comment on his plans.

But when Politico reported this month that Wisconsin Democrats [*were planning*](https://www.politico.com/news/2022/10/13/mandela-calls-democrats-before-midterms-00061603?nname=playbook&amp;nid=0000014f-1646-d88f-a1cf-5f46b7bd0000&amp;nrid=0000016f-fbc2-db95-a76f-fbf21d210000&amp;nlid=630318) possible events with Mr. Sanders, Matt Bennett, the co-founder of Third Way, a centrist group, [*wrote on Twitter*](https://twitter.com/ThirdWayMattB/status/1580529481948991488?s=20&amp;t=YzhvkCSFNUu01Of_jT5RWA): “I desperately want Barnes to win, so I ask again of his campaign: Why would you do this? Why????”

Despite the political challenges facing Democrats this year, Mr. Sanders said he was buoyed by the next generation of liberal leaders poised to come to Capitol Hill.

“When Congress convenes in January,” he said in the interview, “there are going to be more strong progressives in the Democratic caucus than in the modern history of this country.”

PHOTO: Senator Bernie Sanders will begin his campaign swing in Oregon on Oct. 27 and visit seven other states before Election Day. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HAIYUN JIANG/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A18.

**Load-Date:** October 19, 2022

**End of Document**



[***At Sundance, A.I., Psychics and Other Ways of Connecting With the Dead; Critic’s Notebook***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B6K-D631-DXY4-X013-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 28, 2024 Sunday 23:00 EST

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**Section:** MOVIES

**Length:** 1175 words

**Highlight:** Festival documentaries ranged across the genre map, but several explored the lengths we’ll go to communicate with lost loved ones.

**Body**

Festival documentaries ranged across the genre map, but several explored the lengths we’ll go to communicate with lost loved ones.

Everyone from the academy to streaming services splits cinema into two buckets: movies (comedy, romance, horror, whatever) and documentaries, lumped into one unholy pile. Besides being obviously reductive, the division is false: Nonfiction movies can be comedies or romances or horror or any other genre, and they can create new indescribable genres, too. But American audiences still tend to be fed documentaries of only a few types: true crime stories, cult exposés, hagiographies, and educational disquisitions full of talking heads.

There’s more than that to nonfiction. And though plenty of star-driven, lightweight biographies show up at Sundance — famous folk on the carpet create much-needed social-media attention — there’s a lot of other nonfiction on offer, some of which will make its way to theaters and streaming services over the next year or two. A couple of [*lucky*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/10/movies/the-eternal-memory-review.html) [*films*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/19/movies/to-kill-a-tiger-review.html) may even eventually make their way into Oscar contention.

Documentaries at this year’s Sundance, which concluded Sunday, ranged across the genre map, often playfully mixing up conventions. But it was striking how often a particular thread kept popping up: the human longing to communicate with the dead, and the lengths — technological and otherwise — to which we’ll go to make it happen.

That was the theme of “Love Machina” and “Eternal You,” which feel picked by the programmers to complement one another. “Love Machina” (directed by Peter Sillen) is a romance looking at the efforts of the married couple [*Martine*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/16/arts/design/a-sirius-satellite-founder-to-give-keynote-at-moogfest-protesting-bias-law.html) and Bina Rothblatt to create a robotic replica of Bina, powered by artificial intelligence and an extensive database of her thoughts, speech and emotions, that can communicate with her descendants when she is gone. “Eternal You” (directed by Hans Block and Moritz Riesewieck) takes a broader, more analytical look at the burgeoning market for “afterlife technology” designed to do what the Rothblatts hope to accomplish: let people communicate with their loved ones after death using A.I. If that sounds like a “Black Mirror” episode, you’re right — and some “Eternal You” participants note the humanity-altering danger in this quest.

Yet, as the eminent sociologist Sherry Turkle points out onscreen, what we see in these efforts is A.I. offering what religion once did: a sense of an afterlife, a quest for meaning, the feeling of connecting to transcendence. One of the festival’s best documentaries, the sociological portrait “Look Into My Eyes,” taps into this same longing from a more mystical direction. Directed by Lana Wilson, the film drops audiences into the lives of several New York City psychics. The clients are hoping to communicate with the beloved dead through a literal rather than technological medium. (One participant helps people communicate with their pets, some of whom are still living.) But the focus is on the psychics themselves, the reasons they’ve come to their work, and what they believe they’re actually doing in their sessions — and the film is marvelously nuanced and fascinating in its examination. Is this performance? Is it “real”? And if it brings peace to the living, does it matter?

Other documentaries centered on people trying to connect with one another across social barriers, like the much-loved “[*Will &amp; Harper*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/movies/sundance-film-festival-will-ferrell.html),” featuring Will Ferrell. There was the astounding, rebellious “Union,” directed by Brett Story and Stephen Maing, about the [*Amazon Labor Union’s organizing work*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/21/business/amazon-labor-union.html) at the JFK8 fulfillment center on Staten Island. It’s a radically observational documentary, capturing years of the effort amid the complex dynamics of solidarity, with ***working-class*** New Yorkers putting in the time alongside young organizers who take jobs at the center explicitly to lead the unionization campaign. And it’s brilliant.

“Sugarcane,” a sobering community portrait directed by Julian Brave NoiseCat and Emily Kassie, tracks the fallout from the Roman Catholic Church’s residential school for Indigenous children in Canada by tracing generational trauma. Instead of preaching about the topic, the directors let their subjects slowly fill in the outlines while reminding us that these same stories have been replicated across North America, and have only barely begun to be investigated. On the flip side, Shiori Ito’s memoirlike “Black Box Diaries” chronicles the director’s bold and brutal investigation of her own sexual assault at the hands of a prominent Japanese journalist. The ways the investigation is thwarted by the powerful are a damning statement about why, and how, it’s so difficult for such cases to be resolved. (Ito won her case, but the problems are much bigger than Japan.)

And I can’t stop thinking about the remarkable “Soundtrack to a Coup d’Etat” (by Johan Grimonprez), a sprawling film that’s a well-researched essay about the 1960 regime change in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the part the United States, particularly the C.I.A., played — especially in harnessing the cultural cachet of jazz musicians, often without their knowledge, to promote America’s image abroad.

All of these movies are worth seeking out as soon as they’re available. But I’ll tell you the truth: The documentary that feels most destined to live in my memory is the first one I saw this year at Sundance, a genre-defying project by any definition. “Ibelin,” directed by Benjamin Ree, is about Mats Steen, a Norwegian who died in 2014, at age 25, from a rare, degenerative genetic condition. He left behind a blog and a password, and when his parents logged on to post about his death, they discovered something amazing: He had a rich community and life in his World of Warcraft guild, where he played as a character named Ibelin.

Ree employed animators to recreate scenes from Steen’s World of Warcraft life, drawing on a huge archive of transcripts detailing his conversations and activities. Ree also visits some of Steen’s friends in real life, who range across Europe and have immensely moving stories to tell. An excellent pairing with the 2022 Sundance premiere “[*We Met in Virtual Reality*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/27/movies/we-met-in-virtual-reality-review.html),” “Ibelin” is a poignant counterexample to the technodoomerism that often accompanies relationships formed in virtual spaces.

It can be hard to track down some documentaries after their festival runs, since they rarely get the marketing dollars and push that their fiction cousins do. Luckily, Netflix bought “Ibelin.” Which means you’ll be able to connect with Steen’s story, too — through the ubiquitous technology of your very own screen.

PHOTOS: From top: Andrée Blouin, center, and Patrice Lumumba, right, in “Soundtrack to a Coup d’Etat”; “Eternal You,” a documentary about the market for “afterlife technology”; and Chris Smalls in “Union,” about labor organizing at an Amazon fulfillment center. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY TERENCE SPENCER, VIA SUNDANCE INSTITUTE; KONRAD WALDMANN, VIA SUNDANCE INSTITUTE; MARTIN DiCICCO, VIA SUNDANCE INSTITUTE) (C4) This article appeared in print on page C1, C4.

**Load-Date:** January 28, 2024

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[***Meet Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Veteran Political Operator***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BYG-W5M1-DXY4-X16K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 5, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section SR; Column 0; Sunday Review Desk; Pg. 8; GUEST ESSAY

**Length:** 2612 words

**Byline:** By Gaby Del Valle

**Body**

Six days after winning election to Congress, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez did what so many young progressives do while visiting the nation's capital: She went to a rally. It was 2018, and Democratic dissatisfaction with President Donald Trump was a constant in Washington -- but Ms. Ocasio-Cortez wasn't protesting a Republican policy. She was at a sit-in at Representative Nancy Pelosi's office organized by a group dedicated to pushing Democrats to the left on climate issues. Ms. Pelosi said she welcomed the protest, but behind closed doors, top Democrats soon became exasperated with their new colleague.

First impressions are hard to erase, and the obstinacy that made Ms. Ocasio-Cortez an instant national celebrity remains at the heart of her detractors' most enduring critique: that she is a performer, out for herself, with a reach that exceeds her grasp.

But Democrats frustrated by her theatrics may be missing a more compelling picture. In straddling the line between outsider and insider, Ms. Ocasio-Cortez is trying to achieve the one thing that might just shore up her fractured party: building a new Democratic coalition that can consistently draw a majority of American support.

The strategy she has come to embrace isn't what anyone would've expected when she arrived in Washington. In some ways, she's asking the obvious questions: What's broadly popular among a vast majority of Americans, and how can I make it happen? To achieve progress on these issues, she has sought common ground in places where her peers are not thinking to look. Her willingness to forge unlikely alliances, in surprisingly productive places, has opened a path to new voters -- for her party, her ideas and her own political ambitions if she ever decides to run for higher office.

Since 2016, there have been two competing visions for the Democratic Party. One is the promise that began with Barack Obama of a multiracial coalition that would grow stronger as America's demographics shifted; the other is the political revolution championed by Bernie Sanders as a way to unite nonvoters with the ***working class***. Ms. Ocasio-Cortez bridges the gap between the two. The dream for Democrats is that one day, she or someone like her could emerge from the backbench to bring new voters into the party, forging a coalition that can win election after election. It's too early to tell whether she has what it takes to pull that off. But what's clear is that at a time when Democrats are struggling, she is quietly laying the groundwork to build a coalition broader than the one she came to power with, unafraid to take risks along the way.

Those instincts are in short supply in Washington. After five years in Congress, she has emerged as a tested navigator of its byzantine systems, wielding her celebrity to further her political aims in a way few others have. Three terms in, one gets the sense that we're witnessing a skilled tactician exiting her political adolescence and coming into her own as a veteran operator out to reform America's most dysfunctional political body.

To grasp what sets Ms. Ocasio-Cortez apart from many of her colleagues, you have to understand where she finds allies. In 2019, she and Senator Ted Cruz of Texas considered joining forces to write a bill that would bar former members of Congress from becoming lobbyists. Asked why she would consider an alliance with someone so loathed by liberals, she said, ''I will swallow all of my distaste in this situation because we have found a common interest.'' It was a window into the politician she would become: pragmatic and results-driven, willing to work with people she considers her political adversaries, at least on legislation that appeals to her base.

That effort with Mr. Cruz sputtered out, but she has continued to strike up working relationships with Republicans such as Dan Crenshaw of Texas, a former Navy SEAL who has supported the construction of a border wall as well as efforts to roll back abortion rights. Last year, she cosponsored a bill he'd introduced to study psychedelic drug therapy as a potential treatment for active service members with PTSD and traumatic brain injuries. She had first introduced an amendment to encourage psychedelic drug research in 2019, six months into her first term; it failed by a 331-to-91 vote. ''It was on the House floor, and a member of my own party, a senior member, walked up to me and said, 'Oh, is this your little shrooms bill?''' Ms. Ocasio-Cortez, who declined to be interviewed for this article, told The Washington Post last year. Four years later, Ms. Ocasio-Cortez and Mr. Crenshaw were able to drum up bipartisan support to pass the measure.

She has attributed the success of these efforts at least in part to her role as the second most powerful Democrat on the House Oversight Committee, which she said has ''opened many windows'' for collaboration. ''They're very few and far between,'' Ms. Ocasio-Cortez told The Times last year, ''but where we identify them, I think it's important to burrow in.''

It was at an Oversight Committee hearing that she and other members, including Mark Meadows of North Carolina and Jim Jordan of Ohio, grilled the defense contractor TransDigm on a report that found that the company had wildly overcharged the Pentagon for its services. After the hearing, TransDigm agreed to return $16.1 million. One week later, Mr. Meadows -- a member of the far-right Freedom Caucus -- supported bipartisan efforts to rein in facial recognition technology, saying the initiative ''hit the sweet spot that brings progressives and conservatives together.''

Ms. Ocasio-Cortez is not alone in this -- other members of the informal alliance of roughly a half-dozen left-wing representatives known as the Squad have also worked with conservatives -- but none have achieved her level of visibility. And while these bills may seem like small victories, they are more than that because, in a sense, she is redefining what bipartisanship looks like in Washington.

For decades, bipartisanship has meant bringing together moderates, lobbyists and establishment insiders to produce watered-down legislation unpalatable to many voters in both political parties. What Ms. Ocasio-Cortez is doing is different; she's uniting politicians on the fringes of American politics around a broadly popular set of policies.

Americans in both parties overwhelmingly say that they don't trust the government to do the right thing and that donors and lobbyists have too much sway over the legislative process. A Pew Research Center poll conducted last year found that more than 8 in 10 Americans believe politicians ''are more focused on fighting each other than on solving problems.'' One-fifth of respondents said lack of bipartisan cooperation was the biggest problem with the political system.

Seen in that light, Ms. Ocasio-Cortez's efforts to reach out to Republicans are offering what a sizable portion of Americans want from Congress: a return to getting things done.

The few policy matters on which progressives and conservatives align often boil down to a distrust of politicians and of big corporations, particularly technology companies and pharmaceutical giants. Ms. Ocasio-Cortez has shrewdly made those causes her passion, building alliances with conservative colleagues interested in holding these industries accountable.

Last spring, she cosponsored a bill with, among others, Brian Fitzpatrick, a moderate Republican from Pennsylvania, and Matt Gaetz, the Florida rabble-rouser who has become one of Mr. Trump's most steadfast allies. The legislation would bar members of Congress from trading individual stocks, a measure that as of the fall of 2022 was supported by nearly 70 percent of voters across party lines.

On Gaza, too, she has been willing to buck other members of her party to pursue an agenda that a majority of voters support. She was one of the first Democrats to call for a cease-fire; within weeks, nearly 70 percent of Americans said Israel should call one and try to negotiate with Hamas.

As the war has ground on and the death toll has mounted, it has tested her relationship with the far left. In March, Ms. Ocasio-Cortez was accosted by a handful of protesters who demanded that she call Israel's war in Gaza a genocide. She had already been supportive of the Michigan activists encouraging voters to vote ''uncommitted'' rather than back the president in their state's Democratic primary and had been working to persuade Democrats to support a cease-fire. But at the time, she had not yet said that Israel's actions in Gaza amounted to genocide. The protesters wanted more.

Less than three weeks later, Ms. Ocasio-Cortez did accuse Israel of genocide and chastised the White House for providing military aid to the country while it blockaded Gaza. ''If you want to know what an unfolding genocide looks like,'' Ms. Ocasio-Cortez said in a speech on the House floor, ''open your eyes. It looks like the forced famine of 1.1 million innocents. It looks like thousands of children eating grass as their bodies consume themselves, while trucks of food are slowed and halted just miles away.'' Last month, she voted against providing additional funding for Israel. Those were unpopular positions in Congress, where unconditional support for the country remains the norm, but they put her in line with a majority of Democratic voters.

These stances haven't been enough to quell the doubts from a faction of the left that helped get her elected. Over the past few weeks, some have accused her of caving in to pressure from moderate Democrats on Gaza, noting that she was the only founding member of the Squad to sign a statement saying that while she and the other signees opposed ''supplying more offensive weapons that could result in more killings of civilians in Rafah and elsewhere,'' they supported ''strengthening the Iron Dome and other defense systems.''

This pattern is, at this point, familiar to close followers of the Squad, whose members are routinely criticized from the left. Ms. Ocasio-Cortez has taken much of the heat from leftist activists who see her as a symbol of the contradictions and compromises inherent in the political system. It may not be realistic to expect absolute purity from her; she is, after all, a politician. But these critiques overlook the promise of what she's doing behind the scenes.

With six months left before Election Day, Democratic pollsters and strategists are searching for ways for Mr. Biden to win back Muslims and Arab Americans in swing states such as Michigan and Georgia, recent college graduates who hoped to have their student debt forgiven, immigrant-rights activists and Latinos. Some of the betrayal these voters feel was hardly the president's fault; he was hampered on student loan debt by a federal judiciary stacked with judges sympathetic to conservative legal arguments, and Congress refused to pass the comprehensive immigration bill he supported in 2021, which would have provided legal status to as many as 11 million undocumented immigrants. Still, Mr. Biden has struggled to help voters understand the reasons for these failures.

A more gifted orator might have been able to make the structural impediments in his way clear to voters, while also putting forth a proactive vision for dismantling the core problems baked into our politics.

In that, someone like Ms. Ocasio-Cortez, who endorsed Mr. Biden for re-election in 2023, may be able to help. She's the Democratic Party's most charismatic politician since Barack Obama and its most ardent populist since Bernie Sanders. Crucially, she can offer voters something more substantial than a hollow rebuke of Trumpism. Last month, when the journalist Mehdi Hasan asked her how she'd respond to ''a young progressive or Arab American who says to you, 'I just can't vote for Biden again after what he's enabled in Gaza,''' Ms. Ocasio-Cortez said a vote for Mr. Biden didn't necessarily mean an endorsement of all his policies. ''Even in places of stark disagreement, I would rather be organizing under the conditions of Biden as an opponent on an issue than Trump,'' she said. It was a shrewd political maneuver, designed to distance herself from Democrats who support Israel unconditionally, while meeting voters -- some of whom have lost family members in Gaza -- where they are. She was, in effect, acknowledging their pain and attempting to channel their righteous anger into a political movement.

There are, of course, limits to this strategy. Some on the left see Ms. Ocasio-Cortez's endorsement of Mr. Biden as a betrayal of progressive values, particularly in the wake of the climbing death toll in Gaza. The moderate Republicans who turned out for Mr. Biden in 2020 might shrink from a Democratic Party led by someone they consider an outspoken progressive. But for every moderate or leftist voter lost with a strategy like Ms. Ocasio-Cortez's, the Democratic Party may be able to win someone new -- from the pool of disillusioned Americans who feel shut out of the political process.

The Democrats have a chance here to expand their base -- and build a coalition less reliant on the whims of a shrinking group of moderates. Analyses of election data suggest that many of the Democratic voters who have defected to the other side identify as conservatives, particularly on social issues. What's more, the once-strong Democratic support among Arab Americans, Latinos and Asian Americans now seems shaky, and Republicans have captured a large majority of white voters without college degrees. In other words, the coalition Democratic leaders could once rely on to defeat Mr. Trump is already falling apart, and their current strategy -- to hammer the former president -- may not be enough to win in November.

If she ever runs for higher office, Ms. Ocasio-Cortez might be able to galvanize voters of color who, despite leaning left, do not regularly show up at the polls. She could contrast her commitment to issues that matter to a large number of voters, like raising the minimum wage and protecting reproductive rights, with Republicans' endless culture wars. And she could frame herself as one of the few Democrats who opposed unconditionally spending billions on an unpopular war while Americans struggled to afford groceries and gas.

She could take the message that catapulted her into Congress -- as a tireless champion of the underclass -- to the national level. In some ways, she already has. Ms. Ocasio-Cortez hit the picket line with striking United Auto Workers members in Missouri and requested a hearing on the train derailment in East Palestine, Ohio, nearly a year before Mr. Biden visited the community. These are constituencies the Democratic Party has been losing, perhaps because they've written them off as Republican voters, if they bother to vote at all. But in the same way Ms. Ocasio-Cortez isn't afraid to collaborate with conservatives when it helps her policy agenda, she has shown up for people whom other Democrats have abandoned -- and voters may remember that when they cast a ballot in 2028.

Gaby Del Valle is a reporter based in Brooklyn whose work has appeared in The Intercept, Politico, The Nation and other publications.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/04/opinion/alexandria-ocasio-cortez.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/04/opinion/alexandria-ocasio-cortez.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY ALEX WROBLEWSKI/GETTY IMAGES) (SR9) This article appeared in print on page SR8, SR9.

**Load-Date:** May 5, 2024

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[***Read Your Way Through Madrid***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BDK-2TM1-DXY4-X02K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 25, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 12

**Length:** 1379 words

**Byline:** By Elena Medel

**Body**

Like many who call Madrid home, Elena Medel was born elsewhere, but forged her identity in the Spanish capital. Here, she recommends books about this city that ''refuses to be reduced to an ideal.''

Read Your Way Around the World is a series exploring the globe through books.

Few challenges are as complex in Madrid as finding a cat. Not the animal, but a gato -- someone who was born in Madrid, whose parents and grandparents were born in Madrid. Nobody in Madrid was born here: You'll seldom be asked where you are from, because the assumption is that you're from somewhere else, although suspicion -- and prejudice -- can come up when you have a certain accent or skin color.

I was not born in Madrid, but I am from Madrid. When I think of the books that have been written about the city, the thread that unites them has to do with the gaze -- and the experience -- of those who come from elsewhere to forge their identity here: that feeling of looking for a place of one's own in a city that is difficult, often hostile, and that refuses to be reduced to an ideal.

But Madrid, of course. The city of the corrales de comedias, open-air theaters where the medium was reinvented during our Golden Age. The city in whose cafes Leandro Fernández de Moratín, Ramón Gómez de la Serna and Gloria Fuertes all talked about literature -- unfortunately not at the same time, though what a discussion that would have been! The city of the Generation of 1927, where Federico García Lorca, Lucía Sánchez Saornil and Vicente Aleixandre began their careers. The city that was also Rubén Darío's, Gabriela Mistral's and Juan Carlos Onetti's, no matter that they hailed from another continent. The city where Carmen Laforet, who was born in Barcelona, and Ángela Figuera Aymerich, from Bilbao, wrote. ''The Capital of the World,'' as Ernest Hemingway called it in his short story, which takes us back to the months before the Spanish Civil War.

What should I read before I pack my bags?

No one has portrayed Madrid with greater intensity than Benito Pérez Galdós. Part of his 46-volume, Balzacian series ''National Episodes'' takes place here; from it, I'd choose ''Fortunata and Jacinta,'' a choral novel that discusses the way the city constructs its social classes, and vice versa. Camilo José Cela's ''The Hive'' is also a good choice, teeming with hundreds of characters who cross paths in the Madrid of the early years of Francisco Franco's dictatorship, for which the author worked as a censor. To get to know those who live in Madrid, you must also read ''Living's the Strange Thing,'' a gorgeous novel by Carmen Martín Gaite about daily life in the city.

What books can take me behind closed doors or show me other facets of the city?

I have a weakness for the play ''Bohemian Lights,'' by Ramón María del Valle-Inclán. In it, we spend almost 24 hours with the poet Max Estrella, reflecting on the decadence of Spanish society in the 1920s (in general, reflecting on the decadence of Spanish society in any era is one of Madrilenians' obsessions). The play mentions many places that still exist: the chocolate shop in San Ginés, the mirror-lined Callejón del Gato (Cat Alley). I would also recommend ''The Maravillas District,'' an autobiographical novel by Rosa Chacel that takes place in the streets of a Malasaña very different from the gentrified district beloved by students (and tourists) today. To continue getting to know a Madrid far removed from postcards, not only socially but also geographically, you should read ''A Working Woman,'' by Elvira Navarro. It is a reflection on the precarity of labor, especially in the field of culture: The protagonist works as a freelancer in the publishing industry, and barely survives in the neighborhood of Aluche.

What writer is everyone talking about? And which books are they reading?

Almudena Grandes. Her work, which includes novels, short stories and articles, is a long love letter to Madrid, and she died in November 2021; the photos of her funeral are moving, with Republican flags mingling with her books in the hands of thousands of readers. She wrote eloquently about Spain's recent past -- the Second Republic, the Civil War and the years of dictatorship that followed.

''The Ages of Lulu'' is perhaps her most popular book that has been translated into English, but I prefer ''The Frozen Heart,'' also a Madrilenian novel, and the start of her most political phase.

As for the book that everyone is reading -- in Madrid, in Spain, in the world! -- it is ''Bad Habit,'' by Alana S. Portero, which will be published in the United States by HarperCollins in April 2024, in a translation by Mara Faye Lethem. It tells the story of a ***working-class*** transgender woman full of rage and beauty, pain and poetry, who walks through the neighborhoods of Chueca and Malasaña, in the city center, and San Blas, in the suburbs. (By the way, I have just realized that she and Almudena Grandes are the only two authors I have recommended who were born in Madrid, which confirms my theory.)

Who are the literary icons I might see on street signs, statues or public monuments?

Although he did not write any books about Madrid, the city permeated the entire life of Federico García Lorca. He settled here in 1919 and always returned after stays in America or visits to his family in Granada; it was in Madrid that he worked on many of his best books. It is easy to trace Lorca's footsteps through the city: the Residencia de Estudiantes where he met Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí, the Café Gijón where his cohort would gather, the Ateneo de Madrid cultural institution, his last house at 96 Calle de Alcalá (now home to a bookstore) and the stages where his plays premiered. Following this Lorca route, you could end by leaving flowers at his statue in the Plaza de Santa Ana, in front of the Teatro Español.

What's a good place to curl up with a book on a day off?

Bookstores, of course! Don't miss Desperate Literature, with secondhand books, English-language books and a children's section; they also organize many events. Also for books in English, you should visit Pasajes. Let their excellent booksellers recommend some titles: There you might find a copy of Ben Lerner's ''Leaving the Atocha Station,'' a vibrant novel about Madrid through the eyes of a young American poet. Some of my other favorite bookstores include Librería Rafael Alberti, Enclave de Libros and Grant.

Madrid's network of public libraries is also fabulous, especially for the neighborhood events they do to promote reading, bringing culture closer to us no matter where we live. And try to time your trip to coincide with the Madrid Book Fair, held in the first weeks of June in El Retiro, a historic park in the center of the city. It's a great festival where readers, writers, booksellers and publishers meet. And I confess: I spend a lot of time on public transport, so I've learned to enjoy reading on the bus, while the city passes by outside my window.

And for the kids -- any book recommendations?

When I moved to the neighborhood of (Lower) Carabanchel -- on the outskirts of the city, on the other side of the M30, a highway that is the real river of Madrid -- everyone asked me: Do you live near Manolito Four-Eyes? Manolito is a character created by Elvira Lindo who has starred in a series of children's novels -- and yes, he lives with his family in (Upper) Carabanchel. The books make for a very funny portrait of Spain in the '90s; I read them as a teenager, and I remember my little sister loved them.

Elena Medel's Madrid Reading List

''Fortunata and Jacinta,'' Benito Pérez Galdós

''The Hive,'' Camilo José Cela

''Living's the Strange Thing,'' Carmen Martín Gaite

''Bohemian Lights,'' Ramón María del Valle-Inclán

''The Maravillas District,'' Rosa Chacel

''A Working Woman,'' Elvira Navarro

''The Ages of Lulu'' and ''The Frozen Heart,'' Almudena Grandes

''Bad Habit,'' Alana S. Portero

''Leaving the Atocha Station,'' Ben Lerner

''Manolito Four-Eyes,'' Elvira Lindo

Elena Medel is a poet and essayist whose first novel, ''The Wonders,'' was recognized with the Francisco Umbral Award in Spain and translated into more than 15 languages. She is also the founder of the poetry publishing house La Bella Varsovia.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/06/books/madrid-spain-books-elena-medel.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/06/books/madrid-spain-books-elena-medel.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY EMILIO PARRA DOIZTUA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (BR13) This article appeared in print on page BR12, BR13.

**Load-Date:** February 25, 2024

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[***The Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez You Don’t Know; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BY8-PJH1-JBG3-60V2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 4, 2024 Saturday 13:15 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 2613 words

**Byline:** Gaby Del Valle

**Highlight:** Three terms in, she’s exiting her political adolescence and coming into her own as a veteran operator.

**Body**

Six days after winning election to Congress, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez did what so many young progressives do while visiting the nation’s capital: She [*went to a rally*](https://www.cnn.com/2018/11/13/politics/ocasio-cortez-pelosi-protest/index.html). It was 2018, and Democratic dissatisfaction with President Donald Trump was a constant in Washington — but Ms. Ocasio-Cortez wasn’t protesting a Republican policy. She was at a sit-in at Representative Nancy Pelosi’s office organized by a group dedicated to pushing Democrats to the left on climate issues. Ms. Pelosi said she welcomed the protest, but behind closed doors, top Democrats soon became [*exasperated*](https://www.cnn.com/2018/11/13/politics/ocasio-cortez-pelosi-protest/index.html) with their new colleague.

First impressions are hard to erase, and the obstinacy that made Ms. Ocasio-Cortez an instant national celebrity remains at the heart of her detractors’ most enduring critique: that she is a performer, out for herself, with a reach that exceeds her grasp.

But Democrats frustrated by her theatrics may be missing a more compelling picture. In straddling the line between outsider and insider, Ms. Ocasio-Cortez is trying to achieve the one thing that might just shore up her fractured party: building a new Democratic coalition that can consistently draw a majority of American support.

The strategy she has come to embrace isn’t what anyone would’ve expected when she arrived in Washington. In some ways, she’s asking the obvious questions: What’s broadly popular among a vast majority of Americans, and how can I make it happen? To achieve progress on these issues, she has sought common ground in places where her peers are not thinking to look. Her willingness to forge unlikely alliances, in surprisingly productive places, has opened a path to new voters — for her party, her ideas and her own political ambitions if she ever decides to run for higher office.

Since 2016, there have been two competing visions for the Democratic Party. One is the promise that began with Barack Obama of a multiracial coalition that would grow stronger as America’s demographics shifted; the other is the political revolution championed by Bernie Sanders as a way to unite nonvoters with the ***working class***. Ms. Ocasio-Cortez bridges the gap between the two. The dream for Democrats is that one day, she or someone like her could emerge from the backbench to bring new voters into the party, forging a coalition that can win election after election. It’s too early to tell whether she has what it takes to pull that off. But what’s clear is that at a time when Democrats are struggling, she is quietly laying the groundwork to build a coalition broader than the one she came to power with, unafraid to take risks along the way.

Those instincts are in short supply in Washington. After five years in Congress, she has emerged as a tested navigator of its byzantine systems, wielding her celebrity to further her political aims in a way few others have. Three terms in, one gets the sense that we’re witnessing a skilled tactician exiting her political adolescence and coming into her own as a veteran operator out to reform America’s most dysfunctional political body.

To grasp what sets Ms. Ocasio-Cortez apart from many of her colleagues, you have to understand where she finds allies. In 2019, she and Senator Ted Cruz of Texas considered joining forces to write a bill that would bar former members of Congress from becoming lobbyists. Asked why she would consider an alliance with someone so loathed by liberals, she [*said*](https://www.cnn.com/2018/11/13/politics/ocasio-cortez-pelosi-protest/index.html), “I will swallow all of my distaste in this situation because we have found a common interest.” It was a window into the politician she would become: pragmatic and results-driven, willing to work with people she considers her political adversaries, at least on legislation that appeals to her base.

That effort with Mr. Cruz sputtered out, but she has continued to strike up working relationships with Republicans such as [*Dan Crenshaw of Texas*](https://www.cnn.com/2018/11/13/politics/ocasio-cortez-pelosi-protest/index.html), a former Navy SEAL who has supported the construction of a border wall as well as efforts to roll back abortion rights. Last year, she cosponsored a bill he’d introduced to study psychedelic drug therapy as a potential treatment for active service members with PTSD and traumatic brain injuries. She had first introduced an amendment to encourage psychedelic drug research in 2019, six months into her first term; it failed by a 331-to-91 vote. “It was on the House floor, and a member of my own party, a senior member, walked up to me and said, ‘Oh, is this your little shrooms bill?’” Ms. Ocasio-Cortez, who declined to be interviewed for this article, [*told The Washington Post*](https://www.cnn.com/2018/11/13/politics/ocasio-cortez-pelosi-protest/index.html) last year. Four years later, Ms. Ocasio-Cortez and Mr. Crenshaw were able to drum up bipartisan support to pass the measure.

She has attributed the success of these efforts at least in part to her role as the second most powerful Democrat on the House Oversight Committee, which she said has “opened many windows” for collaboration. “They’re very few and far between,” [*Ms. Ocasio-Cortez told The Times*](https://www.cnn.com/2018/11/13/politics/ocasio-cortez-pelosi-protest/index.html) last year, “but where we identify them, I think it’s important to burrow in.”

It was at an Oversight Committee hearing that she and other members, including Mark Meadows of North Carolina and Jim Jordan of Ohio, [*grilled the defense contractor TransDigm*](https://www.cnn.com/2018/11/13/politics/ocasio-cortez-pelosi-protest/index.html) on a [*report*](https://www.cnn.com/2018/11/13/politics/ocasio-cortez-pelosi-protest/index.html) that found that the company had wildly overcharged the Pentagon for its services. After the hearing, TransDigm agreed to return $16.1 million. One week later, Mr. Meadows — a member of the far-right Freedom Caucus — supported bipartisan efforts to rein in facial recognition technology, [*saying*](https://www.cnn.com/2018/11/13/politics/ocasio-cortez-pelosi-protest/index.html) the initiative “hit the sweet spot that brings progressives and conservatives together.”

Ms. Ocasio-Cortez is not alone in this — other members of the informal alliance of roughly a half-dozen left-wing representatives known as the Squad have also worked with conservatives — but none have achieved her level of visibility. And while these bills may seem like small victories, they are more than that because, in a sense, she is redefining what bipartisanship looks like in Washington.

For decades, bipartisanship has meant bringing together moderates, lobbyists and establishment insiders to produce watered-down legislation unpalatable to many voters in both political parties. What Ms. Ocasio-Cortez is doing is different; she’s uniting politicians on the fringes of American politics around a broadly popular set of policies.

Americans in both parties [*overwhelmingly say*](https://www.cnn.com/2018/11/13/politics/ocasio-cortez-pelosi-protest/index.html) that they don’t trust the government to do the right thing and that donors and lobbyists have too much sway over the legislative process. A Pew Research Center [*poll*](https://www.cnn.com/2018/11/13/politics/ocasio-cortez-pelosi-protest/index.html) conducted last year found that more than 8 in 10 Americans believe politicians “are more focused on fighting each other than on solving problems.” One-fifth of respondents said lack of bipartisan cooperation was the biggest problem with the political system.

Seen in that light, Ms. Ocasio-Cortez’s efforts to reach out to Republicans are offering what a sizable portion of Americans want from Congress: a return to getting things done.

The few policy matters on which progressives and conservatives align often boil down to a distrust of politicians and of big corporations, particularly [*technology*](https://www.cnn.com/2018/11/13/politics/ocasio-cortez-pelosi-protest/index.html) companies and [*pharmaceutical*](https://www.cnn.com/2018/11/13/politics/ocasio-cortez-pelosi-protest/index.html) giants. Ms. Ocasio-Cortez has shrewdly made those causes her passion, building alliances with conservative colleagues interested in holding these industries accountable.

Last spring, she [*cosponsored a bill*](https://www.cnn.com/2018/11/13/politics/ocasio-cortez-pelosi-protest/index.html) with, among others, Brian Fitzpatrick, a moderate Republican from Pennsylvania, and Matt Gaetz, the Florida rabble-rouser who has become one of Mr. Trump’s most steadfast allies. The legislation would bar members of Congress from trading individual stocks, a measure that as of the fall of 2022 was supported by [*nearly 70 percent of voters across party lines*](https://www.cnn.com/2018/11/13/politics/ocasio-cortez-pelosi-protest/index.html).

On Gaza, too, she has been willing to buck other members of her party to pursue an agenda that a majority of voters support. She was one of the first Democrats to call for a cease-fire; within weeks, nearly 70 percent of Americans [*said Israel should call one*](https://www.cnn.com/2018/11/13/politics/ocasio-cortez-pelosi-protest/index.html) and try to negotiate with Hamas.

As the war has ground on and the death toll has mounted, it has tested her relationship with the far left. In March, Ms. Ocasio-Cortez was accosted by a handful of protesters who demanded that she call Israel’s war in Gaza a genocide. She had already been supportive of the Michigan activists encouraging voters to vote “uncommitted” rather than back the president in their state’s Democratic primary and had been working to persuade Democrats to support a cease-fire. But at the time, she had not yet said that Israel’s actions in Gaza amounted to genocide. The protesters wanted more.

Less than three weeks later, Ms. Ocasio-Cortez did [*accuse Israel*](https://www.cnn.com/2018/11/13/politics/ocasio-cortez-pelosi-protest/index.html) of genocide and chastised the White House for providing military aid to the country while it blockaded Gaza. “If you want to know what an unfolding genocide looks like,” Ms. Ocasio-Cortez said in a speech on the House floor, “open your eyes. It looks like the forced famine of 1.1 million innocents. It looks like thousands of children eating grass as their bodies consume themselves, while trucks of food are slowed and halted just miles away.” Last month, she voted against providing additional funding for Israel. Those were unpopular positions in Congress, where unconditional support for the country remains the norm, but they put her in line with a majority of Democratic voters.

These stances haven’t been enough to quell the doubts from a faction of the left that helped get her elected. Over the past few weeks, some have accused her of caving in to pressure from moderate Democrats on Gaza, noting that she was the only founding member of the Squad to sign a [*statement*](https://www.cnn.com/2018/11/13/politics/ocasio-cortez-pelosi-protest/index.html) saying that while she and the other signees opposed “supplying more offensive weapons that could result in more killings of civilians in Rafah and elsewhere,” they supported “strengthening the Iron Dome and other defense systems.”

This pattern is, at this point, familiar to close followers of the Squad, whose members are routinely [*criticized*](https://www.cnn.com/2018/11/13/politics/ocasio-cortez-pelosi-protest/index.html) from the left. Ms. Ocasio-Cortez has taken much of the heat from leftist activists who see her as a symbol of the contradictions and compromises inherent in the political system. It may not be realistic to expect absolute purity from her; she is, after all, a politician. But these critiques overlook the promise of what she’s doing behind the scenes.

With six months left before Election Day, Democratic pollsters and strategists are searching for ways for Mr. Biden to win back Muslims and Arab Americans in swing states such as Michigan and Georgia, recent college graduates who hoped to have their student debt forgiven, immigrant-rights activists and Latinos. Some of the betrayal these voters feel was hardly the president’s fault; he was hampered on student loan debt by a federal judiciary stacked with judges sympathetic to conservative legal arguments, and Congress refused to pass the comprehensive immigration bill he supported in 2021, which would have provided legal status to as many as 11 million undocumented immigrants. Still, Mr. Biden has struggled to help voters understand the reasons for these failures.

A more gifted orator might have been able to make the structural impediments in his way clear to voters, while also putting forth a proactive vision for dismantling the core problems baked into our politics.

In that, someone like Ms. Ocasio-Cortez, who endorsed Mr. Biden for re-election in 2023, may be able to help. She’s the Democratic Party’s most charismatic politician since Barack Obama and its most ardent populist since Bernie Sanders. Crucially, she can offer voters something more substantial than a hollow rebuke of Trumpism. Last month, when the journalist Mehdi Hasan [*asked her*](https://www.cnn.com/2018/11/13/politics/ocasio-cortez-pelosi-protest/index.html) how she’d respond to “a young progressive or Arab American who says to you, ‘I just can’t vote for Biden again after what he’s enabled in Gaza,’” Ms. Ocasio-Cortez said a vote for Mr. Biden didn’t necessarily mean an endorsement of all his policies. “Even in places of stark disagreement, I would rather be organizing under the conditions of Biden as an opponent on an issue than Trump,” she said. It was a shrewd political maneuver, designed to distance herself from Democrats who support Israel unconditionally, while meeting voters — some of whom have lost family members in Gaza — where they are. She was, in effect, acknowledging their pain and attempting to channel their righteous anger into a political movement.

There are, of course, limits to this strategy. Some on the left see Ms. Ocasio-Cortez’s endorsement of Mr. Biden as a betrayal of progressive values, particularly in the wake of the climbing death toll in Gaza. The moderate Republicans who turned out for Mr. Biden in 2020 might shrink from a Democratic Party led by someone they consider an outspoken progressive. But for every moderate or leftist voter lost with a strategy like Ms. Ocasio-Cortez’s, the Democratic Party may be able to win someone new — from the pool of disillusioned Americans who feel shut out of the political process.

The Democrats have a chance here to expand their base — and build a coalition less reliant on the whims of a shrinking group of moderates. Analyses of election data suggest that many of the Democratic voters who have defected to the other side identify as conservatives, particularly on social issues. What’s more, the once-strong Democratic support among Arab Americans, Latinos and Asian Americans now seems shaky, and Republicans have captured a large majority of white voters without college degrees. In other words, the coalition Democratic leaders could once rely on to defeat Mr. Trump is already falling apart, and their current strategy — to hammer the former president — may not be enough to win in November.

If she ever runs for higher office, Ms. Ocasio-Cortez might be able to galvanize voters of color who, despite leaning left, do not regularly show up at the polls. She could contrast her commitment to issues that matter to a large number of voters, like raising the minimum wage and protecting [*reproductive rights*](https://www.cnn.com/2018/11/13/politics/ocasio-cortez-pelosi-protest/index.html), with Republicans’ endless culture wars. And she could frame herself as one of the few Democrats who opposed unconditionally spending billions on an unpopular war while Americans [*struggled to afford groceries and gas*](https://www.cnn.com/2018/11/13/politics/ocasio-cortez-pelosi-protest/index.html).

She could take the message that catapulted her into Congress — as a tireless champion of the underclass — to the national level. In some ways, she already has. Ms. Ocasio-Cortez [*hit the picket line*](https://www.cnn.com/2018/11/13/politics/ocasio-cortez-pelosi-protest/index.html) with striking United Auto Workers members in Missouri and [*requested a hearing*](https://www.cnn.com/2018/11/13/politics/ocasio-cortez-pelosi-protest/index.html) on the train derailment in East Palestine, Ohio, nearly a year before Mr. Biden [*visited the community*](https://www.cnn.com/2018/11/13/politics/ocasio-cortez-pelosi-protest/index.html). These are constituencies the Democratic Party has been losing, perhaps because they’ve written them off as Republican voters, if they bother to vote at all. But in the same way Ms. Ocasio-Cortez isn’t afraid to collaborate with conservatives when it helps her policy agenda, she has shown up for people whom other Democrats have abandoned — and voters may remember that when they cast a ballot in 2028.

Gaby Del Valle is a reporter based in Brooklyn whose work has appeared in The Intercept, Politico, The Nation and other publications.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.cnn.com/2018/11/13/politics/ocasio-cortez-pelosi-protest/index.html) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://www.cnn.com/2018/11/13/politics/ocasio-cortez-pelosi-protest/index.html). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.cnn.com/2018/11/13/politics/ocasio-cortez-pelosi-protest/index.html).

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A reporter based in Brooklyn whose work has appeared in The Intercept, Politico Magazine and The Nation.

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY ALEX WROBLEWSKI/GETTY IMAGES) (SR9) This article appeared in print on page SR8, SR9.

**Load-Date:** May 5, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Are Inequities Built Into New Limits on Airbnb Rentals?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B9K-G6S1-JBG3-602W-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 11, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2024 The New York Times Company

**Section:** Section MB; Column 0; Metropolitan Desk; Pg. 3; BIG CITY

**Length:** 1213 words

**Byline:** By Ginia Bellafante

**Body**

It's too early to tell if Local Law 18 will help ease the housing crisis in New York City. But homeowners with vacant rooms aren't eager to open them up for long-term rentals.

If you were planning a trip to New York City for Presidents' Day weekend and logged onto Airbnb Wednesday morning, the first two listings to turn up might have vexed you. One was for a hotel room on Park Avenue South, and the second was for a townhouse apartment in Jersey City, advertised for its proximity to the PATH train to Manhattan, useful because Jersey City is not actually in New York.

When Airbnb arrived 15 years ago, it famously positioned itself as the immersive traveler's alternative to hotels, which, by implication, were meant for the congenitally dull and basic. At its best, the platform rooted the culturally inquisitive in neighborhoods where they might not have gravitated, largely because there were no hotels -- and where they were now driven to spend their money at the local boulangerie or the Malaysian restaurant or the vintage denim place.

At its worst, as critics argued for years, it deepened New York's housing crisis because so many rental apartments -- often stacked up as investment properties in a single building -- were now given over to the tourism economy. This pattern changed in September, when Local Law 18, passed the previous year by the City Council, went into effect, which more or less prohibited rentals of fewer than 30 days. Technically, this way of doing business was already illegal by virtue of New York State's Multiple Dwellings Law, enacted in 1929 to create better safeguards against the dangers of tenement life.

But Airbnb thrived amid loopholes in the law. In May 2022, there were more than 10,500 New York City listings on the site for apartments or whole houses. This week there were fewer than 1,000. In December, as demand for Airbnb spaces in New York fell by 46 percent, the growth in Jersey City and Newark exceeded 53 percent.

Local Law 18, which had a huge push from hotel owners and the affiliate unions that see house-sharing platforms as serial killers out to get one Hilton at a time, is tricky, because it does not effect an outright ban. Someone can become a host by registering with the city's Office of Special Enforcement, but the process is long and tedious, and the office maintains the right to reject your petition. Of the 5,661 applications received by early February, 1,387 have been granted and 955 have been denied.

How effective the new regulations have been in advancing the cause of affordable housing, part of the goal, is not entirely clear, but the consequences for many homeowners who have depended on income from short-term rentals -- not for a Wolf induction range or a trip to Morocco, but simply for the purpose of getting by, seems fairly unambiguous.

In November, RHOAR (the acronym for Restore Homeowner Autonomy & Rights) a grass-roots group of hundreds of property owners who have struggled in the aftermath of Local Law 18, issued a report examining some of its effects. More than 90 percent of those surveyed said they were now having trouble meeting monthly housing costs like mortgages and utilities. Nearly a third were delaying critical repairs to roofs, plumbing and windows.

While the homeowner rate in New York City hovers at about one-third, that figure varies by borough and race, with rates for white and Asian families considerably higher than for Black and Hispanic families. The contractor and filmmaker Tony Lindsay began posting his house in East New York in Brooklyn on Airbnb in 2018, first for extra cash and then as a lifeline when work slowed down and a second rental property, a two-family house owned by his father not far away in Bushwick, became a liability.

The problem, Mr. Lindsay said, is the inequity built into the new law, which ''reflects a preoccupation with conversations that were framed and directed by the privileged.'' A certain class of buildings, some containing condominiums, where units might command a very high nightly price, remain exempt.

''Meanwhile, the ***working-class*** homeowner who was maybe renting out a place for $99 a night and needs the money has been the hardest hit,'' Mr. Lindsay told me. ''We're not getting rich off this.''

In December, three months after the law was set in motion, the average rental costs for apartments in Manhattan and Brooklyn went down, according to reports from the real estate firm Douglas Elliman. Did this signal that Local Law 18 was having the desired effect? Possibly, although many factors affect rent prices, and rentals in Queens actually rose even though inventory increased by 12 percent from the previous year.

The law may turn out to have a bigger effect in the long term, but the challenge of turning around resistant landlords is significant. Every Airbnb host I spoke with seemed to know a story about a difficult tenant who became impossible to remove. Mr. Lindsay said that his father's tenants in Bushwick stopped paying rent during the coronavirus pandemic. He eventually served them with eviction notices, but the tenants are still there. Given that, he is not inspired to become a full-time landlord.

In August, he founded his own organization, the New York Homeowners Alliance, with about 200 members, to try to enact certain amendments to Local Law 18. Many of the people in his group, he said, were not interested in renting the apartments in their houses to long-term tenants.

Beyond that, Airbnb rentals accommodated a certain kind of extended-family lifestyle that allowed people the flexibility to house relatives, often from abroad, for weeks or months at a time. This was how Carmen Marshall, a costume designer and her husband, a set painter, made their lives, marked by fluctuations in income, actually work. Ten years ago, they bought a two-family house in Bushwick, modeling the feasibility on the money they expected from regular Airbnb rentals. Family from Michigan and the Dominican Republic would stay in the ground-floor apartment when it wasn't occupied by paying guests.

The change in the short-term rental law followed the blow of the pandemic and the writers' and actors' strikes, which put so many people out of work for so long. Ms. Marshall and her husband now rent out the apartment to other creative people who need to be in New York for a month or longer -- which is legal under Local Law 18 -- but their income has been cut in half, she told me.

In September, Theo Yedinsky, Airbnb's global policy director called Local Law 18 ''a clear message to millions of potential visitors'' that they were ''not welcome.'' However hyperbolic, it has become harder to stay in New York, just as interest in tourism has rebounded in the wake of Covid. The city has also needed hotel rooms to house migrants while, at the same time, constraints on hotel development imposed three years ago by the De Blasio administration have severely limited the possibility of new rooms down the line.

In two years, the World Cup is expected to bring more than one million visitors to the area. It is hard to see who, beyond the hotel industry, has really benefited from the policy changes around house sharing.Email [*bigcity@nytimes.com*](mailto:bigcity@nytimes.com); follow Ginia Bellafante on X: @GiniaNYT

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/09/nyregion/nyc-airbnb-rentals.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/09/nyregion/nyc-airbnb-rentals.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Tony Lindsay, a Brooklyn homeowner and the founder of the New York Homeowners Alliance, wants the city to amend Local Law 18 to allow for more short-term guests. (PHOTOGRAPH BY AHMED GABER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page MB3.

**Load-Date:** February 11, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Shifting Toward Trump, Latino Voters Hold Sway***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BK2-9401-JBG3-6278-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 17, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 19

**Length:** 1685 words

**Byline:** By Jennifer Medina and Ruth Igielnik

**Body**

Donald Trump's rising support has turned many Latino voters into swing voters.

Former President Donald J. Trump's growing support among Latino voters is threatening to upend the coalition that has delivered victories to Democrats for more than a decade, putting the politically divided group at the center of a tug of war that could determine elections across the country.

Polls show that Mr. Trump's standing with Latino voters has grown since his defeat in 2020, with some surveys finding him winning more than 40 percent of those voters -- a level not seen for a Republican in two decades. That strength has Democrats playing defense to maintain the large majority of Latino voters whom they have relied on to win in recent years.

The shift underscores a stark reality of the 2024 election: Neither party can win with white voters alone.

As the fight for both the White House and Congress shifts more squarely to racially diverse states, both parties will need to rely on coalitions that include Black, Asian and Hispanic voters.

Latino voters will make up an estimated 15 percent of eligible voters this year, and 33 percent of eligible voters in California, where several swing districts are poised to determine control of the House. Races in Arizona and Nevada, where Latinos make up roughly one in four eligible voters, are positioned to tip the balance of power in the Senate.

The fight for the presidency has expanded in recent elections from battlegrounds in the Rust Belt to the Sun Belt. President Biden relied on victories in Arizona, Georgia and Nevada to win in 2020. This year, both parties are investing heavily in those states to persuade the large numbers of Hispanic voters they believe are up for grabs.

''The Latino electorate used to be seen as a massive liability for Republicans. Now, it's turning out to be an asset,'' said Daniel Garza, the executive director of the Libre Initiative, a conservative group that targets Latino voters and is funded by Americans for Prosperity, the group founded by Charles and David Koch. ''Republicans can't win without them -- it would be political malpractice not to have them in a winning coalition.''

The shifts among a large and diverse demographic group defy simple explanation. Differences across regions, generations and economics all play a role.

Mr. Trump has found new support among Latinos who work in law enforcement along the Mexican border, Cuban Americans in Florida averse to policies they view as approaching socialism, evangelical Christians attracted to Christian nationalism and second- and third-generation U.S.-born Latinos who are more likely to identify with and vote like their white peers.

One of the clearest trends is the education divide. Tracking the gap among voters overall, Mr. Trump is increasingly doing better among Hispanic voters without a college degree than among college-educated Hispanics.

''The nation's Latino population is so big now that it is multiple stories,'' said Mark Hugo Lopez, who is the director of race and ethnicity research at the Pew Research Center. ''This has changed before, and it can change again, but even if the shares don't change, the numbers are going to keep going up -- and that is going to have important implications.''

The changes raise a tantalizing prospect for Republicans: The parties may be seeing a political realignment, with Republicans pulling some Black and Latino ***working-class*** voters out of the Democratic coalition and Democrats winning over a slice of the upper-income, college-educated white voters who once would have landed in the G.O.P. It is a voter swap that could extend a lifeline to Republicans, whose dependence on white voters in a diversifying country has had strategists predicting doom for years.

''A moment like this would have been unfathomable in 2016,'' said Patrick Ruffini, a pollster who argues that the G.O.P. is assembling a more multiracial coalition. ''The belief was that Republicans needed to moderate on immigration reform. Now, you have a figure who not only ignores that but completely turns it on its head. It debunks decades of conventional wisdom.''

However, it is unclear how major and lasting the Trump-era changes will be. Polling on partisanship shows that Latino voters have been fairly steady in their partisan identification, though have more recently started to drift toward the Republican Party. Republicans have gained some support with Black voters in polls, but there is no clear evidence of a mass movement.

Some Democratic strategists believe that current polls are overestimating Hispanic support for Mr. Trump, in part because they may exclude too many voters who primarily speak Spanish. They also believe that many Hispanic voters will move back toward President Biden in the coming months, arguing that Mr. Trump's rhetoric will repel them.

''Democrats are balancing two realities -- the polls have been off and we have won, but there are still warning signs,'' said Tory Gavito, a Democratic strategist who conducts focus groups with Hispanic voters. She said she often heard those voters focused on their economic security.

''Status threats are potent because Latino voters know that they are in a race to avoid last place,'' she said. ''They don't want to be a loser, and they know it is an uphill climb.''

It is difficult to overstate the vast growth of Latino voters in the last 20 years. An estimated 36 million Latinos are eligible to vote this year, an increase of nearly four million just from 2020 and more than double from 2008.

Many Latino voters have long had a tenuous allegiance to either party. In 2004, for example, roughly four in 10 Latino voters chose George W. Bush, the most support on record from Latinos for a Republican presidential candidate.

Just four years later, the Democratic advantage nearly doubled, with nearly 70 percent of Latino voters choosing Barack Obama over Senator John McCain of Arizona, according to exit polls. In 2020, with Mr. Trump, support for Republicans ticked back up.

Since 2020, Republicans have increased outreach to Hispanic voters. They have attracted more Hispanic candidates, particularly in parts of Florida, Texas and New Mexico, and reached out to voters in Spanish more frequently. Major evangelical groups that once focused largely on white congregations have expanded their political outreach to Latino churches.

''This election will be decided at the margins, and we are going to reach out to these voters aggressively,'' said Danielle Alvarez, a spokeswoman for the Trump campaign. ''If we can keep this momentum, if we can stave off support from Biden, we will win.''

Many Democrats have been stunned by Republicans' inroads, as Mr. Trump has continued to unleash incendiary rhetoric about immigrants, including those from Latin America, ''poisoning the blood of our country'' and promised draconian policies such as mass deportations. He has advanced the Great Replacement conspiracy theory, claiming that Democrats welcome undocumented immigrants into the United States because they will allow them to vote illegally for the party.

Interviews and surveys suggest many Latino voters do not see themselves as the target of Mr. Trump's comments. Instead, they often say they welcome his talk about a border crackdown and see him as helping business owners and the economy.

''Democrats are letting us down and over and over,'' said George Rodriguez, 57, who lives in Las Vegas and calls himself a Chicano Republican. ''They're losing us because we don't want handouts. We don't want -- we don't need your hug. We want a direction. We want jobs.''

Some polling shows that Latino voters' views about the Democratic Party remain positive. A Pew Research Center survey last year found that nearly 80 percent of Latino voters thought the Democratic Party ''really cares about Latinos'' and roughly 70 percent said the party ''worked hard to earn Latinos' votes,'' compared with 45 percent for Republicans.

To some extent, the shift among Latino voters may be as much about dissatisfaction with Mr. Biden as enthusiasm for Mr. Trump. Young Latino voters -- like other young voters -- are moving away from Mr. Biden out of frustration over the economy and the war in Gaza. And Latinas have shifted toward Mr. Trump at a similar rate as Latino men, worrying some Democratic strategists who are counting on abortion rights to be a driving issue this fall.

''I want to hear something positive more often,'' said Elisa Iñiguez, 69, who emigrated from Mexico to Southern California more than 40 years ago. She has almost always voted for Democrats and plans to vote for Mr. Biden, she said, but has grown frustrated in recent years. ''We have to care more about people who are already here. We all want the same rights.''

The Biden campaign says it is particularly focused on two groups: people who voted for Hillary Clinton, the Democratic nominee, in 2016 and switched to Mr. Trump in 2020, and a much larger group of new or inconsistent voters. Latinos make up a significant share of both categories.

''The president's campaign isn't asking but earning the support of our community,'' Michelle Villegas, the Latino vote director of the Biden campaign, said in a statement.

Biden campaign officials said they had spent some $25 million, and had plans to spend another $30 million, on advertising on television, radio and online platforms that attract large Latino audiences.

The political arm of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, known as BOLD PAC, has also encouraged candidates to use Spanglish in advertising as a way to reach native-born English speakers, who make up a vast majority of Latino voters.

''Our party hasn't done the best job of really speaking to the Latino community, because we've too often been seen as monolithic and taken for granted,'' said Representative Maxwell Alejandro Frost, Democrat of Florida and an Afro-Cuban American, who is leading some of those efforts.

Mr. Frost said he had so far been encouraged by the party's outreach this year. ''The president does not have to do it alone.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/14/us/politics/trump-biden-campaign-latino-voters.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/14/us/politics/trump-biden-campaign-latino-voters.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Latino voters, whose support for Donald Trump has grown since 2020, will make up an estimated 15 percent of eligible voters this year. Both parties consider them a critical bloc. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ILANA PANICH-LINSMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

SEAN RAYFORD FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A19.

**Load-Date:** March 17, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Las Vegas Hospitality Workers Authorize Strike at Major Resorts***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:698B-DDX1-DXY4-X0R3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 27, 2023 Wednesday

The New York Times on the Web

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**Section:** Section ; Column 0; National Desk

**Length:** 627 words

**Byline:** By Kurtis Lee

**Body**

Unions representing 60,000 workers across Nevada have been in talks with the resorts since April. The vote is a crucial step toward a walkout.

Hospitality workers in Las Vegas have voted overwhelmingly to authorize a strike against major resorts along the Strip, a critical step toward a walkout as the economically challenged city prepares for major sporting events in the months ahead.

The authorization vote on Tuesday by members of Culinary Workers Union Local 226 and Bartenders Union Local 165, which collectively represent 60,000 workers across Nevada, was approved by 95 percent of those taking part, according to union officials.

Although a vote is a forceful step, it does not guarantee that workers will strike before hashing out a new contract deal with the major resorts. Contracts for roughly 40,000 housekeepers, bartenders, cooks and food servers at MGM Resorts International, Caesars Entertainment and Wynn Resorts expired on Sept. 15, after being extended from a June deadline. Other workers remain on extended contracts that can be terminated at any time.

The locals, which are affiliated with the union Unite Here, have been in negotiations with the resorts since April over demands that include higher wages, more safety protections and stronger recall rights so that workers have more ability to return to their jobs during a pandemic or an economic crisis. (Union officials have said there are about 20 percent fewer hospitality workers in the city than before the Covid pandemic.)

''No one ever wants to go on strike,'' said Ted Pappageorge, the head of Local 226. ''But ***working-class*** folks and families have been left behind, especially since the pandemic.''

In a statement, MGM Resorts said it was optimistic the two sides could come to an agreement.

''We continue to have productive meetings with the union and believe both parties are committed to negotiating a contract that is good for everyone,'' said the company.

Wynn Resorts and Caesars Entertainment declined to comment on the vote. Negotiations continue next week between the union and the companies.

The contract battle comes as the tourism-dependent state, where the rebound from the pandemic's economic toll has been slower than in other regions, has hedged its bets on a big sports bump.

In November, Formula 1 will arrive with the Las Vegas Grand Prix, an international event that is expected to draw hundreds of thousands of tourists. A few months later, the region will be the site of the Super Bowl.

The authorization vote also comes amid major labor battles nationwide.

Thousands of members of the United Automobile Workers union have been on strike against the three major Detroit automakers for nearly two weeks. And while the Writers Guild of America recently reached a tentative agreement with major Hollywood studios after a monthslong walkout, contract talks with tens of thousands of striking actors are at an impasse.

In Southern California, thousands of hotel workers with Unite Here Local 11 have staged several months of temporary strikes.

The Culinary Union, which is a major base for Democrats in Nevada, a swing state, held a similar strike authorization vote in 2018 among 25,000 workers. A contract agreement with major hotels was reached before any strike occurred.

For Chelsea MacDougall, who works as a gourmet food server at the Wynn Las Vegas, watching months of negotiations with few results has been frustrating. Inside an arena crowded with fellow union workers -- some waving signs that read ''One Job Should Be ENOUGH,'' alluding to low pay -- she voted to authorize a walkout.

''This is our next show of force to companies,'' said Ms. MacDougall, 36, who makes $11.57 an hour before tips. ''The workers deserve a living wage.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/27/business/economy/las-vegas-strip-strike-authorization.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/27/business/economy/las-vegas-strip-strike-authorization.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Union members cast their ballots at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, on Tuesday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Bridget Bennett for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** September 27, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Letters***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68N9-MVK1-DXY4-X49S-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 9, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2023 The New York Times Company

**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 5

**Length:** 378 words

**Body**

Crisis Reading

To the Editor:

Bravo! Thanks to A.O. Scott for the eloquent essay (June 25) on the necessity of reading. Classics like Dostoyevsky's ''The Brothers Karamazov'' and George Eliot's ''Silas Marner'' made me a believer in the power of reading to transform society and the self.

Reading helped a generation of ***working-class*** kids from segregated barrios take control of our education. In the 1960s and '70s, student walkouts organized by Chicano activists at schools across Texas demonstrated what enlightened citizens could do. The scales from their eyes fell upon reading books like ''Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass'' and Alex Haley's ''The Autobiography of Malcolm X.'' I can see why red states are banning them -- they reveal inconvenient truths about America's history. A well-read electorate will not accept secondhand facts. Nor will it obey without evidentiary due process.

Books about the dark side of American history, such as ''The 1619 Project,'' won't disappear through legislation. Anyone with a cellphone can download books today, and people will always find a way to read, explore, discuss and share ideas. So long as people are curious, there will always be readers.

Rafael C. Castillo San Antonio

â™¦

To the Editor:

A friend just texted me that somebody wrote a very long essay called ''The Reading Crisis.'' I wish the author had just tweeted his main idea in a sentence or two so I would know what he had to say. I guess I'll never know.

Louis Phillips New York

Correction

The Inside the List column last Sunday misspelled the given name of the author of the novel ''The Paris Daughter.'' She is Kristin Harmel, not Kristen. The column also referred incorrectly to Harmel's 2019 book ''The Winemaker's Wife.'' It was her 11th novel, not her sixth.

[*books@nytimes.comThe*](mailto:books@nytimes.comThe) Times welcomes letters from readers. Letters for publication should include the writer's name, address and telephone number. Letters should be addressed to The Editor, The New York Times Book Review, 620 Eighth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10018. The email address is [*books@nytimes.com*](mailto:books@nytimes.com) Letters may be edited for length and clarity. We regret that because of the large volume of mail received, we are unable to acknowledge or to return unpublished letters.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/21/books/review/letters-to-the-editor.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/21/books/review/letters-to-the-editor.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page BR5.

**Load-Date:** July 9, 2023

**End of Document**



[***U.A.W. Gives Influential Backing to Biden After Making Him Work for It***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B5Y-4CC1-JBG3-6024-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 25, 2024 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2024 The New York Times Company

**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 13

**Length:** 1137 words

**Byline:** By Katie Rogers, Noam Scheiber and Jonathan Weisman

**Body**

The group, which endorsed President Biden in the 2020 election, made the self-described most ''pro-union president in history'' work for its official approval.

The United Automobile Workers union endorsed President Biden on Wednesday, delivering an influential boost as he faces a battle against former President Donald J. Trump to win the support of labor groups.

Mr. Biden, who calls himself the ''most pro-union president in history,'' delighted striking U.A.W. workers but angered auto industry executives when he appeared on a picket line with workers last fall. On Wednesday, he appeared in front of a national conference of autoworkers to tell them that he had been proud to do it.

''Let me tell you something I learned a long time ago,'' Mr. Biden said. ''If I'm going to be in a fight, I want to be in the fight with you, the U.A.W.''

In earlier remarks, Shawn Fain, the U.A.W. president, told the crowd that Mr. Biden had the track record to help ***working-class*** people organize for higher wages, better retirement benefits and health care.

''This election is about who will stand up with us and who will stand in our way,'' Mr. Fain said after a lengthy speech comparing Mr. Biden's past pro-union speeches with Mr. Trump's lack of support and appearances at nonunion facilities. He called Mr. Trump a ''scab'' -- shorthand for someone who undercuts the power of a union, such as by replacing a striking worker.

''If our endorsement must be earned, Joe Biden has earned it,'' Mr. Fain said.

The value of the endorsement, which the U.A.W. put off last year over concerns about Mr. Biden's commitment to promoting union jobs in electric-vehicle manufacturing, may be less about persuading members to back Mr. Biden than in motivating them to vote. The union has estimated that only about 30 percent of its members supported Mr. Trump in 2016. But without the union's formal backing and investments in turnout, Mr. Biden could suffer a drop-off in members who show up to vote in critical swing states like Michigan.

''Elections aren't about just picking your best friend for the job or the candidate who makes you feel good,'' Mr. Fain said. ''Elections are about power.''

With Mr. Trump all but locking up the nomination after his performance in New Hampshire's primary on Tuesday, officials with the Biden campaign said that the race between the two candidates had all but begun.

While onstage, Mr. Biden focused on highlighting economic bright spots, including a strong job market, lower gas prices and increased consumer optimism. He also compared his track record to his predecessor's, saying Mr. Trump is ''the only president other than Herbert Hoover who lost jobs when he was president.''

Mr. Fain, a vocal critic of Mr. Trump, did not mince words. He recalled the 2008 financial crisis, highlighting Mr. Trump's anti-union rhetoric then and as a presidential candidate in 2015. Then he recalled Mr. Biden's comments, as vice president, that the ''nation bet on American autoworkers and won.''

At this, attendees yelled out obscenities about Mr. Trump. ''Love the energy,'' Mr. Fain replied.

After the event, Mr. Fain told reporters that the U.A.W.'s board had unanimously approved the endorsement. He said that Mr. Biden's economic message was breaking through to rank-and-file members, but added that the union would ''have to do better'' to combat what he said was misinformation about Mr. Biden's achievements.

Still, Mr. Fain had made the president work for the endorsement.

Mr. Biden appeared at several U.A.W. events to prove his bona fides with the group's leadership and rank and file. In September, Mr. Biden grabbed a bullhorn and joined striking autoworkers in Michigan, becoming the first sitting president to join a picket line in an extraordinary show of support for workers demanding better wages. When the contract was won, Mr. Biden wore a red T-shirt and appeared before celebrating workers in Illinois.

Union officials often say Mr. Biden has been more vocal than any president in decades in backing organized labor. He appeared in a video as Amazon workers in Alabama sought to unionize, warning that ''there should be no intimidation, no coercion, no threats, no anti-union propaganda.'' He also called out Kellogg for its plans to permanently replace striking workers. (The strike was resolved before the company took that step.)

The U.A.W. was early to support Mr. Biden's green energy policies, but became frustrated by the lack of support for unionized auto-industry jobs in the Inflation Reduction Act, the major climate bill that the president signed in 2022.

Mr. Fain had also expressed frustration that the Biden administration had given Ford a $9 billion government loan to build three electric-vehicle battery plants in Tennessee and Kentucky without any commitment by the company to create high-wage union jobs there.

It takes fewer workers to assemble an electric vehicle than it does to build one with an internal combustion engine. To make up for those lost assembly jobs, the U.A.W. wants to organize the plants that make batteries and other electric vehicle parts that are being built to take advantage of the tax incentives included in Mr. Biden's climate legislation. They are also pushing to extend union organizing to electric vehicle makers that have long resisted it.

Mr. Biden's decision to appear on the picket line in Michigan raised the ire of auto industry executives, according to officials in his administration, who said that the president was nonetheless determined to make clear where he stood in the labor conflict.

Seeing an opening with the U.A.W.'s rank and file, if not its leadership, Mr. Trump then made a play for the endorsement, campaigning against Mr. Biden's ''ridiculous Green New Deal crusade.'' A day after Mr. Biden joined the U.A.W. picket line, Mr. Trump rallied at a nonunion auto parts factory in Michigan, vying for the support of blue-collar workers.

Mr. Fain had long made it clear his leadership would never endorse the former president, but endorsing Mr. Biden was still politically complicated. In addition to the substantial portion of his membership that is likely to favor Mr. Trump, the U.A.W. also includes a vocal liberal bloc that is skeptical of Mr. Biden. Many of the liberal members are graduate students and university researchers who have been critical of the president over his support for Israel during its war in Gaza. The union itself has called for a cease-fire.

During the event, several protesters waving Palestinian flags were dragged out by security officials as the president kept speaking, the second time in as many days that a Biden campaign event has been interrupted by people protesting Israel's campaign against Hamas in Gaza. Workers chanted ''U.A.W.'' to drown out their cries.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/24/us/politics/biden-uaw-union-speech-endorsement.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/24/us/politics/biden-uaw-union-speech-endorsement.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: ''If I'm gonna be in a fight, I want to be in the fight with you, the U.A.W.,'' President Biden said at the union's conference Wednesday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A13.

**Load-Date:** January 25, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Bringing a Dublin Trilogy to Life***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69B8-54R1-DXY4-X0MP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 6, 2023 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1218 words

**Byline:** By Laura Collins-Hughes

**Body**

At NYU Skirball, Druid's marathon production depicts the beginning of a free Irish state through the voices of the ***working class***.

In the back room of a hotel cafe in Lower Manhattan, the Irish director Garry Hynes was talking about Sean O'Casey, the laborer turned playwright whose frequently funny, sometimes blood-chilling, canonical 1920s tragicomedies are set amid the tenements of Dublin.

Mostly, Hynes called him O'Casey, but a few times she called him Sean, and the warmth of that familiarity melted away any sepia encrustation that has accumulated around his name. Hynes, 70, the artistic director and a co-founder of the Druid theater company in Galway, Ireland, imagines O'Casey was ''a bit of a joker,'' ''grumpy'' and given to provoking people ''just for the sake of provoking.'' Not easy, in other words, but playful.

She has long believed O'Casey, who died at 84 in 1964, in his adopted England, to be miscategorized as a playwright -- lumped in with the naturalists when really he is up to something richer than that.

Steeped in him of late, she has brought his famous Dublin trilogy to New York in the acclaimed production DruidO'Casey. A five-star review in the London Observer called the marathon experience of it ''revelatory,'' and said it ''probes the ambiguities and indeterminacies of O'Casey's texts,'' bringing ''his impoverished characters to rumbustious life.''

Together the three plays tell a story of the beginning of a free Irish state: ''The Shadow of a Gunman'' (1923), set in 1920 during the Irish War of Independence; ''Juno and the Paycock'' (1924), set in 1922 during the Irish Civil War; and ''The Plough and the Stars'' (1926), set in 1915 and '16, leading up to and during the Easter Rising against the British.

Home is the locus of each play, all first staged at the Abbey Theater in Dublin when the historical events in them were recent memories.

But combat seeps into every crevice of the lives of O'Casey's Dubliners -- characters who, as the Druid Ensemble member Rory Nolan said by phone, ''aren't even aware that they're going through gigantic societal changes and through moments in history that will echo down the ages to where we are now.''

Hynes has interpreted O'Casey for New York audiences before: in ''Juno,'' a musical adaptation of ''Juno and the Paycock,'' starring Victoria Clark, for Encores! in 2008. A decade earlier, she became the first woman to win a Tony Award for directing -- in 1998 for ''The Beauty Queen of Leenane,'' on the same night that Julie Taymor won for ''The Lion King,'' but a few minutes sooner.

For years she had wanted to direct a single company of actors in the entire Dublin trilogy, much as she did with her lauded play cycles DruidSynge, DruidShakespeare and DruidMurphy. A cast of 18 will perform DruidO'Casey from Wednesday through Oct. 14 at NYU Skirball in New York, then Oct. 18-21 in Ann Arbor, Mich. Audiences can see single shows or, for the cumulative effect, the full marathon in one day.

Hynes chatted about DruidO'Casey one morning last week over coffee and a bagel with cream cheese. These are edited excerpts from that conversation.

Why are you doing the marathon chronologically in order of the action of the plays rather than of the dates when they were written?

We discussed it a lot. You can see O'Casey develop as a writer over the three plays if you do them in the order in which they were written. Then somebody said to me, ''But do we want six and a half hours of theater -- of some of the greatest theater that this country's produced -- to end [as 'Plough' does] with two British soldiers singing in a Dublin house, 'Keep the Home Fires Burning,' or do you want the trilogy to end [as 'Juno' does] with two women walking into a future that they have no idea what it is?''

That's the argument.

That's the argument, yeah. Like when the last scenes of ''Juno'' were played for the first or second or third time in the Abbey Theater in the 1920s, nobody knew what the future would be. But when we do them, we know.

What do you hear in O'Casey's voice that he's saying to the present?

It is pretty shocking for us to realize that the struggles that are going on in Ireland through those three plays are homes, houses, health, which are the things that are happening in Ireland now. You know, O'Casey did not agree with the Rising in 1916. He was politically against it. He thought that the whole movement was beginning to be less about what the people's needs are, and more about historic deeds: fighting for the freedom of Ireland rather than fighting for the freedom of Irish people to live in proper homes.

Why did you want to stage the trilogy?

I did ''Plough and the Stars'' [with Brendan Gleeson] as the first production I directed in the Abbey when I became artistic director there. And then I did a ''Juno'' with Michael Gambon. But one of the things I felt is that, as well as being great plays, they were talked of as naturalism, and increasingly, my experience of the plays was that they're not naturalism -- that O'Casey's whole experience of the theater was coming from the music hall, and coming from [the 19th-century Irish melodramatist Dion] Boucicault.

O'Casey gave to very poor people great passions. Because he did that, he was regarded as a naturalist, but I believe the plays are far more interesting than that. They're an extraordinary sort of mix whereby you can be laughing one moment and crying the next. We want to provide an ability for the plays to be performed as pieces of theatrical writing that were asked to be performed, not asked to be endured.

O'Casey roots them in the inescapably domestic.

What is so wonderful is that the domestic is constantly reflecting on what's outside. So you're hearing about all the things going on out in the streets. They're marching. They're striking. They're killing people. They're doing all these kind of things out there on the street. And it's like it's [solely] out there. But actually it's not, because inside they're fighting. So the two things are playing off each other in counterpoint all the time.

And these are war plays that have women in them. He doesn't erase the fact of who else is living through that history.

Yeah, absolutely.

Tell me about him and women.

About Sean and women? Well, he dedicates ''Plough'' ''To the gay laugh of my mother at the gate of the grave.'' He created wonderful characters all through. But his women were the mainstay of life, you know?

He sees them as whole humans.

He absolutely does. But I don't think he hero-worships them either.

He doesn't do that with anyone. A striking thing is his absolute refusal to valorize violence. He presents all sorts of characters who do that, but he is not doing it himself.

It's marvelous because the argument about what is valorous or not, what is worthy or not, is being had there on that stage, constantly.

Why does O'Casey matter?

O'Casey matters because he wrote plays that can get inside. Inside you. Inside your head, inside your heart. He fiercely believed in people being treated properly. And he never abandoned that even when others abandoned it. He was never not completely true to what he believed, although he had many opportunities to not be. I know if I knew him, we'd probably row. But he is a hero of mine.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/04/theater/garry-hynes-sean-ocasey-dublin-trilogy.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/04/theater/garry-hynes-sean-ocasey-dublin-trilogy.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Sean O'Casey's plays explore the struggles of the Irish ***working class*** in the early 20th century and moments in history that would ''echo down the ages,'' as one actor put it. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BETTMANN/GETTY IMAGES) (C1)

The director Garry Hynes, above, has traveled to New York with her acclaimed production of Sean O'Casey's Dublin trilogy. Left, Aaron Monaghan and Anna Healy in ''The Plough and the Stars,'' one of the works. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY LILA BARTH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

ROS KAVANAGH) (C4) This article appeared in print on page C1, C4.

**Load-Date:** October 6, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Can a New Law Force Airbnb Hosts to Become Landlords?; Big CITY***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B94-P241-JBG3-60MJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 9, 2024 Friday 03:00 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1249 words

**Byline:** Ginia Bellafante Ginia Bellafante has served as a reporter, critic and, since 2011, as the Big City columnist. She began her career at The Times as a fashion critic, and has also been a television critic. She previously worked at Time magazine.

**Highlight:** It’s too early to tell if Local Law 18 will help ease the housing crisis in New York City. But homeowners with vacant rooms aren’t eager to open them up for long-term rentals.

**Body**

It’s too early to tell if Local Law 18 will help ease the housing crisis in New York City. But homeowners with vacant rooms aren’t eager to open them up for long-term rentals.

If you were planning a trip to New York City for Presidents’ Day weekend and logged onto Airbnb Wednesday morning, the first two listings to turn up might have vexed you. One was for a hotel room on Park Avenue South, and the second was for a townhouse apartment in Jersey City, advertised for its proximity to the PATH train to Manhattan, useful because Jersey City is not actually in New York.

When Airbnb arrived 15 years ago, it famously positioned itself as the immersive traveler’s alternative to hotels, which, by implication, were meant for the congenitally dull and basic. At its best, the platform rooted the culturally inquisitive in neighborhoods where they might not have gravitated, largely because there were no hotels — and where they were now driven to spend their money at the local boulangerie or the Malaysian restaurant or the vintage denim place.

At its worst, as critics argued for years, it deepened New York’s housing crisis because so many rental apartments — often stacked up as investment properties in a single building — were now given over to the tourism economy. This pattern changed in September, when [*Local Law 18*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/big-city), passed the previous year by the City Council, went into effect, which more or less prohibited rentals of fewer than 30 days. Technically, this way of doing business was already illegal by virtue of New York State’s Multiple Dwellings Law, enacted in 1929 to create better safeguards against the dangers of tenement life.

But Airbnb thrived amid loopholes in the law. In May 2022, there were more than 10,500 New York City listings on the site for apartments or whole houses. This week there were fewer than 1,000. In December, as demand for Airbnb spaces in New York [*fell by 46 percent, the growth in Jersey City and Newark exceeded 53 percent*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/big-city).

Local Law 18, which had a huge push from hotel owners and the affiliate unions that see house-sharing platforms as serial killers out to get one Hilton at a time, is tricky, because it does not effect an outright ban. Someone can become a host by registering with the city’s Office of Special Enforcement, but the process is long and tedious, and the office maintains the right to reject your petition. Of the 5,661 applications received by early February, 1,387 have been granted and 955 have been denied.

How effective the new regulations have been in advancing the cause of affordable housing, part of the goal, is not entirely clear, but the consequences for many homeowners who have depended on income from short-term rentals — not for a Wolf induction range or a trip to Morocco, but simply for the purpose of getting by, seems fairly unambiguous.

In November, [*RHOAR*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/big-city) (the acronym for Restore Homeowner Autonomy &amp; Rights) a grass-roots group of hundreds of property owners who have struggled in the aftermath of Local Law 18, issued a report examining some of its effects. More than 90 percent of those surveyed said they were now having trouble meeting monthly housing costs like mortgages and utilities. Nearly a third were delaying critical repairs to roofs, plumbing and windows.

While the homeowner rate in New York City hovers at about one-third, that figure varies by borough and race, with rates for white and Asian families considerably higher than for Black and Hispanic families. The contractor and filmmaker Tony Lindsay began posting his house in East New York in Brooklyn on Airbnb in 2018, first for extra cash and then as a lifeline when work slowed down and a second rental property, a two-family house owned by his father not far away in Bushwick, became a liability.

The problem, Mr. Lindsay said, is the inequity built into the new law, which “reflects a preoccupation with conversations that were framed and directed by the privileged.” A certain class of buildings, some containing condominiums, where units might command a very high nightly price, remain exempt.

“Meanwhile, the ***working-class*** homeowner who was maybe renting out a place for $99 a night and needs the money has been the hardest hit,” Mr. Lindsay told me. “We’re not getting rich off this.”

In December, three months after the law was set in motion, the [*average rental costs for apartments in Manhattan and Brooklyn went down*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/big-city), according to reports from the real estate firm Douglas Elliman. Did this signal that Local Law 18 was having the desired effect? Possibly, although many factors affect rent prices, and rentals in Queens actually rose even though inventory increased by 12 percent from the previous year.

The law may turn out to have a bigger effect in the long term, but the challenge of turning around resistant landlords is significant. Every Airbnb host I spoke with seemed to know a story about a difficult tenant who became impossible to remove. Mr. Lindsay said that his father’s tenants in Bushwick stopped paying rent during the coronavirus pandemic. He eventually served them with eviction notices, but the tenants are still there. Given that, he is not inspired to become a full-time landlord.

In August, he founded his own organization, the New York Homeowners Alliance, with about 200 members, to try to enact certain amendments to Local Law 18. Many of the people in his group, he said, were not interested in renting the apartments in their houses to long-term tenants.

Beyond that, Airbnb rentals accommodated a certain kind of extended-family lifestyle that allowed people the flexibility to house relatives, often from abroad, for weeks or months at a time. This was how Carmen Marshall, a costume designer and her husband, a set painter, made their lives, marked by fluctuations in income, actually work. Ten years ago, they bought a two-family house in Bushwick, modeling the feasibility on the money they expected from regular Airbnb rentals. Family from Michigan and the Dominican Republic would stay in the ground-floor apartment when it wasn’t occupied by paying guests.

The change in the short-term rental law followed the blow of the pandemic and the writers’ and actors’ strikes, which put so many people out of work for so long. Ms. Marshall and her husband now rent out the apartment to other creative people who need to be in New York for a month or longer — which is legal under Local Law 18 — but their income has been cut in half, she told me.

In September, Theo Yedinsky, Airbnb’s global policy director called Local Law 18 “a clear message to millions of potential visitors” that they were “not welcome.” However hyperbolic, it has become harder to stay in New York, just as interest in tourism has rebounded in the wake of Covid. The city has also needed hotel rooms to house migrants while, at the same time, constraints on hotel development imposed three years ago by the De Blasio administration have severely limited the possibility of new rooms down the line.

In two years, the World Cup is expected to bring more than one million visitors to the area. It is hard to see who, beyond the hotel industry, has really benefited from the policy changes around house sharing.

Email [*bigcity@nytimes.com*](mailto:bigcity@nytimes.com); follow Ginia Bellafante on X: @GiniaNYT

PHOTO: Tony Lindsay, a Brooklyn homeowner and the founder of the New York Homeowners Alliance, wants the city to amend Local Law 18 to allow for more short-term guests. (PHOTOGRAPH BY AHMED GABER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page MB3.

**Load-Date:** February 9, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Biden Receives Endorsement from United Automobile Workers Union***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B5S-CJX1-JBG3-6018-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 24, 2024 Wednesday 22:58 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1163 words

**Highlight:** The group, which endorsed President Biden in the 2020 election, made the self-described most “pro-union president in history” work for its official approval.

**Body**

The group, which endorsed President Biden in the 2020 election, made the self-described most “pro-union president in history” work for its official approval.

The United Automobile Workers union endorsed President Biden on Wednesday, delivering an influential boost as he faces a battle against former President Donald J. Trump to win the support of labor groups.

Mr. Biden, who calls himself the “most pro-union president in history,” [*delighted striking U.A.W. workers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/26/us/politics/biden-uaw-strike-picket-michigan.html) but angered auto industry executives when he appeared on a picket line with workers last fall. On Wednesday, he appeared in front of a national conference of autoworkers to tell them that he had been proud to do it.

“Let me tell you something I learned a long time ago,” Mr. Biden said. “If I’m going to be in a fight, I want to be in the fight with you, the U.A.W.”

In earlier remarks, [*Shawn Fain, the U.A.W. president*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/05/business/economy/shawn-fain-uaw-profile.html), told the crowd that Mr. Biden had the track record to help ***working-class*** people organize for higher wages, better retirement benefits and health care.

“This election is about who will stand up with us and who will stand in our way,” Mr. Fain said after a lengthy speech comparing Mr. Biden’s past pro-union speeches with Mr. Trump’s lack of support and appearances at nonunion facilities. He called Mr. Trump a “scab” — shorthand for someone who undercuts the power of a union, such as by replacing a striking worker.

“If our endorsement must be earned, Joe Biden has earned it,” Mr. Fain said.

The value of the endorsement, which the U.A.W. put off last year over concerns about Mr. Biden’s commitment to promoting union jobs in electric-vehicle manufacturing, may be less about persuading members to back Mr. Biden than in motivating them to vote. The union has [*estimated*](https://www.detroitnews.com/story/business/autos/general-motors/2016/11/10/uaw-believes-members-voted-trump/93606668/) that only about 30 percent of its members supported Mr. Trump in 2016. But without the union’s formal backing and investments in turnout, Mr. Biden could suffer a drop-off in members who show up to vote in critical swing states like Michigan.

“Elections aren’t about just picking your best friend for the job or the candidate who makes you feel good,” Mr. Fain said. “Elections are about power.”

With Mr. Trump all but locking up the nomination after his performance in New Hampshire’s primary on Tuesday, officials with the Biden campaign said that the race between the two candidates had all but begun.

While onstage, Mr. Biden focused on highlighting economic bright spots, including a strong job market, lower gas prices and increased consumer optimism. He also compared his track record to his predecessor’s, saying [*Mr. Trump*](https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/elections/2024/01/09/donald-trump-hopes-economy-crashes-in-2024/72159263007/) is “the only president other than Herbert Hoover who lost jobs when he was president.”

Mr. Fain, a [*vocal critic*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/27/us/politics/shawn-fain-trump-uaw.html) of Mr. Trump, did not mince words. He recalled the 2008 financial crisis, highlighting Mr. Trump’s anti-union rhetoric then and as a presidential candidate in 2015. Then he recalled Mr. Biden’s comments, as vice president, that the “nation bet on American autoworkers and won.”

At this, attendees yelled out obscenities about Mr. Trump. “Love the energy,” Mr. Fain replied.

After the event, Mr. Fain told reporters that the U.A.W.’s board had unanimously approved the endorsement. He said that Mr. Biden’s economic message was breaking through to rank-and-file members, but added that the union would “have to do better” to combat what he said was misinformation about Mr. Biden’s achievements.

Still, Mr. Fain had made the president work for the endorsement.

Mr. Biden appeared at several U.A.W. events to prove his bona fides with the group’s leadership and rank and file. In September, Mr. Biden grabbed a bullhorn and joined striking autoworkers in Michigan, becoming the first sitting president to join a picket line in an extraordinary show of support for workers demanding better wages. When the contract was won, Mr. Biden wore a red T-shirt and appeared before celebrating workers in Illinois.

Union officials [*often say*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/27/business/economy/biden-labor-unions.html) Mr. Biden has been more vocal than any president in decades in backing organized labor. He [*appeared in a video*](https://twitter.com/POTUS/status/1366191901196644354) as Amazon workers in Alabama sought to unionize, warning that “there should be no intimidation, no coercion, no threats, no anti-union propaganda.” He also [*called out*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/10/business/economy/kellogg-strike-biden.html) Kellogg for its plans to permanently replace striking workers. (The strike [*was resolved*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/21/business/economy/kellogg-union-strike-contract.html) before the company took that step.)

The U.A.W. was [*early to support*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/11/magazine/biden-economy.html) Mr. Biden’s green energy policies, but became frustrated by the lack of support for unionized auto-industry jobs in the Inflation Reduction Act, the major climate bill that the president [*signed in 2022*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/16/business/biden-climate-tax-inflation-reduction.html).

Mr. Fain had also [*expressed frustration*](https://uaw.org/statement-uaw-president-shawn-fain-federal-government-giving-ford-9-2-billion-loan-no-strings-attached/) that the Biden administration had [*given Ford*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/22/business/energy-environment/ford-battery-plants-loan.html) a $9 billion government loan to build three electric-vehicle battery plants in Tennessee and Kentucky without any commitment by the company to create high-wage union jobs there.

It [*takes fewer workers to assemble an electric vehicle*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/22/business/economy/electric-vehicles-jobs.html) than it does to build one with an internal combustion engine. To make up for those lost assembly jobs, the U.A.W. wants to [*organize the plants that make batteries and other*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/09/business/economy/ev-battery-union.html) electric vehicle parts that are being built to take advantage of the tax incentives included in Mr. Biden’s climate legislation. They are also pushing to extend union organizing to electric vehicle makers that have long resisted it.

Mr. Biden’s decision to appear on the picket line in Michigan raised the ire of auto industry executives, [*according to officials in his administration*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/16/business/uaw-ratify-contract-general-motors.html), who said that the president was nonetheless determined to make clear where he stood in the labor conflict.

Seeing an opening with the U.A.W.’s rank and file, if not its leadership, [*Mr. Trump then made a play for the endorsement*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/20/us/politics/trump-united-auto-workers-electric-vehicles.html), campaigning against Mr. Biden’s “ridiculous Green New Deal crusade.” A day after Mr. Biden joined the U.A.W. picket line, [*Mr. Trump rallied at a nonunion auto parts factory in Michigan*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/27/us/politics/trump-autoworkers-detroit.html), vying for the support of blue-collar workers.

Mr. Fain had long made it clear his leadership would never endorse the former president, but endorsing Mr. Biden was still politically complicated. In addition to the substantial portion of his membership that is likely to favor Mr. Trump, the U.A.W. also includes a [*vocal liberal bloc*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/07/business/american-unions-long-backed-israel-now-some-are-protesting-it.html) that is skeptical of Mr. Biden. Many of the liberal members are [*graduate students*](https://www.npr.org/2023/10/19/1206209107/united-auto-workers-union-uaw-membership-grad-students-big-3-strike) and university researchers who have been critical of the president over his support for Israel during its war in Gaza. The union itself has [*called for a cease-fire*](https://uaw.org/uaw-statement-israel-palestine/).

During the event, several protesters waving Palestinian flags were dragged out by security officials as the president kept speaking, the second time in as many days that a Biden campaign event has been interrupted by people protesting Israel’s campaign against Hamas in Gaza. Workers chanted “U.A.W.” to drown out their cries.

PHOTO: “If I’m gonna be in a fight, I want to be in the fight with you, the U.A.W.,” President Biden said at the union’s conference Wednesday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A13.

**Load-Date:** January 24, 2024

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[***When Did New York's Streets Get So Hollow?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B8X-NPD1-DXY4-X026-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 8, 2024 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2024 The New York Times Company

**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 24; GUEST ESSAY

**Length:** 1349 words

**Byline:** By Cara Eckholm

**Body**

Over the past decade, there has been much hand-wringing about New York's puzzling empty storefront problem, with vacancy rates sitting north of 15 percent last fall in some of the city's most celebrated areas. How did streets, from the East to the West Village, once home to the urbanist Jane Jacobs, a champion of the city's neighborhoods, become so hollow?

Rent escalation and the shift to e-commerce are, of course, obvious culprits. But behind the scenes, an important, largely overlooked factor is New York City's zoning code, enacted in 1961. Written in the face of fears of overcrowding, the code incorporated the postwar planning ideology that New Yorkers would live in tranquil residential neighborhoods and commute by car to office jobs in Midtown or to factory jobs on the city's periphery. The code also reflected an anachronistic, and at times elitist, view that limited where and how small businesses could operate. Businesses that might disrupt the peace were, in effect, banned in much of the city, to protect the ''nicer'' neighborhoods where wealthier New Yorkers were meant to reside.

Today, over half a century later, the Department of City Planning is finally trying to overhaul the 1961 code and revive much of the mixed-use character and serendipitous storefront activity that gives New York its soul. The plan -- known as City of Yes for Economic Opportunity -- is part of a trio of initiatives from the Adams administration, aimed at bolstering business activity, building more housing and navigating the city toward carbon neutrality.

The effort is a seemingly obvious step in New York's transformation into what the urbanists Edward L. Glaeser and Carlo Ratti call the Playground City, in which neighborhoods ''tie life, labor and leisure together.'' The plan includes proposals for 18 common-sense zoning amendments, informed by feedback from organizations and owners of small businesses, some of whom testified in its favor at a recent public hearing. (Comments can be submitted to the City Planning Commission thorough Feb. 15.)

But change is scary, and City of Yes for Economic Opportunity, which is set for a vote by the City Council this spring, has divided the city's 59 residential community boards. So far, 20 have voted in favor of the plan and 24 against. Opposition extends from Bay Ridge, to Whitestone, even to Jacobs's home turf, Greenwich Village. Some opponents fear that the revised zoning might bring more of the ''wrong'' kinds of businesses to their bucolic neighborhoods.

Community board hearings have featured worries about escalatory ''what if'' scenarios around activity that in many cases was, and still would be, illegal under the proposed changes: What if the new store on my corner starts selling under-the-counter marijuana and becomes a hangout for unsavory characters? What if a bar opens next to me and starts hosting Tuesday night dance parties, which break noise codes?

The answer, proponents of the plan say, is better law enforcement rather than blanket prohibitions on where businesses can locate. The current zoning, they argue, penalizes the city's many hardworking and rule-abiding small-business owners, who are the lifeblood of both New York's street life and its economy.

To truly understand the contours of today's debate and what's proposed, one must first understand the history of New York's mind-numbingly complex zoning code.

Much as freeways leveled neighborhoods, the 1961 code flattened streets into three primary types of zones: residential, commercial and manufacturing. Zones were then broken down into numbered subsets, each of which was given a distinct set of permitted businesses.

C5 commercial districts, for example, like Madison Avenue, were intended for the wealthy; that meant high fashion was permitted, but service businesses, like catering and appliance repair shops, were banned. By contrast, C6 commercial districts, like the area around Herald Square, were intended for the ***working class*** and permitted a broader range of uses, like billiards and wholesale retail.

A whopping 426 uses of space are defined in the zoning, as varied as taxidermy specialists, typewriter repair shops and travel bureaus. All were assigned areas where they could operate. Existing businesses that did not conform with the new list of permitted uses in their locations were grandfathered in. But they were prohibited from making any substantial alterations to their footprint or evolving business operations -- like repairing bicycles in a shop that was permitted only to do sales. And if a storefront was vacant for more than two years, the zoning would default to the new permitted uses, potentially precluding a new store from opening in an old one's place.

In response to blight in the 1970s, the city eventually caved on the compliance question in some residential areas. But these restrictions persist in large sections of New York, applying to, for instance, beloved legacy businesses on and near Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn, like Montero Bar, the Long Island Bar and Brooklyn Heights Deli, which are considered nonconforming.

''When the pandemic hit, it exposed all the ways in which our zoning is holding businesses back in their ability to respond to change,'' Matt Waskiewicz, an architect of City of Yes for Economic Opportunity at the city's planning department, told me. To this day, in many parts of the city -- from the Lower East Side to Bedford-Stuyvesant -- there are empty storefronts that cannot be reoccupied under current code.

City of Yes would do away with the two-year vacancy clock altogether and focus on further integrating residential and commercial areas. That has prompted angst from some community board members, who seem to prefer to live in a homogenous suburb.

One of the most contentious amendments would create a process for approving new corner stores in residential neighborhoods, or what I jokingly call the Great Bodega Reform. Bodegas kept much of the city humming through the pandemic and are one of New York's defining cultural icons. Yet the amendment has found opposition in New York's outlying neighborhoods, where some residents apparently prefer to remain dependent on cars for their day-to-day purchases.

City of Yes would also modernize permitted business types to reflect how contemporary New Yorkers spend their free time. In commercial zones, the plan would allow so-called maker spaces like microbreweries, 3-D printing shops and pottery studios, which today are relegated to manufacturing areas. It would also permit amusement venues like escape rooms, arcades and other types of immersive entertainment, which the 1960s planners could have never dreamed of.

Particularly fiery opposition surrounds an amendment to permit dancing and comedy in bars and restaurants that are already allowed live music. While some community groups have caricatured the plan as inviting ''cabarets'' to quiet neighborhoods, it is better seen as an attempt to recognize 21st-century social norms. New Yorkers like to dance, and they like to tell jokes. We should celebrate their creativity, not silence them through arcane zoning laws.

In 1961, planners tried to force residents into lifestyles and patterns they thought appropriate for their station and that era. Rather than a city that lives in fear of what-ifs, New York should be a city of possibility that evolves with the times. It's 2024. Let's not let midcentury thinking kill our vibe.

Cara Eckholm is a fellow at Cornell Tech's Jacobs Urban Tech Hub. She is a native New Yorker originally from Greenwich Village. In 2022, she served on the ''New'' New York Panel, created by the city and New York State to revitalize New York's central business districts after the Covid-19 pandemic. She lives in Brooklyn.

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**Graphic**

PHOTO: St. Marks Place and Second Avenue, the East Village, 1969. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CARL GOSSETT JR./THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A24.

**Load-Date:** February 8, 2024

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[***Lost Hope of Lasting Democratic Majority***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66FW-H7B1-JBG3-604H-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 24, 2022 Saturday 05:00 EST

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**Section:** UPSHOT

**Length:** 1663 words

**Byline:** Nate Cohn

**Highlight:** Revisiting an influential book and the notion that demographics are destiny.

**Body**

Revisiting an influential book and the notion that demographics are destiny.

Today we wish a belated and maybe not-so-Happy 20th Birthday to “The Emerging Democratic Majority,” the book that famously argued Democrats would gain an enduring advantage in a multiracial, postindustrial America.

There are countless explanations for the rise of Donald Trump and the growing dysfunction of American political life. This book does not necessarily rank at the top of that list. But when historians look back on this era, the book’s effect on American politics might be worth a mention.

The thesis that Democrats were on the cusp of a lasting advantage in national politics helped shape the hopes, fears and, ultimately, the conduct of the two major parties — especially once the Obama presidency appeared to confirm the book’s prophecy.

It transformed modest Democratic wins into harbingers of perpetual liberal rule. It fueled conservative anxiety about America’s growing racial diversity, even as it encouraged the Republican establishment [*to reach out to Hispanic voters*](https://archive.nytimes.com/opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/03/20/the-republican-autopsy-report/) and pursue immigration reform. The increasingly popular notion that “demographics are destiny” made it easier for the progressive base to argue against moderation and in favor of mobilizing a new coalition of young and nonwhite voters. All of this helped set the stage for the rise of Mr. Trump.

This is a lot to attribute to a single book, especially since the book does not really resemble the Obama-era caricature advanced by its supporters. The book does not put forward what became a commonly held view that racial demographic shifts would allow Democrats to win through mobilization, a more leftist politics or without the support of white ***working-class*** voters.

Instead, the book argued — not persuasively, as we’ll see — that Democrats could build a majority with a (still ill-defined) “centrist” politics of the Clinton-Gore variety, so long as they got “close to an even split” of white ***working-class*** voters.

“We were clearly overly optimistic about that prospect, to say the least,” said John Judis, one of the authors of the book, of the prospect of such high levels of Democratic support.

One easy way to see the divergence between reality and the expectations promoted by the book is to look at its projections for the Electoral College, compared with how the nation actually voted over the next 20 years:

What should you notice about the map of the projections?

First, the book is very cautious about predicting any Democratic gains attributable to racial demographic shifts. There’s no blue Georgia, no blue Texas, no blue North Carolina and no blue Arizona. There’s not even a blue Colorado or blue Virginia, which really did come to pass just six years after the book’s publication. Only Nevada and Florida — already highly competitive battlegrounds in 2000 — could be characterized as flipping to the Democrats because of the growing diversity of the population.

Second, the map illustrates that the authors supposed extraordinary levels of Democratic support among white voters without a college degree. Not only are white ***working-class*** battlegrounds like Iowa, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania characterized as “solid Democratic,” but Republican-leaning states like Ohio, Missouri and even West Virginia are characterized as “leaning Democratic.”

The characterization of West Virginia as “leaning Democratic” — despite George W. Bush’s victory before the book’s publication — is a telling indication of the problems underlying the book’s thesis.

While the book correctly anticipated Democratic strength in postindustrial metropolitan areas, it failed to appreciate the challenge of holding on to blue-collar white voters at the same time.

The authors said the “key” for Democrats would be in “discovering a strategy that retains support among the white ***working class***, but also builds support among college-educated professionals and others.” But the book did not contain a road map to pulling it off. It said, “They can do both.” The optimism was rooted in the assumption that Clinton-Gore had already solved the problem.

The authors dismiss the Bush victory in 2000, arguing that Al Gore failed “largely because of factors that had nothing to do with the appeal of his politics.”

While the book acknowledged that Mr. Bush was assisted by Mr. Gore’s stances on the environment, coal, abortion and gun control in white ***working-class*** areas, it didn’t appear to take these cultural issues as a serious problem for Democrats. At the very least, they weren’t considered serious enough to move West Virginia out of the Democratic column.

Instead, the authors advanced the argument that the strong economy in 2000 was actually part of Mr. Gore’s problem, by allowing ***working-class*** whites to vote on cultural issues rather than their economic interest. The Clinton sex scandals were also considered a necessary condition for Republican strength; without Bill Clinton dragging them down, Democrats would rebound. Whatever the merits of these arguments, it isn’t especially credible to argue that the 2000 election — held at a time of peace and prosperity — was anything like a worst-case scenario for Democrats.

In retrospect, gun control and environmental issues were harbingers of one of the major themes of postindustrial politics: White ***working-class*** voters were slowly repelled by the policy demands of the secular, diverse, postindustrial voters who were supposed to power a new Democratic majority.

The book is all but silent on the issues that fit into this category, like same-sex marriage, immigration, climate change, inequality or racial justice. In fairness, the book was written before many of these issues rose to prominence. It was written near the “end of history.” The 2000 election campaign was a relatively dull affair, with low turnout and few stark differences between the candidates. No one could have foreseen the next 20 years of wars, economic crisis, cultural change and social unrest.

Yet despite all the intervening events of the last two decades, the book did get something very important right: America was entering a new era of postindustrial politics.

As Mr. Judis noted in an email, professionals have “grown, if anything, more Democratic” than the book foresaw. Maybe the book didn’t predict a blue Virginia or a blue Colorado — but in some sense, those shifts proved that the thesis of the book was more powerful than its authors imagined. The industrial era of political conflict really was coming to a close.

While the authors argued Democrats would follow in the footsteps of [*Progressive Era Republicans*](https://www.britannica.com/summary/The-Progressive-Era-Key-Facts), who ran as reformers and won overwhelming electoral victories, the next 20 years proved more reminiscent of [*the Gilded Age*](https://www.history.com/topics/19th-century/gilded-age) — the decades of political division, resurgent populism, political reaction and growing inequality that ultimately set the stage for the rise of the progressives.

Perhaps this is the book’s greatest shortcoming. It assumed that the transition to a new postindustrial, multiracial society would come without anything like the conflict, unrest and reaction that accompanied industrialization. Indeed, the book failed to imagine the basic contours of political conflict in the postindustrial era — let alone why the Democrats would be well positioned to guide the nation through those challenges. Instead, it assumed a peaceful, prosperous and content nation, one where centrist Democrats offering small solutions to small problems might fend off stolid Reagan-era Republicans in perpetuity.

It didn’t turn out that way.

Twenty years later, both authors have distanced themselves from the book’s thesis. Mr. Judis did it [*in 2015*](https://www.nationaljournal.com/s/32748/emerging-republican-advantage/) — and he had expressed skepticism as early as the 2010 G.O.P. midterm sweep. [*Ruy Teixeira*](https://theliberalpatriot.substack.com/), the book’s co-author, held on for longer, [*publishing demographic projections*](https://www.americanprogress.org/article/americas-electoral-future/) and [*analyses*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/plum-line/wp/2016/01/25/donald-trump-and-the-gops-demographic-trap/) that argued against a clear path for Mr. Trump in 2016. But over the last years, Mr. Teixeira has [*backed off*](https://www.persuasion.community/p/demography-is-not-destiny?fbclid=IwAR1oYrtB3CnhOQAkf2qsTC-Yyfo0KJ8gHh8_G0aDm7PPniL_ZguwChc9-8o) the thesis — or at least misinterpretations of the thesis such as casting demographic change as destiny.

The theory that demographics are destiny is a tempting one. In a certain sense, the last 20 years have vindicated it. If you want to guess how a state or county has shifted over the last two decades, demographics can tell you just about everything you need to know. If you want to build [*an election needle*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/05/upshot/needle-election-night-2018-midterms.html) or weight a political poll, demographic data is awfully useful, too.

Yet demographic change rarely offers a path to political dominance, at least nowadays. Demographic shifts are transforming the United States — but at a glacial pace. Over a four-year period, Democrats might gain a mere half percentage point because of the increased nonwhite share of the electorate — assuming everything else is held constant. A half-point is something, but it’s easily swamped by other factors, like a shift in the economy, a different slate of candidates, a midterm, or just a few too many years in power.

In the real world, things aren’t held constant. Demographic change can provoke backlash. And, even if it doesn’t, a party courting new voters might still find itself losing ground among its old supporters, who were brought to the party by a different set of messages, issues and candidates. And even if a party does everything right, and manages to squeeze a point or two out of demographic shifts in a given election — the way President Obama probably did in 2012 — it might just tempt a party to cash in its electoral chips on an agenda that costs support from a key group. It might even convince a party that demographics are destiny — and that the hard work of persuading voters and building a broad and sometimes fractious coalition just isn’t necessary.

For more on “The Emerging Democratic Majority,” an [*interview*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/25/us/politics/ruy-teixeira-democrats.html) by [*Blake Hounshell*](https://www.nytimes.com/by/blake-hounshell) with [*Ruy Teixeira*](https://theliberalpatriot.substack.com/archive).

PHOTO: Barack Obama on the campaign trail in 2008, when a book titled “The Emerging Democratic Majority” seemed prophetic. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Damon Winter/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** September 24, 2022

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[***Didier Eribon on Ernaux: She captured ‘in one sentence what I couldn’t say in a page.’***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66JG-G7W1-JBG3-614W-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 6, 2022 Thursday 16:54 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS

**Length:** 299 words

**Byline:** Laura Cappelle and Alex Marshall

**Highlight:** The French philosopher and sociologist said that Ernaux had always been “a great personal inspiration.”

**Body**

The French philosopher and sociologist said that Ernaux had always been “a great personal inspiration.”

Authors worldwide praised Annie Ernaux’s novels on Thursday after she received the Nobel Prize in Literature, but some in France have also been praising her politics, especially for highlighting the struggles of the ***working class***.

Among them was Didier Eribon, the philosopher and sociologist. “I have such admiration for her, not just as a writer, but for her activism,” Eribon said in a telephone call.

Ernaux supported the [*Yellow Vest movement*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/15/business/yellow-vests-movement-inequality.html) that, starting in 2018, [*brought French cities to a standstill while protesting rising fuel prices and declining living standards*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/01/world/europe/france-yellow-vests-protests-macron.html), Eribon said. She also regularly supported workers who went on strike, and highlighted their plight in her books. “Beyond being a model, I think she gave others permission to write about class-based violence and trauma,” Eribon added.

Eribon first met Ernaux in 2002, shortly after [*the death of Pierre Bourdieu*](https://www.nytimes.com/2002/01/25/world/pierre-bourdieu-71-french-thinker-and-globalization-critic.html), a leading French sociologist and globalization critic. She had always been “a great personal inspiration,” he added. When he was writing “Returning to Reims,” a memoir about growing up as a gay child of factory workers, Eribon said he “had a pile of books by Annie Ernaux on my desk, and when I couldn’t find a way to say something, I opened them.”

“She always found a way to capture in one sentence what I couldn’t say in a page,” Eribon added.

Ernaux’s Nobel was “wonderful news,” Eribon said, adding, “Annie Ernaux’s work has marked a renewal in French literature.”

PHOTO: The French writer Didier Eribon, who also wrote about his ***working-class*** roots, said he admired Ernaux both for her writing and for her activism. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Photo by Arne Dedert/picture alliance via Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** October 6, 2022

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[***Are People Who Read Magazines Without Paying ‘Stealing’ Their Content?; The Ethicist***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BCR-TJM1-DXY4-X00M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 21, 2024 Wednesday 13:51 EST

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**Section:** MAGAZINE

**Length:** 1322 words

**Byline:** Kwame Anthony Appiah Kwame Anthony Appiah is The New York Times Magazine&amp;#8217;s Ethicist columnist and teaches philosophy at N.Y.U. His books include &amp;#8220;Cosmopolitanism,&amp;#8221; &amp;#8220;The Honor Code&amp;#8221; and &amp;#8220;The Lies That Bind: Rethinking Identity.&amp;#8221; To submit a query: Send an email to , [*ethicist@nytimes.com*](mailto:ethicist@nytimes.com)

**Highlight:** The magazine’s Ethicist columnist on bookstore etiquette.

**Body**

The magazine’s Ethicist columnist on bookstore etiquette.

At the local Barnes &amp; Noble, the in-store coffee shop is next to the vast selection of magazines for sale. Many coffee drinkers grab multiple magazines and take them to their table with their coffee and read them. After coffee, most, but not all, put the magazines back in the racks without paying for them. They are “stealing” content that is meant to be purchased. Is this a form of shoplifting? — Name Withheld

From the Ethicist:

Usually, retail thieves — even ones eager to justify their behavior — know they’re thieving: They’re stealthy about it. But what your coffee drinkers are doing is out in the open. They evidently don’t think that they’re breaking the rules; you’re not so sure. The norms and expectations here are ambiguous, then. In the end, it’s up to a vendor to set the rules about what people can do with the items on display. You ask if the conduct you observe is acceptable. Maybe the real question is: What does the store think?

We can make inferences from its actions. Bookstores have always allowed some consumption of unpurchased content — you flip through a book and size it up before you buy. And a Barnes &amp; Noble with a coffee shop is going for a certain vibe; there are business benefits in being welcoming. That’s why the company website encourages you to sit in the coffee shop, use its Wi-Fi and read e-books free on your Nook. Nor are the unpurchased magazines a loss, exactly. The store pays the publishers only when magazines are sold to customers. Unsold copies are recycled.

Store managers could, if they wanted, crack down on the behavior, but — aside from cases of egregious abuse — they generally don’t. And, of course, the store has chosen to locate the magazines near the seating area. In sum: It isn’t just your coffee drinkers who are acting as if what they’re doing is OK. Barnes &amp; Noble is, too.

Readers Respond

The previous question was from a reader whose friend admitted to shoplifting. She wrote: “A close friend of many years whom I’ve always thought of as an extremely honest, ethical person recently confided in me that she shoplifts on a regular basis. She explained that she never steals from small or independently owned businesses, only from large companies, and only when no small business nearby carries the items she needs. She targets companies that are known to treat their employees badly, or that knowingly source their products from places where human rights are violated, or whose owners/C.E.O.s donate to ultraconservative, authoritarian-leaning candidates, etc. … When she told me, I thought, Stealing is wrong. But as we discussed it, I realized I was oversimplifying a complex moral issue. Is it wrong to steal food to feed your starving children? What if I stole a legally purchased gun from a person I knew was about to commit a mass shooting? Are those who bring office supplies home from their workplace also thieves? I find myself struggling with the question of whether an individual’s actions are morally defensible if they do more good than harm.”

In his response, the Ethicist noted: “The moral and legal proscription of theft is meant to create a system that allows people to hold on to their possessions and dispose of them only when they choose to. Theft undermines this system — a system we all have reason to value and a duty to help sustain by keeping to the rules. Your light-fingered friend may protest that she steals only from retail outlets connected to bad actors. But the rest of us aren’t picking and choosing in this way; we pay what we owe at the checkout counter. So she’s taking advantage of our compliance without complying herself. … Because you care about her, you should try to persuade her to drop her unfortunate hobby — and her insistence that it’s fine to steal from others when you disapprove of them. She might see things differently if you pointed out that this rationale would encourage those of us who disapprove of theft to steal from her.” (Reread the full question and answer [*here*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/16/magazine/shoplifting-friend-ethics.html).)

⬥

Why doesn’t the letter writer’s friend boycott the company to show her disapproval? Many of us do that. Old saying: Principles cost money. Therefore, we do not shop at “lowest price” businesses. — Susan

⬥

I appreciate the Ethicist’s response but I would encourage the letter writer’s friend to consider the stores’ workers. They are the ones most burdened by “shrinkage”: losing out on bonuses when inventory doesn’t match up, having to perform added security duties or being forced to put more product behind locked cases. The theory of change here is off. A big company will never feel the effect of her few petty thefts (and they can raise prices on frequently taken items if they do). A cashier or stocker, however, might. The best revenge is to shop elsewhere. — Hayley

⬥

I agree with the Ethicist and have one thing to add: hard working people, often single parents, work for these retailers. When you have mouths to feed you do not have the luxury to take retail jobs with only those companies that have values similar to yours. Would any company share all of your values? I doubt it. I have worked for two big-box retailers in my career. I chose both because they were close to home and provided health care benefits, two things I needed as a single parent. Stealing from these companies means the prices potentially go up. Not only do the employees suffer from higher prices, but the consumers, usually ***working-class*** people themselves, suffer too. Additionally, as a 30-year retail veteran, I know that stores with high shrink are more likely to be closed. When a big-box retailer near me closed for high shrink it left many families in a food desert. We still do not have a replacement for that store. Imagine not being able to feed your children fresh vegetables because you do not have a car and there are no grocery stores nearby. The shoplifter is in fact hurting the very people she claims to want to protect. — Kim

⬥

The letter writer’s friend is justifying her pilferage from large corporations by believing that she would be harming them. The truth is that, as the Ethicist explained so well, what she is actually doing is making the rest of us pay more; she appears to be unaware how commerce works. I hope the letter writer can convince her friend that what she is doing is simply wrong. I am bipolar and before I was even aware of that, I went through a phase where I would steal silly things such as three Band-Aids out of a box or a sample lipstick, never anything large or costly. Over a decade ago, I was caught walking out of a store with a $9.99 pair of sunglasses on my head. The irony of this is that I had no idea they were there. I had been trying on sunglasses and would put a pair on my face, and if I liked them, I would “save” them on my head. In the end, I decided not to buy them, but I had forgotten that there was a pair still on my head. I was spotted by Walgreens security leaving the store after paying for my order. I explained my innocent action, but the guard took me back to the security office nevertheless. A policeman was called and although I wasn’t charged, I was given a summons to appear in court. Without a lawyer, I was asked to plead guilty, not guilty or no contest. Not understanding the difference, I plead no contest. That third degree misdemeanor has followed me since then. It made it impossible for me to rent an apartment I wanted and stopped me from continuing my business. If I could, I would remind this high-minded warrior that these tiny infractions can cause long-term annoyances. — Miranda

⬥

I have shoplifted for decades, since I was a boy. I am now a senior citizen. It is strictly for my own pleasure and satisfaction. I feel no remorse about it. I have been caught twice with minimal issues. I shall continue. It is a part of me. — C.K.

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Illustration by Tomi Um FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** February 21, 2024

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[***Latinos, Shifting Toward Trump, Land at the Center of the 2024 Campaign***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BJF-STY1-DXY4-X04B-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 14, 2024 Thursday 22:30 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1720 words

**Byline:** Jennifer Medina and Ruth Igielnik Jennifer Medina is a Los Angeles-based political reporter for The Times, focused on political attitudes and demographic change. Ruth Igielnik is a polling editor for The Times, where she writes and analyzes surveys. She was previously a senior researcher at the Pew Research Center.

**Highlight:** Donald Trump’s rising support has turned many Latino voters into swing voters.

**Body**

Donald Trump’s rising support has turned many Latino voters into swing voters.

Former President Donald J. Trump’s growing support among Latino voters is threatening to upend the coalition that has delivered victories to Democrats for more than a decade, putting the politically divided group at the center of a tug of war that could determine elections across the country.

Polls show that Mr. Trump’s standing with Latino voters has grown since his defeat in 2020, with some surveys finding him winning more than 40 percent of those voters — a level not seen for a Republican in two decades. That strength has Democrats playing defense to maintain the large majority of Latino voters whom they have relied on to win in recent years.

The shift underscores a stark reality of the 2024 election: Neither party can win with white voters alone.

As the fight for both the White House and Congress shifts more squarely to racially diverse states, both parties will need to rely on coalitions that include Black, Asian and Hispanic voters.

Latino voters will make up an estimated 15 percent of eligible voters this year, and 33 percent of eligible voters in California, where several swing districts are poised to determine control of the House. Races in Arizona and Nevada, where Latinos make up roughly one in four eligible voters, are positioned to tip the balance of power in the Senate.

The fight for the presidency has expanded in recent elections from battlegrounds in the Rust Belt to the Sun Belt. President Biden relied on victories in Arizona, Georgia and Nevada to win in 2020. This year, both parties are investing heavily in those states to persuade the large numbers of Hispanic voters they believe are up for grabs.

“The Latino electorate used to be seen as a massive liability for Republicans. Now, it’s turning out to be an asset,” said Daniel Garza, the executive director of the Libre Initiative, a conservative group that targets Latino voters and is funded by Americans for Prosperity, the group founded by Charles and David Koch. “Republicans can’t win without them — it would be political malpractice not to have them in a winning coalition.”

The shifts among a large and diverse demographic group defy simple explanation. Differences across regions, generations and economics all play a role.

Mr. Trump has found new support among Latinos who work in law enforcement along the Mexican border, Cuban Americans in Florida averse to policies they view as approaching socialism, evangelical Christians attracted to Christian nationalism and second- and third-generation U.S.-born Latinos who are more likely to identify with and vote like their white peers.

One of the clearest trends is the education divide. Tracking the gap among voters overall, Mr. Trump is [*increasingly doing better*](https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2023/07/12/voting-patterns-in-the-2022-elections/) among Hispanic voters without a college degree than among college-educated Hispanics.

“The nation’s Latino population is so big now that it is multiple stories,” said Mark Hugo Lopez, who is the director of race and ethnicity research at the Pew Research Center. “This has changed before, and it can change again, but even if the shares don’t change, the numbers are going to keep going up — and that is going to have important implications.”

The changes raise a tantalizing prospect for Republicans: The parties may be seeing a political realignment, with Republicans pulling some Black and Latino ***working-class*** voters out of the Democratic coalition and Democrats winning over a slice of the upper-income, college-educated white voters who once would have landed in the G.O.P. It is a voter swap that could extend a lifeline to Republicans, whose dependence on white voters in a diversifying country has had strategists predicting doom for years.

“A moment like this would have been unfathomable in 2016,” said Patrick Ruffini, a pollster who argues that the G.O.P. is assembling a more multiracial coalition. “The belief was that Republicans needed to moderate on immigration reform. Now, you have a figure who not only ignores that but completely turns it on its head. It debunks decades of conventional wisdom.”

However, it is unclear how major and lasting the Trump-era changes will be. Polling on partisanship shows that Latino voters have been fairly steady in their partisan identification, though have more recently started to [*drift*](https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2023/07/12/voting-patterns-in-the-2022-elections/) toward the Republican Party. Republicans have gained some support with Black voters in polls, but there is no clear evidence of a mass movement.

Some Democratic strategists believe that current polls are overestimating Hispanic support for Mr. Trump, in part because they may exclude too many voters who primarily speak Spanish. They also believe that many Hispanic voters will move back toward President Biden in the coming months, arguing that Mr. Trump’s rhetoric will repel them.

“Democrats are balancing two realities — the polls have been off and we have won, but there are still warning signs,” said Tory Gavito, a Democratic strategist who conducts focus groups with Hispanic voters. She said she often heard those voters focused on their economic security.

“Status threats are potent because Latino voters know that they are in a race to avoid last place,” she said. “They don’t want to be a loser, and they know it is an uphill climb.”

It is difficult to overstate the vast growth of Latino voters in the last 20 years. An estimated 36 million Latinos are eligible to vote this year, an increase of [*nearly four million just from 2020*](https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2023/07/12/voting-patterns-in-the-2022-elections/) and more than double from 2008.

Many Latino voters have long had a tenuous allegiance to either party. In 2004, for example, roughly four in 10 Latino voters chose George W. Bush, the most support on record from Latinos for a Republican presidential candidate.

[*Just four years later*](https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2023/07/12/voting-patterns-in-the-2022-elections/), the Democratic advantage nearly doubled, with nearly 70 percent of Latino voters choosing Barack Obama over Senator John McCain of Arizona, according to exit polls. In 2020, with Mr. Trump, support for Republicans ticked back up.

Since 2020, Republicans have increased outreach to Hispanic voters. They have attracted more Hispanic candidates, particularly in parts of Florida, Texas and New Mexico, and reached out to voters in Spanish more frequently. Major evangelical groups that once focused largely on white congregations have expanded their political outreach to Latino churches.

“This election will be decided at the margins, and we are going to reach out to these voters aggressively,” said Danielle Alvarez, a spokeswoman for the Trump campaign. “If we can keep this momentum, if we can stave off support from Biden, we will win.”

Many Democrats have been stunned by Republicans’ inroads, as Mr. Trump has continued to unleash incendiary rhetoric about immigrants, including those from Latin America, “poisoning the blood of our country” and promised draconian policies such as mass deportations. He has advanced the Great Replacement conspiracy theory, claiming that Democrats welcome undocumented immigrants into the United States because they will allow them to vote illegally for the party.

Interviews and surveys suggest many Latino voters do not see themselves as the target of Mr. Trump’s comments. Instead, they often say they welcome his talk about a border crackdown and see him as helping business owners and the economy.

“Democrats are letting us down and over and over,” said George Rodriguez, 57, who lives in Las Vegas and calls himself a Chicano Republican. “They’re losing us because we don’t want handouts. We don’t want — we don’t need your hug. We want a direction. We want jobs.”

[*Some polling shows that Latino voters*](https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2023/07/12/voting-patterns-in-the-2022-elections/)’ views about the Democratic Party remain positive. A Pew Research Center survey last year found that nearly 80 percent of Latino voters thought the Democratic Party “really cares about Latinos” and roughly 70 percent said the party “worked hard to earn Latinos’ votes,” compared with 45 percent for Republicans.

To some extent, the shift among Latino voters may be as much about dissatisfaction with Mr. Biden as enthusiasm for Mr. Trump. Young Latino voters — like other young voters — are moving away from Mr. Biden out of frustration over the economy and the war in Gaza. And Latinas have shifted toward Mr. Trump at a similar rate as Latino men, worrying some Democratic strategists who are counting on abortion rights to be a driving issue this fall.

“I want to hear something positive more often,” said Elisa Iñiguez, 69, who emigrated from Mexico to Southern California more than 40 years ago. She has almost always voted for Democrats and plans to vote for Mr. Biden, she said, but has grown frustrated in recent years. “We have to care more about people who are already here. We all want the same rights.”

The Biden campaign says it is particularly focused on two groups: people who voted for Hillary Clinton, the Democratic nominee, in 2016 and switched to Mr. Trump in 2020, and a much larger group of new or inconsistent voters. Latinos make up a significant share of both categories.

“The president’s campaign isn’t asking but earning the support of our community,” Michelle Villegas, the Latino vote director of the Biden campaign, said in a statement.

Biden campaign officials said they had spent some $25 million, and had plans to spend another $30 million, on advertising on television, radio and online platforms that attract large Latino audiences.

The political arm of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, known as BOLD PAC, has also encouraged candidates to use Spanglish in advertising as a way to reach native-born English speakers, who make up a vast majority of Latino voters.

“Our party hasn’t done the best job of really speaking to the Latino community, because we’ve too often been seen as monolithic and taken for granted,” said Representative Maxwell Alejandro Frost, Democrat of Florida and an Afro-Cuban American, who is leading some of those efforts.

Mr. Frost said he had so far been encouraged by the party’s outreach this year. “The president does not have to do it alone.”

PHOTOS: Latino voters, whose support for Donald Trump has grown since 2020, will make up an estimated 15 percent of eligible voters this year. Both parties consider them a critical bloc. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ILANA PANICH-LINSMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; SEAN RAYFORD FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A19.

**Load-Date:** March 16, 2024

**End of Document**



[***A Biden Victory in November Hinges on Pennsylvania***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BV9-KJY1-JBG3-60RY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 20, 2024 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 18; MICHELLE COTTLE

**Length:** 2163 words

**Byline:** By Michelle Cottle and Damon Winter

**Body**

Let's talk about why President Biden is spending three days in Pennsylvania this week -- a lot of time, by campaign standards. By now, you probably know that just a few swing states are pivotal to winning the White House in November. For Mr. Biden, the Keystone State is the most crucial.

It's not just that Pennsylvania has 19 electoral votes -- the biggest haul of any battleground. And it's not just that it is part of the Blue Wall, the string of industrial states that helped Democrats win the presidency for years until Donald Trump cracked it in 2016. This fight is also personal: Mr. Biden is a native son of Pennsylvania who spent part of his childhood there, identifies with its ***working-class***, regular-folk vibe and gets intuitively how the state is a microcosm for America. If Scranton Joe cannot hang on to his Rosebud, he is probably in big trouble nationally.

The goodish news for Mr. Biden is that he appears to be running neck and neck here with Mr. Trump, according to polling and campaign insiders, unlike in some other swing states where he is struggling a bit more. The tougher news is that many Democrats anticipate a tick-tight race, and it's not yet clear what will energize and turn out voters. ''My big fear is that people are exhausted by the chaos,'' says U.S. Representative Mary Gay Scanlon, who hails from one of the suburban collar counties around Philadelphia.

So what does Team Biden need to do to prevail? High-profile visits like Mr. Biden's three-day swing this week are important. But they are a tiny piece of what it takes to win a place as sprawling and complicated as Pennsylvania. To get a clearer sense of the puzzle, I set about picking the brains of over a dozen strategists, organizers, elected officials and other state political experts. A smattering of common themes and strategies bubbled up -- some easier than others for the president and his campaign to tackle.

I started by approaching Gov. Josh Shapiro, a member of Mr. Biden's campaign advisory board who is considered a Democratic rock star since winning the state by nearly 15 points in 2022. (Mr. Biden squeaked by here in 2020 by 1.2 points. Though, to be fair, Mr. Shapiro had a truly lousy opponent.)

One story stuck with me from talking with the governor. It's a bit canned, sure, but it made me think about some of the hurdles Mr. Biden is facing. Asked if anything took him by surprise in his own run, Mr. Shapiro told me about his first TV ad, which showed him sitting around the Sabbath dinner table with his family, and how, afterward, voters would come up to him to share their own faith stories and traditions. ''The ad allowed them to speak to me in a personal way,'' he recalled.

While Mr. Biden can emote with the best of them, many voters, especially among his base, just aren't feeling that personal bond these days. Finding ways to reconnect, to make people feel understood and listened to, is one of his trickiest challenges.

Part of this will be letting voters know that he has been working for them. It's important to spell out for people ''what you delivered, how your work positively impacted their lives,'' Mr. Shapiro says of his experience. It also means addressing the things that still need fixing -- making clear that, yes, you feel voters' pain. ''I've heard people loud and clear. Things cost a lot. They want relief,'' said the governor, stressing that you have to ''acknowledge the challenges people feel.''

As Mr. Biden works to sell voters on his accomplishments, and himself, he will have to do it across wildly different parts of Pennsylvania. Winning here means playing everywhere, say the state's political hands -- pretty much all of whom can recite the vote margins a Democrat needs to aim for in Philadelphia, its collar counties, Allegheny (home to Pittsburgh), this western enclave, that area of the Lehigh Valley and even the T counties running up the center and across the top of the state that typically go Republican. Boiled down, the blue-team blueprint is: Run up the numbers in and around Philly, do well in Allegheny and other select spots and hold down Republicans' margins of victory in the more rural areas.

''You can't rely on the places traditionally friendly to us. You have to close the margins in places we're not going to win,'' said Lt. Gov. Austin Davis, a Democrat. Take the reliably red counties of Westmoreland, in the Pittsburgh region, and rural Northumberland, he offered: ''You can lose 60-40, but you can't lose 70-30. It makes a huge difference.''

''Margins matter!'' confirmed State Representative Malcolm Kenyatta, who is running statewide for auditor general. This is especially true if turnout in Philadelphia is not so hot -- which, Democrats say, has been the case for several years. But we'll get to that in a minute.

Making inroads into hostile territory was crucial to both Mr. Shapiro's and Senator John Fetterman's victories in 2022. And while a presidential campaign is a different animal, some of the basics are transferable. Team Biden will need to build up its campaign infrastructure and outreach early in places where Democrats usually get clobbered.

So far, the campaign seems to be taking this challenge to heart.

Lancaster County is one of those places that don't show Democrats a lot of love. Mr. Trump won this Republican stronghold by nearly 16 points in 2020. Mr. Shapiro narrowly lost it to the MAGA-tastic Doug Mastriano in 2022. But the Biden team sees potential here and began investing resources early this cycle. The campaign opened a local office last month -- one of 14 already up and running in the state -- making a big to-do about the event and inviting MSNBC to cover it. Campaign hiring is gearing up, and volunteers are already out knocking on voters' doors multiple times a week.

Last Saturday, I tagged along for some canvassing with Stella Sexton, the vice chairwoman of the county Democratic Committee. Armed with a list of registered Democrats, she was reminding people that the primary was this coming Tuesday and ensuring they knew their polling place was at a local funeral home. Getting people involved in the primary makes it more likely that they will show up for the general election, she told me.

Many of the folks on her list weren't home. Or weren't answering the door. (It's gotten harder with video doorbells, she noted.) Others were not in the mood to chat, such as the older gentleman who came to the door in his fish-print pajama pants. But now and then, Ms. Sexton hit upon someone who shared her sense of mission -- like Bernese Lyons, a feisty nonagenarian with strong feelings about the need to defeat Mr. Trump. ''The man is mad!'' she declared.

Playing in Republican areas can get Mr. Biden only so far, of course. His success will rest heavily on Philadelphia's populous collar counties, which once leaned red but have shifted blue in recent years thanks in part to suburban women turning against Mr. Trump. MAGA extremism did not play well in this region even before the demise of Roe v. Wade. Now? Mobilizing its legions of moderates and independents over reproductive rights is central to the Democratic playbook.

And then there's Philly. Any Democrat running statewide needs to run up the vote count in this city of more than 1.5 million people, with three-quarters of the voters registered as Democrats. Talking about Philly is where Dems sound the most nervous. Turnout there has been meh for the past several elections, they say. And since 2020, Mr. Biden has lost support among some core constituencies, including Black and Hispanic voters, of which Philly has an abundance.

Some people, including the former governor Ed Rendell, fear it will be tough for the president to match his 2020 numbers this time. The city was ''hard hit during the pandemic. It's had crime problems, economic problems,'' he says. ''There really is just a general feeling of -- not a hopeless feeling -- but a general feeling that people aren't fired up.''

Political types focused on the city note that, among young Black men in particular, there is a lack of urgency regarding the importance of this election. The Biden campaign is hoping to change this with early engagement. It wants to turn its offices into community hubs, maybe even set up community fridges (like community pantries, only ... cooler) in some neighborhoods. And it wants to get trusted local leaders out talking with people early and often.

Smart politicians also know better than to overlook the state's Hispanic population. While still a relatively modest 8.6 percent, this demographic group is on the rise well beyond Philadelphia. Notably, Allentown, Pennsylvania's third-largest city, is now majority Hispanic and, in 2021, elected its first Latino mayor.

Mr. Shapiro's team keeps in touch with Spanish-language media hosts, and the governor does interviews on Spanish-language radio. Not that you have to speak Spanish to us, clarifies Allentown's mayor, Matt Tuerk. ''But you need to show up early instead of just in October and seriously listen to our concerns.'' Already this year, Mr. Biden has visited Allentown, as has the president's health and human services secretary, Xavier Becerra.

The right surrogates, properly deployed, will be critical. Local talent will be the backbone. ''It's really important to tell your story through the people who live in the community,'' says Mr. Shapiro. But superstars could have their place as well. ''If I were in charge of the campaign, I would take Bill Clinton and send him to every small county in the state,'' says Mr. Rendell. ''And I'd have Barack Obama hit the major cities.'' Many people expect Mr. Shapiro, who enjoys enviable approval numbers, to be Mr. Biden's most effective surrogate. ''He is the most popular Democrat in the state,'' says Mr. Rendell. ''Use him!''

The campaign's messengers, of course, need a message that resonates. In terms of policy, Pennsylvanians put the economy at the top of their list of concerns, as is the case nationwide. (No surprise that this is the theme of Mr. Biden's visit this week.) Indeed, many of the issues that trouble people here are what you hear all over. Gun violence is a worry in Philadelphia. Young voters are outraged over the war in Gaza. The opioid crisis has hit hard. Democracy is being threatened. Women's reproductive rights are under attack.

The state has its particularities as well, including the sticky issue of fracking. Many Democrats hate the process because of its environmental costs. But in Pennsylvania, fracking took ''a lot of people who were going to live and die poor,'' made their land valuable and erased their ''financial worries,'' notes Mr. Rendell.

Tensions over energy development here are one reason the party has lost ground in the southwestern part of the state, says Berwood Yost, who heads the Center for Opinion Research at Franklin & Marshall College. At a rally in the Lehigh Valley last Saturday, Mr. Trump gleefully painted the president as an enemy of Pennsylvania's energy sector. Mr. Biden needs to approach the issue with extreme care, says Mr. Rendell. Mr. Yost observes that Mr. Shapiro, who has been handling a similar balancing act successfully so far, could ''offer ideas.''

The president's heaviest lift may be combating the general bad vibes afoot in the land. ''We're at a point with polarization and politics where policy matters less than emotion,'' says Mr. Yost. Moreover, while hawking specific achievements is all well and good, he says, ''you have to have some kind of a vision.''

The vision thing is a tough one. For his part, Mr. Shapiro frames this election as a story about freedom: the freedom of women to control their bodies, the freedom to love who you want, the freedom to be who you are and so on. Ms. Scanlon sees it as ''an election about choice -- and not just on reproductive rights.'' Mr. Biden will need to find his own narrative for his candidacy, then work like hell to push it out. But even with a great story, it is hard to argue people out of their feelings.

Still, as the race heats up and people tune in, Democrats are betting they will benefit, as they have since 2018, from the chaos that clings to Mr. Biden's opponent. ''There's an old saying in politics: 'The greatest motivator is hate not love,''' says Mr. Rendell. ''And Trump is giving a lot of people reasons to hate, and fear, him.''

Democrats have their fingers crossed that this will prove the defining piece of the puzzle.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/18/opinion/joe-biden-pennsylvania.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/18/opinion/joe-biden-pennsylvania.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Above left, Philadelphia's nearby collar counties once leaned red but have shifted blue in recent years thanks in part to suburban women turning against Mr. Trump. Stella Sexton, near left, a local Democratic leader in Pennsylvania, canvasses in her area. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAMON WINTER/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A18.

**Load-Date:** April 20, 2024

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[***When Did New York’s Streets Get So Hollow?; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B8R-3071-JBG3-600M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 7, 2024 Wednesday 20:21 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1365 words

**Byline:** Cara Eckholm

**Highlight:** The city is rewriting its antiquated zoning code. We should seize the chance to create a metropolis of opportunity that evolves with the times.

**Body**

Over the past decade, there has been much hand-wringing about New York’s [*puzzling empty storefront*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/09/06/nyregion/nyc-storefront-vacancy.html) problem, with vacancy rates sitting north of [*15 percent*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/09/06/nyregion/nyc-storefront-vacancy.html) last fall in some of the city’s most celebrated areas. How did streets, from the East to the West Village, once home to the urbanist Jane Jacobs, a champion of the city’s neighborhoods, become so hollow?

Rent escalation and the shift to e-commerce are, of course, obvious culprits. But behind the scenes, an important, largely overlooked factor is New York City’s zoning code, enacted in 1961. Written in the face of [*fears of overcrowding*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/09/06/nyregion/nyc-storefront-vacancy.html), the code incorporated the postwar planning ideology that New Yorkers would live in tranquil residential neighborhoods and commute by car to office jobs in Midtown or to factory jobs on the city’s periphery. The code also reflected an anachronistic, and at times elitist, view that limited where and how small businesses could operate. Businesses that might disrupt the peace were, in effect, banned in much of the city, to protect the “nicer” neighborhoods where wealthier New Yorkers were meant to reside.

Today, over half a century later, the Department of City Planning is finally trying to overhaul the 1961 code and revive much of the mixed-use character and serendipitous storefront activity that gives New York its soul. The plan — known [*as City of Yes for Economic Opportunity*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/09/06/nyregion/nyc-storefront-vacancy.html) — is part of a [*trio of initiatives*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/09/06/nyregion/nyc-storefront-vacancy.html) from the Adams administration, aimed at bolstering business activity, building more housing and navigating the city toward carbon neutrality.

The effort is a seemingly obvious step in New York’s transformation into what the urbanists Edward L. Glaeser and Carlo Ratti call [*the Playground City*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/09/06/nyregion/nyc-storefront-vacancy.html), in which neighborhoods “tie life, labor and leisure together.” The plan includes proposals for 18 common-sense zoning amendments, informed by feedback from organizations and owners of small businesses, some of whom testified in its [*favor at a recent public hearing.*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/09/06/nyregion/nyc-storefront-vacancy.html) (Comments [*can be submitted*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/09/06/nyregion/nyc-storefront-vacancy.html) to the City Planning Commission through Feb. 15.)

But change is scary, and City of Yes for Economic Opportunity, which is set for a vote by the City Council this spring, has divided the city’s 59 residential community boards. So far, 20 have voted in favor of the plan and 24 against. Opposition extends from [*Bay Ridge*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/09/06/nyregion/nyc-storefront-vacancy.html), to [*Whitestone*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/09/06/nyregion/nyc-storefront-vacancy.html), even to Jacobs’s home turf, Greenwich Village. Some opponents fear that the revised zoning might bring more of the “wrong” kinds of businesses to their bucolic neighborhoods.

Community board hearings have featured worries about escalatory “what if” scenarios around activity that in many cases was, and still would be, illegal under the proposed changes: What if the new store on my corner starts selling under-the-counter marijuana and becomes a hangout for unsavory characters? What if a bar opens next to me and starts hosting Tuesday night dance parties, which break noise codes?

The answer, proponents of the plan say, is better law enforcement rather than blanket prohibitions on where businesses can locate. The current zoning, they argue, penalizes the city’s many hardworking and rule-abiding small-business owners, who are the lifeblood of both New York’s street life and its economy.

To truly understand the contours of today’s debate and what’s proposed, one must first understand the history of New York’s [*mind-numbingly complex zoning code*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/09/06/nyregion/nyc-storefront-vacancy.html).

Much as freeways leveled neighborhoods, the 1961 code flattened streets into three primary types of zones: residential, commercial and manufacturing. Zones were then broken down into numbered subsets, each of which was given a distinct set of permitted businesses.

[*C5 commercial districts*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/09/06/nyregion/nyc-storefront-vacancy.html), for example, like Madison Avenue, were intended for the wealthy; that meant high fashion was permitted, but service businesses, like catering and appliance repair shops, were banned. By contrast, [*C6 commercial districts*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/09/06/nyregion/nyc-storefront-vacancy.html), like the area around Herald Square, were intended for the ***working class*** and permitted a broader range of uses, like billiards and wholesale retail.

A [*whopping 426 uses of space*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/09/06/nyregion/nyc-storefront-vacancy.html) are defined in the zoning, as varied as taxidermy specialists, typewriter repair shops and travel bureaus. All were assigned areas where they could operate. Existing businesses that did not conform with the new list of permitted uses in their locations were grandfathered in. But they were prohibited from making any substantial alterations to their footprint or evolving business operations — like repairing bicycles in a shop that was permitted only to do sales. And if a storefront was vacant for more than two years, the zoning would default to the new permitted uses, potentially precluding a new store from opening in an old one’s place.

In response to blight in the 1970s, the city eventually caved on the compliance question in some residential areas. But these restrictions persist in large sections of New York, applying to, for instance, beloved legacy businesses on and near Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn, [*like Montero Bar, the Long Island Bar and Brooklyn Heights Deli*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/09/06/nyregion/nyc-storefront-vacancy.html), which are considered nonconforming.

“When the pandemic hit, it exposed all the ways in which our zoning is holding businesses back in their ability to respond to change,” Matt Waskiewicz, an architect of City of Yes for Economic Opportunity at the city’s planning department, told me. To this day, in many parts of the city — from the Lower East Side to Bedford-Stuyvesant — there are empty storefronts that cannot be reoccupied under current code.

City of Yes would do away with the two-year vacancy clock altogether and focus on further integrating residential and commercial areas. That has prompted angst from some community board members, who seem to prefer to live in a homogenous suburb.

One of the most contentious amendments would create a process for approving new corner stores in residential neighborhoods, or what I jokingly call the Great Bodega Reform. Bodegas [*kept much of the city humming through the pandemic*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/09/06/nyregion/nyc-storefront-vacancy.html) and are one of New York’s defining [*cultural icons*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/09/06/nyregion/nyc-storefront-vacancy.html). Yet the amendment has found opposition in New York’s outlying neighborhoods, where some residents apparently prefer to remain dependent on cars for their day-to-day purchases.

City of Yes would also modernize permitted business types to reflect how contemporary New Yorkers spend their free time. In commercial zones, the plan would allow so-called maker spaces like microbreweries, 3-D printing shops and pottery studios, which today are relegated to manufacturing areas. It would also permit amusement venues like escape rooms, arcades and other types of immersive entertainment, which the 1960s planners could have never dreamed of.

Particularly fiery opposition surrounds an amendment to permit dancing and comedy in bars and restaurants that are already allowed live music. While [*some community groups*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/09/06/nyregion/nyc-storefront-vacancy.html) have caricatured the plan as inviting “cabarets” to quiet neighborhoods, it is better seen as an attempt to [*recognize 21st-century social norms*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/09/06/nyregion/nyc-storefront-vacancy.html). New Yorkers like to dance, and they like to tell jokes. We should celebrate their creativity, not silence them through arcane zoning laws.

In 1961, planners tried to force residents into lifestyles and patterns they thought appropriate for their station and that era. Rather than a city that lives in fear of what-ifs, New York should be a city of possibility that evolves with the times. It’s 2024. Let’s not let midcentury thinking kill our vibe.

[*Cara Eckholm*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/09/06/nyregion/nyc-storefront-vacancy.html) is a fellow at [*Cornell Tech’s Jacobs Urban Tech Hub*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/09/06/nyregion/nyc-storefront-vacancy.html). She is a native New Yorker originally from Greenwich Village. In 2022, she served on the [*“New” New York Panel*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/09/06/nyregion/nyc-storefront-vacancy.html), created by the city and New York State to revitalize New York’s central business districts after the Covid-19 pandemic. She lives in Brooklyn.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/09/06/nyregion/nyc-storefront-vacancy.html) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/09/06/nyregion/nyc-storefront-vacancy.html). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/09/06/nyregion/nyc-storefront-vacancy.html).

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PHOTO: St. Marks Place and Second Avenue, the East Village, 1969. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CARL GOSSETT JR./THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A24.

**Load-Date:** March 30, 2024

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[***Small-Time Soccer Team Draws Crowd With Its Activism***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BG2-W1Y1-DXY4-X487-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 3, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 16

**Length:** 1433 words

**Byline:** By Rory Smith

**Body**

The Dublin club Bohemians has made support for social causes a crucial part of its identity. Critics say the hipsters have taken over, but the approach has attracted fans around the world.

In the back room of the threadbare offices of the Irish soccer team Bohemians, the printer clunks and chugs and whirs incessantly, spitting out a cascade of shipping labels. Some of the addresses bear the names of nearby Dublin streets. Others are from farther afield: across Ireland, across the Irish Sea, across the Atlantic.

Each label will be affixed to a package containing a Bohemians jersey. And these days, the club sells a lot of jerseys.

The appeal is not rooted in any of the traditional drivers of soccer's merchandise market: success, glamour, a beloved star player. Daniel Lambert, the club's chief operating officer, loves both Bohemians and the League of Ireland, the competition in which it plays, but he is under no illusions about the reality of either. ''We're a small team in a poor league,'' he said.

Instead, fans are drawn to Bohemians by the jerseys themselves; or, rather, what the jerseys say, both about the team and the customer.

Some recent editions have drawn on the cultural iconography of Dublin: the Poolbeg cooling towers; the pattern from the city's bus seats; the face of Phil Lynott, former frontman of the band Thin Lizzy. Others send a more explicit message: One of this season's efforts has been designed in the colors of the Palestinian flag. A couple of years ago, another bore the slogan ''Refugees Welcome.''

In a studiously apolitical sport, where most teams avoid staking out positions except on the safest of ground -- and at a time when Ireland is trying to douse the sparks of a flickering culture war -- that makes Bohemians an enthusiastic, unabashed outlier: a rare example of a soccer club willing to wear its values on its sleeve, its torso and any other surface it can find.

At Dalymount Park, Bohemians' tumbledown home, the corner flags bear the rainbow colors of the Pride movement. Fans walk the concourses in scarves bearing both the club crest and the Palestinian colors. Corrugated iron walls are decorated with images of Che Guevara and the Venezuelan flag.

Behind one section, home to the most boisterous of the club's supporters, a fist rises against a red-and-black background. ''Love football, hate racism,'' it reads.

It has been placed there quite deliberately. Bohemians might lean, unapologetically, to the left, but the club has been more than willing to harness distinctly capitalist marketing strategies to amplify its reach. ''The politics are absolutely sincere,'' Dion Fanning, a writer, author and co-host of the podcast Free State, said. ''But the way they do it is very clever.''

Much of that can be attributed to Mr. Lambert's background in music. He thinks, essentially and habitually, like a promoter. ''It's in that section that younger fans are taking selfies and uploading them to Instagram,'' Mr. Lambert said. ''This way they have that message in there, too.''

It is hard to argue that the approach is not working. Bohemians' appeal now stretches far beyond its traditional base in the north Dublin suburb of Phibsborough. It has captured the hearts and minds of a congregation of fans across the world, diffused by geography but united -- in Mr. Lambert's eyes -- by common priorities.

Bohemians attracts fans, he said, who are ''socially conscious, concerned about what has happened to the game, uncomfortable with state actors being in charge of these precious things that belong to the ***working class***.''

There are enough of them that Bohemians now stands as a remarkable commercial success story. A little more than a decade ago, the club stood on the verge of a first-ever relegation from the top tier of Irish soccer and the brink of financial oblivion. Now, it is a picture of health. In 2015, the club had only 530 members. That figure now stands at 3,000. ''With a waiting list,'' Mr. Lambert noted.

There are 10 teams in the League of Ireland, yet Bohemians accounts for a quarter of the league's commercial revenue. The club's merchandise sales alone have soared by 2,000 percent in a decade. The orders for jerseys that pour in every day are not just for the newest versions, either; old editions continue to sell well, something Mr. Lambert attributes to the fact that they are not ephemeral fashion items. ''They tell a story,'' he said.

That story, and the club's rise alongside it, has not always been universally popular. Mr. Lambert conceded that some Bohemians fans may have been put off by the club's activism -- on subjects as diverse as gay marriage, climate justice and the ending of what he terms Ireland's ''inhumane'' handling of asylum seekers -- and he has long detected a low-grade grumbling among supporters of rival teams.

It is, after all, fair to say that very few soccer teams have an in-house poet, or host halftime raves, or employ four members of staff devoted to establishing a climate strategy. ''We've heard it all: the hipster club, a load of gimmicks,'' Mr. Lambert said. ''You do hear people say: 'Why can't Bohs just be normal?'''

The answer to that, Mr. Lambert said, is simple. Bohemians does not see the positions it takes as inherently political. To the club, they are humanitarian issues, the natural values of a team owned not by a private investor but by its fans. And expressing them, he and others said, is more pressing than ever, as Ireland's incipient far right grows in both strength and volume.

''There is something at stake now,'' said Mr. Fanning, the podcast host. ''A few years ago, when Bohemians started doing this, you would have said Ireland would never have a far right. Now, it is still several levels below a subculture, but it is there, and it will get bigger.''

That, Mr. Lambert said, is what makes the decision to bind the club to its beliefs even more important. ''The purpose of a club is to be a force for good,'' he said. ''I think people are quite often desensitized to a lot of these issues. You can use sport to bring them to people's attention, to engage with them, to put pressure on governments to address them. Sport has an obligation to do that.''

As much as Bohemians' activism is rooted in its beliefs, though, it has also been good for business. Crowds across the League of Ireland have grown in recent years -- the precise cause of that phenomenon is hotly debated -- but tickets for Bohemians games are now particularly precious possessions.

Mary Nolan, who has been attending games with her father since she was a child, said, ''You see more women, more kids, more families.''

''There's still a few old men who moan that none of the newcomers know anything about football, but it's generally a very welcoming space now,'' she added. ''Far more people have been drawn in than put off by the politics.''

And even those fans who might not naturally be inclined to see a soccer team as the correct vehicle for social justice have little reason to complain. There is no wealthy private benefactor to write the checks. There is no generous television deal. Transfer fees for selling player to larger leagues are unreliable and often measly.

The club's messaging, and its willingness to take stands, puts Bohemians in a ''far stronger position,'' as Mr. Lambert put it. It helps to finance all the work the club does off the field, and helps to pay for the team that plays on it.

''My dad is naturally very liberal,'' Ms. Nolan said. ''He knows these causes matter. But he also understands, at the very least, that they help to sell a lot of jerseys.''

As long as that continues, there seems to be no reason for anyone to object. ''When I was a kid and a young man there was no contradiction between loving books and loving football,'' Roddy Doyle, the novelist and a lifelong Bohemians fan, wrote in an email. ''They were all cultural choices we made, our badges of identity.''

He added: ''Bohemians come close to delivering that blend that has always been my idea of culture: a stadium in an area that crackles with history and is also a magnet for newness; a team that wears jerseys that feature Dublin musicians and have 'Refugees Welcome' printed across their chests; fans who sing a song composed by Brendan Behan just before kickoff. Supporting Bohemians is a stew. But the football is vital.''

For all the causes, the activism, the growth and the commercial success, Mr. Doyle wrote, the best part of being a Bohemians fan to him is the same as it has always been: ''Being in the crowd when they score.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/02/world/europe/ireland-bohemians-soccer-dublin.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/02/world/europe/ireland-bohemians-soccer-dublin.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Bohemian F.C., above left, has made its values and Dublin iconography part of its identity. Social causes exist with cheers in its stadium, top. An image of Phil Lynott, the former frontman of the band Thin Lizzy, above right, was featured on a recent team jersey. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAULO NUNES DOS SANTOS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A16.

**Load-Date:** March 3, 2024

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[***She Reigns as the Queen of Quirk***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BG2-W1Y1-DXY4-X491-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 3, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section AR; Column 0; Arts and Leisure Desk; Pg. 13

**Length:** 1444 words

**Byline:** By Elisabeth Vincentelli

**Body**

This CBS procedural is new, but its star, Carrie Preston, has been playing the central character for almost 14 years.

While filming the new crime show ''Elsbeth'' in an Upper West Side apartment in January, Carrie Preston, playing the title character, tentatively patted the guest star Peter Grosz on the arm. The combination of the gesture and Elsbeth's hesitant expression made the attempt at comfort come across as simultaneously awkward and funny -- and unmistakably true to the consistently awkward, funny Elsbeth.

Robert King, who created the series with his wife, Michelle, and was directing that particular episode, chuckled in delight as he watched on a monitor. Nearby the showrunner, Jonathan Tolins, said, ''She always finds things like that,'' referring to Preston's flourish. ''That was probably not in the script.''

Premiering Thursday on CBS, ''Elsbeth'' is a new project but Elsbeth herself is not. One reason Preston inhabits her fully enough to improvise such small, telling gestures is because she has been playing her for almost 14 years.

Fans of legal dramas have long been acquainted with Elsbeth Tascioni, a seemingly scatterbrained but diabolically effective redheaded lawyer who popped up toward the end of the first season of ''The Good Wife'' in May 2010. From the start, the Kings, who also created that hit show, thought of Elsbeth as an answer to Columbo, the Los Angeles homicide detective that Peter Falk played in a series, then specials, between 1968 and 2003.

''I didn't really watch 'Columbo' -- it was a little before my time,'' said Preston, 56. But ''I knew he was a little unorthodox in the way he did things. I was like, 'OK, I get it: They want people to not see her coming.'''

The Kings kept bringing Elsbeth back for guest stints on both ''The Good Wife'' and its first spinoff, ''The Good Fight.'' Despite her relatively limited screen time, she became a fan favorite, and Preston landed two Emmy nominations and one win, in 2013, for playing her.

The character was a little more subdued in her early appearances than she is now, but she became ever more madcap. ''I guess they liked what I did with it and began responding to my playing of the role over time,'' Preston said, referring to the Kings.

''I think they started to bring me on to add a comic note to the proceedings,'' she added. ''And it evolved from there.''

Nobody could quite let go of Elsbeth, and Preston recalls that the Kings first mentioned possibly building a show around the character when ''The Good Wife'' was winding down. They went on to make ''The Good Fight'' instead, led by Christine Baranski as the powerhouse attorney Diane Lockhart. Then during the Covid-19 pandemic, the couple found themselves bingeing episodes of ''Columbo,'' and Elsbeth was once again back on their minds, promising tantalizing narrative avenues.

''Peter Falk's character is almost perfect, but if you think of him as a woman it creates a new, interesting dynamic,'' Robert King said in a joint video interview with his wife. ''Especially post-#MeToo, without putting our hand on the politics.''

''With Columbo it was all class -- he got overlooked because he was a ***working-class*** guy,'' Michelle added. ''With Elsbeth Tascioni, you layer gender on top of that.''

While the previous two shows were set in Chicago, ''Elsbeth'' takes place in New York. (The pilot does include a mention of the ''Good Wife'' stalwart Cary Agos.) The heroine has been dispatched to New York to be an outside observer at a police precinct headed by Captain Wagner (Wendell Pierce), where she ends up helping solve criminal cases.

Watching Preston and Pierce go through scenes on the show's soundstage in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, where the precinct scenes are shot, the fraught relationship between the two characters was evident from their appearance and body language. She flitted around in a bright blouse, a colorful hummingbird darting quizzical looks every which way; he was a solid mass of a man in his dark-blue uniform, letting her eccentricity bounce off him.

''There's something happening with us,'' Pierce said of the budding chemistry between the two characters in a video interview. ''Dare I say it? It reminds me of Lou Grant and Mary,'' he continued, alluding to the characters played by Ed Asner and Mary Tyler Moore on ''The Mary Tyler Moore Show'' in the 1970s. ''That's a bold statement, but it really does.''

That analogy is especially apropos because when Lou Grant was spun off from Moore's sitcom into his own self-titled series, it was a drama. Elsbeth, too, has changed formats, going from two legal dramas to a lighthearted procedural.

''I would say this is a comedy,'' Preston said. ''It's an hourlong show on network, but it's a comedy.''

Elsbeth is the latest in a line of unconventional TV puzzle-solvers, following the prickly heroes of ''Monk,'' ''House'' and, of course, most anything that borrows from ''Sherlock Holmes.'' But as its creators suggest, it is ''Columbo'' that the new series most openly honors.

Both shows are ''howdunits'' in which we know the culprit's identity from the beginning. Elsbeth's antagonists also are affluent and powerful, or at least power-hungry. In the first season, she is thrown into rarefied micro-worlds that include reality television, luxe co-op boards, elite matchmaking and high-level tennis. Naturally, their denizens run on hubris and look down on the ebullient Elsbeth as a naïve Midwestern bumpkin. Each episode involves verbal cat-and-mouse games between her and a murderers' row of, well, murderers. (Guest stars in the first season include Jesse Tyler Ferguson, Jane Krakowski, Retta and Blair Underwood.)

Even those supposedly on Elsbeth's side make the mistake of misreading her. As the cast ran through a scene on set, Gloria Reuben swanned in as Wagner's wife, telling Elsbeth ''Aren't you a slice of heaven?'' with a buttery undertone of condescension.

''I think all our shows have played with the idea of being underestimated, having characters who use their quirkiness and folksiness and their silliness to hide the fact that they're really cunning,'' Robert King said.

As Preston noted, being misjudged only helps Elsbeth win cases and, now, solve crimes. ''She will cut you with a razor blade and you won't know you're bleeding until she walks away,'' she said.

One of the reasons Elsbeth fascinates viewers is that it is unclear whether her sunny demeanor and free-associating non sequiturs stem from her unfiltered nature or are part of a strategy to ensnare her opponents. The show addresses this ambiguity in the pilot, in which the killer is an acting teacher (played by Preston's ''True Blood'' co-star Stephen Moyer). He may be an overly confident, smarmy lech, but he is also good at his job, and at one point he tells Elsbeth, ''You're doing some very fine acting right now.''

Not even Elsbeth's creators fully agree on her motivations, at least publicly. Michelle King said ''the character is actually totally sincere. She's not putting on an act.'' But Preston was more equivocal.

''I don't ever want the audience to know, because I think it's more surprising and interesting,'' she said. ''Maybe she doesn't even know sometimes when she's manipulating.''

These divergences are par for the course for a character who remains largely opaque despite her many appearances over the years. Of her personal life, we only know that she has an ex-husband and a son. When asked if either would pop up in ''Elsbeth,'' Tolins was evasive.

''Possibly, possibly,'' he said. ''You'll have to watch."

''Elsbeth has always been a side dish, and it's a delicate thing to move a side dish to the center of the plate,'' he added. ''So we are finding lots of cool ways to hint at unexpected layers to this character and of this woman's life.''

What will definitely remain front and center is Elsbeth's idiosyncratic charm, kindness and ''childlike enthusiasm,'' Tolins said. ''Throwing that kind of character in the world of a police procedural, it's a fun tension, but also you root for her and you care about her.''

In other words, ''Elsbeth'' is a departure from the usually gritty world of modern police shows, and the woman herself is a counter to the dour parade of troubled cops with predictable dark sides instructing us about the poor state of the world.

''When I turn on TV, I'm aware that certain shows feel like vegetables, like 'OK, this is meant to be good for me in the long run but that doesn't really appeal,''' Michelle King said, as her husband let out a laugh. ''This show is dessert. It is meant to be fun and entertaining and comic, and just enjoyable.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/28/arts/television/in-elsbeth-a-quirky-side-character-becomes-a-quirky-lead.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/28/arts/television/in-elsbeth-a-quirky-side-character-becomes-a-quirky-lead.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Top, Carrie Preston on the set of ''Elsbeth.'' Center, Preston in ''Elsbeth'' with Wendell Pierce. Above, Preston (as Elsbeth) and Julianna Margulies in Season 1 of ''The Good Wife.'' (PHOTOGRAPHS BY EVELYN FREJA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

ELIZABETH FISHER/CBS

DAVID M. RUSSELL/CBS) This article appeared in print on page AR13.

**Load-Date:** March 3, 2024

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[***Minor League Baseball Faces a Real Estate Problem***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BRH-P291-DXY4-X064-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 7, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BU; Column 0; Money and Business/Financial Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1994 words

**Byline:** By Mary Pilon

**Body**

Ed Willson has a jar filled with dirt sitting on his desk.

For more than 40 years, Mr. Willson has been a fan of the minor league baseball team in Eugene, Ore., the Emeralds, and a season-ticket holder for 22 seasons. He was crushed when Civic Stadium, the longtime home of the team, burned to the ground in 2015. ''It was a serious heartbreak,'' Mr. Willson said.

After the fire, Mr. Willson made a pilgrimage to the scorched diamond, where he filled a plastic bag with dirt from the pitcher's mound that he considered sacred. He planned to give it to the team when it began construction on its new stadium.

Nine years later, the dirt is still on Mr. Willson's desk. The Emeralds are still without a permanent home. And there's a risk that the team, after 69 seasons, may leave town altogether.

Although the Emeralds (also known for their Sasquatch mascot, Sluggo) have survived wildfires, losing seasons, recessions, Major League Baseball's 2020 reorganization of the minor leagues and Covid, they are a team without a ballpark.

And the debate about the Emeralds' fate -- in the birthplace of Nike, no less -- is a testament to the struggle for affordable, in-person sports to survive in the current Gilded Age.

Nor are the Emeralds the only minor league baseball team that has reached a crisis point as a result of a ballpark problem. In 2020, Major League Baseball imposed new guidelines for its minor league stadiums. They include LED lighting, changing rooms for women, new fencing, expanded training facilities and a larger clubhouse. Those fixes are pricey.

In California, the Visalia Rawhide are fighting for stadium improvement funds, an earshot away from a childhood home of the Hollywood baseball star Kevin Costner. (If you build it, they will come?) Up north on Interstate 5 in Oregon, the Hillsboro Hops find themselves in a similar predicament as the Emeralds, and are also lobbying lawmakers for funding for a new park, as are the Everett AquaSox in Washington. Even North Carolina's Durham Bulls, of ''Bull Durham'' fame, were gobsmacked by their renovation price tag and reached out for $9.1 million in city funding. The Lancaster JetHawks in California shut down in 2021 in part because of the city's lack of interest in maintaining the team's ballpark.

''I hate to think about the team leaving,'' Mr. Willson said of the Emeralds. ''It would be one more resource that the community has lost.''

In recent years, the Emeralds have played their games at PK Park, the University of Oregon's baseball stadium, and fans have consistently filled the newer, less wood-splintered stands. Before 2020, when the team had a shorter, 76-game season (half of them at home), it averaged more than 20 sellouts of more than 3,600 tickets. In a restricted return during Covid in 2021, the team sold 84,000 tickets, the first time it had dipped below 100,000 in generations. Last year, in 58 games at PK Park, the team sold 150,000 tickets, roughly the population of Eugene.

In their temporary home, the Emeralds, a San Francisco Giants affiliate, ended their 2021 season in first place after being promoted to the high-A class, the third-highest level in the minors (below triple-A and double-A but above single-A), and have had their league's best record in two of the last three seasons. Casey Schmitt, an infielder who made his major league debut with the Giants last year, was an Emerald in 2022.

But the team's PK Park lease ends in 2030, and the league has also imposed fund-raising deadlines that the Emeralds are not meeting. The team is more than $50 million short of the estimated $90 million it will take to build a permanent home.

''We really love the Ems,'' Eugene's mayor, Lucy Vinis, said. ''We'd love to keep them. We also don't have the money. It's a very painful conflict.''

Cheap, Fan-Focused and Quirky

Students at the University of Oregon come and go, but Emeralds games, cheap, scrappy and often rowdy, are for locals. There are rumors that the Emeralds, founded in 1955, inspired the Springfield Isotopes, the team in Oregon-bred Matt Groening's ''The Simpsons.'' (A lawyer for Mr. Groening declined to comment, citing Mr. Groening's schedule.) The Hall of Famers Mike Schmidt and Jim Bunning spent time in the Emeralds' dugout -- Mr. Bunning as their manager -- and another Hall of Famer, Reggie Jackson, played in Eugene as an opponent.

Much has changed in Eugene since then. Nike became Nike. Its co-founder and chairman emeritus, Phil Knight, has funneled hundreds of millions of dollars into the construction of world-class sporting facilities in town for the University of Oregon Ducks.

Meanwhile, in the tradition of minor league clubs everywhere, the Emeralds stayed proudly cheap, fan-focused and quirky. The team hosts a themed Grateful Dead night, when tie-dye is encouraged. The Emeralds were early to embrace Pride colors on their jerseys and play several games each season as the Monarcas, a tribute to Latin American players and fans.

In an effort to appeal to a coastal Oregon town, Florence, in 2023 the team announced an ''alternate identity'' as the Exploding Whales, a nod to the 1970 dynamite-fueled removal of a dead whale on the rugged shore. That event lives on thanks to viral interest on the internet, and the team sold out of Exploding Whales merchandise within 90 seconds of its debut.)

Minor league teams are quiet warriors against the rising expense of watching sports in person. The average price of a National Football League ticket last season was $377, according to TicketSmarter, plus parking and concessions, Multiply that by four and a family outing can easily slide into four figures.

Baseball's major league teams have tried to maintain more affordable ticket prices, offering nosebleeds at some venues for as low as $6. But still, in 2023, the average cost for a family of four to attend a major league game, including parking and concessions, was $266.58, up 4.5 percent from the previous year, according to the MLB Fan Cost Index. (For the Boston Red Sox or New York Yankees, that number can soar near $400.)

That makes minor league games, where box seats can be had for $10 and a hot dog still costs a few bucks, a haven for the ***working class*** and families with young children. (Yet some fans still bristle at the increasing costs of minor league ball in larger markets, such as a $25 ticket to see the Cyclones in Brooklyn.)

The bargain economics also applied to the players. Perhaps too much. Minor leaguers won major victories last year in terms of pay, health insurance, and name, image and likeness rights. Still, Mr. Schmitt remembered that during his 2022 stint with the Ems, players used a tent for a locker room at PK Park and he had to find a gym in town where he could do his weight training.

''It was a little tough at first,'' Mr. Schmitt said.

The ghost stories of lost teams and empty ballparks are all too real for the Emeralds' general manager, Allan Benavides.

''There's kind of this sense in the city that we've always been here,'' he said. ''They're never going to go anywhere, right? There are some folks I talk to in town who just think it's like crying wolf. Or: 'Come on, if you don't get it, what are they going to do? Move you?' And the answer is, 'Yeah.'''

Searching for Funds

The proposed stadium has no greater advocate than Mr. Benavides, going into his 15th season as the Emeralds' general manager.

A Los Angeles-bred Dodgers fan (who now roots for the Giants, much to his mother's dismay), he has spent years lobbying lawmakers, petitioning fans and writing opinion essays about the team's ''existential crisis.''

Advocates for the team announced a proposal that would build a stadium at the Lane County Fairgrounds, seating 4,350 for baseball and up to 10,000 for concerts. The price tag: $90 million. In addition to baseball games and concerts, the stadium would host youth sports, mixed martial arts and boxing events, and high school graduations, as well as have potential for disaster relief, Mr. Benavides said.

He talks through his funding map like the coaching staff running through the roster and players' statistics. As of now, the Emeralds are counting on $35 million from a county lodging tax. County commissioners need to give final clearance for revenue from the hotel tax, which was passed in 2022, to go toward the stadium. The team also needs $15 million from a city bond issue, which voters will decide on May 21.

Thanks in part to an appearance by Sluggo at the statehouse in Salem, the Emeralds have received $15 million from a state appropriation. They also have $1.5 million in federal funds and $23.5 million committed by the Emeralds organization in their coffers.

So, $50 million of it is in flux.

To make his case, Mr. Benavides points to a 2023 analysis from ECOnorthwest, a public policy firm, that estimated the stadium's construction would stimulate $127.8 million in economic output and $47.9 million in labor income.

In minor league baseball, the parent club (the Giants) pays for players but typically does not finance ballparks, which are generally owned and operated independently of their parent teams. It's a dynamic that can leave a privately or taxpayer-funded stadium in the lurch.

The Emeralds' owner, the Elmore Sports Group, a Bloomington, Ind., conglomerate of several minor league teams, would not own the stadium; Lane County would. Thus, Elmore Sports holds the option to move the team.

''As owners, we see ourselves as the caretakers, stewards of the teams,'' said D.G. Elmore, the group's chairman, whose father, Dave, bought the team in the mid-1980s and died last year. ''We don't see it, the possibility of moving teams. I desperately hope we don't have to do it.''

Red Tape at the Fairgrounds

The fairgrounds complex, where the proposed stadium would be erected, sits in the Jefferson Westside part of Eugene, walking distance from downtown, which has struggled with a recent increase in homelessness and drug use.

The neighborhood surrounding the site is filled with lawn signs for and against the stadium. ''No! Stadium at the fairgrounds'' may live next door to an image of Sluggo's outstretched green, fuzzy arms and ''Play ball at the fairgrounds!''

The board of the Jefferson Westside Neighbors, the area that encompasses the fairgrounds and surrounding residences, voted in favor of the stadium.

''I'm not sporty, and I don't follow baseball,'' Ted Coopman, the board's chair, said. The fairgrounds have a large indoor space used for a Holiday Market and conferences year round, wide parking lots where carnival rides bloom in the summer, and barns for livestock vying for blue ribbons, ''but their dairy barns are from the turn of the century and not the most recent one,'' Mr. Coopman added. ''It really needs some help, and it seems like a good way to modernize it and bring more people into the neighborhood.''

Chief among the critics is Taxpayers for Transparency, a group of stadium opponents largely led by the city's hoteliers. They argue that the public shouldn't pay for the stadium and that Elmore Sports, a for-profit, out-of-state entity, should not occupy land owned by the county. They have also raised concern about the long-term costs and the lack of guarantees that a new ballpark would keep the Emeralds in town.

As a season of red tape looms, Mr. Benavides will be strategizing in the front office. While he dreams of Shohei Ohtani's sneezing up some of his $700 million contract with the Dodgers, he's not relying on it.

He needs the city bonds to pass on May 21, the lodging tax revenue and then the county commissioners' approval on everything.

As for Mr. Willson, the Ems superfan, he'll continue to lobby his lawmakers, with his jar of pitcher's mound dirt looking back at him.

''It's starting to feel like we need a miracle to get the funding,'' he said. ''Fortunately, this is baseball. So miracles happen all the time. I'm hopeful.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/06/business/minor-league-baseball-real-estate.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/06/business/minor-league-baseball-real-estate.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Top, Tanner O'Tremba during a Eugene Emeralds' practice this month. Above, from left: Allan Benavides, the team's general manager

the University of Oregon's PK Park, which the team uses because a fire destroyed its stadium

and the players try to focus on moving up to the next level. Far left, the team's PK Park lease ends in 2030. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY CELESTE NOCHE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (BU4) This article appeared in print on page BU1, BU4.

**Load-Date:** April 7, 2024

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[***Can Minor League Baseball Survive Its Real Estate Problems?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BRH-5741-JBG3-600D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 7, 2024 Sunday 12:35 EST

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**Section:** BUSINESS

**Length:** 2046 words

**Byline:** Mary Pilon

**Highlight:** The fight over a new stadium for the Eugene Emeralds highlights a wider challenge for cheaper alternatives to big-league live sports.

**Body**

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For more than 40 years, Mr. Willson has been a fan of the minor league baseball team in Eugene, Ore., the Emeralds, and a season-ticket holder for 22 seasons. He was crushed when Civic Stadium, the longtime home of the team, burned [*to the ground in 2015*](https://www.vice.com/en/article/pg5nkz/remembering-eugene-oregons-civic-stadium). “It was a serious heartbreak,” Mr. Willson said.

After the fire, Mr. Willson made a pilgrimage to the scorched diamond, where he filled a plastic bag with dirt from the pitcher’s mound that he considered sacred. He planned to give it to the team when it began construction on its new stadium.

Nine years later, the dirt is still on Mr. Willson’s desk. The Emeralds are still without a permanent home. And there’s a risk that the team, after 69 seasons, may leave town altogether.

Although the Emeralds (also known for their Sasquatch mascot, Sluggo) have survived wildfires, losing seasons, recessions, Major League Baseball’s 2020 reorganization of the minor leagues and Covid, they are a team without a ballpark.

And the debate about the Emeralds’ fate — in the birthplace of Nike, no less — is a testament to the struggle for affordable, in-person sports to survive in the current Gilded Age.

Nor are the Emeralds the only minor league baseball team that has reached a crisis point as a result of a ballpark problem. In 2020, Major League Baseball imposed new guidelines for its minor league stadiums. They include LED lighting, changing rooms for women, new fencing, expanded training facilities and a larger clubhouse. Those fixes are pricey.

In California, the [*Visalia Rawhide*](https://www.vice.com/en/article/pg5nkz/remembering-eugene-oregons-civic-stadium) are fighting for stadium improvement funds, an earshot away from a childhood home of the Hollywood baseball star Kevin Costner. (If you build it, they will come?) Up north on Interstate 5 in Oregon, the Hillsboro Hops find themselves in a similar predicament as the Emeralds, and are also [*lobbying lawmakers for funding for a new park*](https://www.vice.com/en/article/pg5nkz/remembering-eugene-oregons-civic-stadium), as are the [*Everett AquaSox in Washington*](https://www.vice.com/en/article/pg5nkz/remembering-eugene-oregons-civic-stadium). Even North Carolina’s [*Durham Bulls, of “Bull Durham” fame*](https://www.vice.com/en/article/pg5nkz/remembering-eugene-oregons-civic-stadium), were gobsmacked by their renovation price tag and reached out for $9.1 million in city funding. The Lancaster JetHawks in California shut down in 2021 in part because of [*the city’s lack of interest in maintaining the team’s ballpark*](https://www.vice.com/en/article/pg5nkz/remembering-eugene-oregons-civic-stadium).

“I hate to think about the team leaving,” Mr. Willson said of the Emeralds. “It would be one more resource that the community has lost.”

In recent years, the Emeralds have played their games at PK Park, the University of Oregon’s baseball stadium, and fans have consistently filled the newer, less wood-splintered stands. Before 2020, when the team had a shorter, 76-game season (half of them at home), it averaged more than 20 sellouts of more than 3,600 tickets. In a restricted return during Covid in 2021, the team sold 84,000 tickets, the first time it had dipped below 100,000 in generations. Last year, in 58 games at PK Park, the team sold 150,000 tickets, roughly the population of Eugene.

In their temporary home, the Emeralds, a San Francisco Giants affiliate, ended their 2021 season in first place after being promoted to the high-A class, the third-highest level in the minors (below triple-A and double-A but above single-A), and have had their league’s best record in two of the last three seasons. Casey Schmitt, an infielder who made his major league debut with the Giants last year, was an Emerald in 2022.

But the team’s PK Park lease ends in 2030, and the league has also imposed fund-raising deadlines that the Emeralds are not meeting. The team is more than $50 million short of the estimated $90 million it will take to build a permanent home.

“We really love the Ems,” Eugene’s mayor, Lucy Vinis, said. “We’d love to keep them. We also don’t have the money. It’s a very painful conflict.”

Cheap, Fan-Focused and Quirky

Students at the University of Oregon come and go, but Emeralds games, cheap, scrappy and often rowdy, are for locals. There are rumors that the Emeralds, founded in 1955, inspired the Springfield Isotopes, the team in Oregon-bred Matt Groening’s “The Simpsons.” (A lawyer for Mr. Groening declined to comment, citing Mr. Groening’s schedule.) The Hall of Famers Mike Schmidt and Jim Bunning spent time in the Emeralds’ dugout — Mr. Bunning as their manager — and another Hall of Famer, Reggie Jackson, played in Eugene as an opponent.

Much has changed in Eugene since then. Nike became Nike. Its co-founder and chairman emeritus, Phil Knight, has funneled hundreds of millions of dollars into the construction of world-class sporting facilities in town for the University of Oregon Ducks.

Meanwhile, in the tradition of minor league clubs everywhere, the Emeralds stayed proudly cheap, fan-focused and quirky. The team hosts a themed Grateful Dead night, when tie-dye is encouraged. The Emeralds were early to embrace Pride colors on their jerseys and play several games each season as the Monarcas, a tribute to Latin American players and fans.

In an effort to appeal to a coastal Oregon town, Florence, in 2023 the team announced an [*“alternate identity” as the Exploding Whales*](https://www.vice.com/en/article/pg5nkz/remembering-eugene-oregons-civic-stadium), a nod to the 1970 dynamite-fueled removal of a dead whale on the rugged shore. That event lives on thanks to viral interest on the internet, and the team sold out of Exploding Whales merchandise within 90 seconds of its debut.)

Minor league teams are quiet warriors against the rising expense of watching sports in person. The [*average price of a National Football League ticket*](https://www.vice.com/en/article/pg5nkz/remembering-eugene-oregons-civic-stadium) last season was $377, according to TicketSmarter, plus parking and concessions, Multiply that by four and a family outing can easily slide into four figures.

Baseball’s major league teams have tried to maintain more affordable ticket prices, offering nosebleeds at some venues for as low as $6. But still, in 2023, the average cost for a family of four to attend a major league game, including parking and concessions, was $266.58, up 4.5 percent from the previous year, [*according to the MLB Fan Cost Index*](https://www.vice.com/en/article/pg5nkz/remembering-eugene-oregons-civic-stadium). (For the Boston Red Sox or New York Yankees, that number can soar near $400.)

That makes minor league games, where box seats can be had for $10 and a hot dog still costs a few bucks, a haven for the ***working class*** and families with young children. (Yet some fans still bristle at the increasing costs of minor league ball in larger markets, such as a $25 ticket to see the Cyclones in Brooklyn.)

The bargain economics also applied to the players. Perhaps too much. Minor leaguers won major victories [*last year*](https://www.vice.com/en/article/pg5nkz/remembering-eugene-oregons-civic-stadium) in terms of pay, health insurance, and name, image and likeness rights. Still, Mr. Schmitt remembered that during his 2022 stint with the Ems, players used a tent for a locker room at PK Park and he had to find a gym in town where he could do his weight training.

“It was a little tough at first,” Mr. Schmitt said.

The ghost stories of lost teams and empty ballparks are all too real for the Emeralds’ general manager, Allan Benavides.

“There’s kind of this sense in the city that we’ve always been here,” he said. “They’re never going to go anywhere, right? There are some folks I talk to in town who just think it’s like crying wolf. Or: ‘Come on, if you don’t get it, what are they going to do? Move you?’ And the answer is, ‘Yeah.’”

Searching for Funds

The proposed stadium has no greater advocate than Mr. Benavides, going into his 15th season as the Emeralds’ general manager.

A Los Angeles-bred Dodgers fan (who now roots for the Giants, much to his mother’s dismay), he has spent years lobbying lawmakers, petitioning fans and writing opinion essays about the team’s [*“existential crisis.”*](https://www.vice.com/en/article/pg5nkz/remembering-eugene-oregons-civic-stadium)

Advocates for the team announced a proposal that would build a stadium at the Lane County Fairgrounds, seating 4,350 for baseball and up to 10,000 for concerts. The price tag: $90 million. In addition to baseball games and concerts, the stadium would host youth sports, mixed martial arts and boxing events, and high school graduations, as well as have potential for disaster relief, Mr. Benavides said.

He talks through his funding map like the coaching staff running through the roster and players’ statistics. As of now, the Emeralds are counting on $35 million [*from a county lodging tax*](https://www.vice.com/en/article/pg5nkz/remembering-eugene-oregons-civic-stadium). County commissioners need to give final clearance for revenue from the hotel tax, which was passed in 2022, to go toward the stadium. The team also needs $15 million from a city bond issue, which voters will decide on May 21.

Thanks in part to an appearance by Sluggo at the statehouse in Salem, the Emeralds have received $15 million from a state appropriation. They also have $1.5 million in federal funds and $23.5 million committed by the Emeralds organization in their coffers.

So, $50 million of it is in flux.

To make his case, Mr. Benavides points to a 2023 analysis from ECOnorthwest, a public policy firm, that estimated the stadium’s construction would stimulate $127.8 million in economic output and $47.9 million in labor income.

In minor league baseball, the parent club (the Giants) pays for players but typically does not finance ballparks, which are generally owned and operated independently of their parent teams. It’s a dynamic that can leave a privately or taxpayer-funded stadium in the lurch.

The Emeralds’ owner, the [*Elmore Sports Group*](https://www.vice.com/en/article/pg5nkz/remembering-eugene-oregons-civic-stadium), a Bloomington, Ind., conglomerate of several minor league teams, would not own the stadium; Lane County would. Thus, Elmore Sports holds the option to move the team.

“As owners, we see ourselves as the caretakers, stewards of the teams,” said D.G. Elmore, the group’s chairman, whose father, Dave, bought the team in the mid-1980s and died last year. “We don’t see it, the possibility of moving teams. I desperately hope we don’t have to do it.”

Red Tape at the Fairgrounds

The fairgrounds complex, where the proposed stadium would be erected, sits in the Jefferson Westside part of Eugene, walking distance from downtown, which has struggled with a recent increase in homelessness and drug use.

The neighborhood surrounding the site is filled with lawn signs for and against the stadium. “No! Stadium at the fairgrounds” may live next door to an image of Sluggo’s outstretched green, fuzzy arms and “Play ball at the fairgrounds!”

The board of the Jefferson Westside Neighbors, the area that encompasses the fairgrounds and surrounding residences, voted in favor of the stadium.

“I’m not sporty, and I don’t follow baseball,” Ted Coopman, the board’s chair, said. The fairgrounds have a large indoor space used for a Holiday Market and conferences year round, wide parking lots where carnival rides bloom in the summer, and barns for livestock vying for blue ribbons, “but their dairy barns are from the turn of the century and not the most recent one,” Mr. Coopman added. “It really needs some help, and it seems like a good way to modernize it and bring more people into the neighborhood.”

Chief among the critics is Taxpayers for Transparency, a group of stadium opponents largely led by the city’s hoteliers. They argue that the public shouldn’t pay for the stadium and that Elmore Sports, a for-profit, out-of-state entity, should not occupy land owned by the county. They have also raised concern about the long-term costs and the lack of guarantees that a new ballpark would keep the Emeralds in town.

As a season of red tape looms, Mr. Benavides will be strategizing in the front office. While he dreams of Shohei Ohtani’s sneezing up some of his $700 million contract with the Dodgers, he’s not relying on it.

He needs the city bonds to pass on May 21, the lodging tax revenue and then the county commissioners’ approval on everything.

As for Mr. Willson, the Ems superfan, he’ll continue to lobby his lawmakers, with his jar of pitcher’s mound dirt looking back at him.

“It’s starting to feel like we need a miracle to get the funding,” he said. “Fortunately, this is baseball. So miracles happen all the time. I’m hopeful.”

PHOTOS: Top, Tanner O’Tremba during a Eugene Emeralds’ practice this month. Above, from left: Allan Benavides, the team’s general manager; the University of Oregon’s PK Park, which the team uses because a fire destroyed its stadium; and the players try to focus on moving up to the next level. Far left, the team’s PK Park lease ends in 2030. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY CELESTE NOCHE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (BU4) This article appeared in print on page BU1, BU4.

**Load-Date:** April 24, 2024

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[***The Killing on the Subway: Outrage, Fear, Empathy; letters***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6881-D1X1-JBG3-630G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 17, 2023 Wednesday 00:41 EST

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**Section:** OPINION; letters

**Length:** 1223 words

**Highlight:** Readers discuss the arrest of Daniel Penny for killing a mentally ill man and their fears about riding on the subway. Also: Democrats as a ***working-class*** party.

**Body**

To the Editor:

Re “[*A Preventable Tragedy on New York’s Subway*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/14/opinion/jordan-neely-killing-subway.html),” by David French (column, May 15):

I like the point Mr. French made that Jordan Neely, while being the “principal victim” on the subway, wasn’t the only one the city failed.

Mr. Neely, like so many others with serious mental health issues, “should not have been in that subway car.” I feel lucky to have escaped from the subway unscathed on several occasions.

A week or so before the Neely incident, I entered an F train and sat down. A man, whom I could smell before I saw him, sat down very close to me and started screaming in a loud voice, raising his hands and threatening people.

I was terrified, got up after a few minutes, and waited by the door until it opened at the next station and I could run out and into the next car. A group of people followed me. We held our breath that he wouldn’t come after us.

We were lucky that time. My concern is that the next time — and there will be a next time — someone starts acting irrationally and threatening people, a fear of being accused of a crime will stop a passenger from trying to subdue the person and possibly save lives.

Linda Lerner

Brooklyn

To the Editor:

David French cites reports from women who have been “groped, flashed, or masturbated at” on the subway. Many other instances of disturbances or crimes inside subway cars have been reported in The Times. It’s nice to see more police officers on the platforms, but where I almost never see a police officer is actually on a subway train, patrolling the cars.

It is precisely in the cars that mentally disturbed people abound, and where it is difficult at any given moment to decide how much of a threat any one of them is to my safety. So let’s get the police on the trains.

Jane O’Shaughnessy

New York

To the Editor:

I am sick of articles suggesting that Daniel Penny had any reason whatsoever to kill Jordan Neely.

Being yelled at is no justification for killing someone. There is such a thing as proportionality.

David French asks, “Should passengers stand by when, say, an angry man [*yanks the hair*](https://twitter.com/realJoelFischer/status/1529522031376613376) of a woman next to him?” Of course not! But we shouldn’t kill him, either! We should do what is necessary to keep the person from harming someone else, call the police and leave it at that.

It appears that Mr. Neely assaulted no one. Meanwhile, the very fact that Mr. Penny was able to kill him shows that he was strong enough to simply subdue him. That was all that was required (if, indeed, anything was).

We have a responsibility to act within reason. Mr. Penny did not do so.

Wesley Clark

Brooklyn

To the Editor:

While I deplore the accidental killing of what was a clearly mentally disturbed man on a subway train, I wonder what the reaction would have been had Jordan Neely become violent and ended up wounding or killing an innocent passenger? We have seen that play out more than once.

The man who put him in a chokehold was probably trying to prevent that from happening. We can’t expect each subway car to contain someone trained in determining which mentally disturbed person behaving in a threatening manner is dangerous or not.

Had the scenario played out differently, we’d be reading comments about the failure of any of the passengers to step up and try to prevent a clearly disturbed person from harming others!

It is sad that Mr. Neely had to lose his life, but the real villain is the lack of city services and medical attention for homeless people, not the person who tried to prevent harm to subway passengers. I’m sure it was not his intent to kill anyone.

Irene Bernstein-Pechmèze

Queens

To the Editor:

As if Jordan Neely’s loss of life at the hands of an overzealous Daniel Penny were not enough, it is appalling to note that apparently no one or not enough people riding that subway car cared enough to stop Mr. Penny from completing his despicable act. Did the other riders just look on, or did they just look the other way?

Roberto Richheimer

Mexico City

To the Editor:

Re “[*On the Right, Help for Man Charged in Chokehold Death*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/14/nyregion/daniel-penny-jordan-neely-conservative.html)” (news article, May 15):

As an elderly lifelong Democrat, I resent the implication that only those on the right support Daniel Penny. Mr. Penny protected people like me from harassment and assault from people like Jordan Neely.

My husband and I seldom go into New York City anymore because of people like Mr. Neely. They make riding the subway a fearful experience for elderly people like us who cannot afford taxis or Ubers.

Gail G. Abrams

Little Silver, N.J.

To the Editor:

Does anyone still remember the time when the thousands of psychotic, hallucinating people unable to care for themselves were patients in New York State’s vast state hospital system instead of on the streets? People who were a danger to themselves and others were generally well cared for, fed, housed and medicated when appropriate, with antipsychotic drugs rather than street drugs.

No one would suggest that the state hospital system was without flaws, but society and the mentally ill certainly seemed much better off before this system was dismantled and not replaced.

George Sabel

Westwood, N.J.

To the Editor:

I am a retired psychiatrist who spent the better part of three decades caring for inpatients on a psychiatric unit. Some of the patients were agitated and aggressive. The efforts to calm a patient included trying to talk them down. If that didn’t work and if the patient remained dangerous, a staff member might restrain the person, always having enough personnel to subdue them while minimizing risk of harm to all parties (of course in the hospital, medications might be used as well).

If the person had no weapons, even though threatening people, no potentially dangerous methods were warranted.

In the recent incident on the subway, several people could have been recruited to help with restraining the person, thereby reducing risk of injury. Clearly lethal means were not justified.

Edwin Tobes

Ann Arbor, Mich.

To the Editor:

I cannot judge Daniel Penny’s intention, or what darker forces may have taken over his interaction with Jordan Neely, but I do believe that he represents something in all of us in those moments of confrontation with those who are mentally ill.

Bizarre behavior can trip a knee-jerk reaction to something so deeply fearful that our lizard brain sees only otherness and danger.

Whatever the ultimate legal decision, societally and personally we have a long way to go in dealing with the troubled Jordan Neelys and the protective or reactive response of the Daniel Pennys in each of us.

David Pasinski

Fayetteville, N.Y.

The Democrats as a ***Working-Class*** Party

To the Editor:

Re “[*Biden Promotes Quality Careers Minus a Degree*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/15/us/politics/biden-working-class-voters.html?searchResultPosition=3)” (front page, May 16):

Not all should go to college, or should need to, to make a good living. By emphasizing this point, President Biden has taken an important step toward re-establishing the Democratic Party as America’s ***working-class*** party.

But this and other economic initiatives may not be enough to win back blue-collar workers. Concerns about the weakening of traditional moral values, violent crime and high levels of undocumented migrants might still keep red states red.

To be a true labor party, the Democrats must position themselves just left of center by representing and addressing the values and concerns of the majority of Americans.

John Miraglia

Old Bridge, N.J.

This article appeared in print on page A23.

**Load-Date:** May 18, 2023

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[***Requiem for a Hamptons Day Laborer***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BRH-P291-DXY4-X05G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 7, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section MB; Column 0; Metropolitan Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1899 words

**Byline:** By Ginia Bellafante

**Body**

Early in the evening of Dec. 30, Julio Florencio Teo Gomez, a carpenter from Guatemala City who had shifted around different living situations on Long Island for more than a decade, went looking for money he was owed for a job he had completed before the holidays. Like so many other day laborers operating in the far reaches of Long Island, he had found the work at a roundup one morning in the parking lot of the 7-Eleven in Southampton. Throughout the final week of the year, he visited the lot several times in the late afternoons, when painters and millworkers, handymen and others in the building trades are dropped off at the end of the workday. He hoped to find the contractor who had neglected to pay him and collect what he was due.

Whether he managed to get the cash is unclear, but at the end of his mission, Mr. Teo Gomez set out to visit his brother 17 miles away in Riverhead. Although they had been living together for a time, Mr. Teo Gomez's home was now an encampment in the woods in Bridgehampton. It was shortly after 6 o'clock when he walked toward a bus stop on County Road 39, a stretch of road that runs from Shinnecock Hills to Water Mill and passes one of the country's most exclusive golf clubs, a McDonald's and the grave of Gary Cooper. Crossing in the dark, he was struck by a sedan. Police officers arrived and administered CPR. The driver remained at the scene of the accident and was not charged. Mr. Teo Gomez, who was 48 and had a wife and five children in Guatemala, died later that night at a nearby hospital.

For a good share of his adult life he had been part of a work force crucial to the high-season rituals of Long Island's East End, where the upkeep of expensive property is meticulous and constant. The workers, who are for the most part undocumented immigrants from Guatemala and Mexico, are kept sufficiently busy during the stretch from April to September, when consistent landscaping work is available and they can make $100 to $150 a day -- enough for a room in a house or apartment, or at least a designated sofa somewhere.

But the colder months -- when there is no imperative to trim the hedgerows -- demand alternatives. Some workers find them in the rhythms of the harvest, moving to the North Fork in October to pick grapes at local vineyards and then traveling to Florida to pick oranges during the winter. Others remain, and when they cannot afford a room, they live in the woods.

Encampments have emerged over the years as real estate values have soared and the least well-paid among the ***working class*** have had fewer options in terms of where and how they live. There is not a permanent homeless shelter in this part of Suffolk County. During the winter, the encampment population reaches about 100; it can double over the summer, when demand for workers -- and the cost of rent -- are so much higher.

The outdoor living arrangements are achievements in found-object design -- mattresses positioned under jury-rigged tents, food prepared over an open fire or on propane cooktops. Water is hauled in gallon jugs, brought in from parks and convenience stores. But the encampment Mr. Teo Gomez lived in with two other men stands in such disorienting proximity to an Elle Decor evocation of the Hamptons that you can see the side of a Shingle-style house through the bare trees on a hill in the distance.

Over the years, those who stay through the winter have benefited from the attentions of some local officials and charities and most recently from a trained social worker named Marit Molin, herself an immigrant from Sweden. When she and her family moved to the East End full-time from Manhattan nine years ago, she was struck by the way her children's friends marveled at how much food she had in her fridge. As a summer resident, she'd had little sense of how many people struggled in such a lavishly wealthy place.

The children of housekeepers and other low-wage workers, she soon discovered, often spent summer days in the back of their parents' cars, waiting for their shifts to end. Unsettled by the disparities, she started an art camp where 40 percent of children could attend for free. Two years later, in 2020, she founded Hamptons Community Outreach, with the goal of keeping people fed and helping financially strained homeowners make repairs they could not afford.

Ms. Molin first heard about the encampments three years ago when someone mentioned to her that there were people living outdoors and that occasionally they froze to death. She and an outreach team began regularly delivering food, often supplied by local restaurants she commandeered into service, as well as warm clothes, to the men living in them.

Poverty is not a new phenomenon on the South Fork, however incongruous that might seem within the context of $100-a-plate lobster salads. Neither are the efforts to alleviate it. In the early 1980s, a group in Southampton got together to figure out how to help those who could not make ends meet. Their effort grew into Heart of the Hamptons, a food pantry that provided more than 347,000 meals last year. In 2002 an organization called Maureen's Haven, named after a nun of the Dominican order, arose to help men and women living on the fringes. Based in Riverhead, it provides shelter during the winter in roving locations, often in churches.

But in many cases, the offer of shelter is refused, as Gina Laferrera, detective sergeant at the Southampton Town Police, explained. People are put off by shelter rules -- strict times of arrival and departure, baggage checks and a mandatory breathalyzer test. Among day laborers living in encampments, drinking is a means to stay warm and relieve the tedium of long days without any work.

Law enforcement tends to leave the encampments alone. The police will ask that they be taken down when they are erected on private property, Sergeant Laferrera said, but this rarely sparks conflict: ''I can't remember anyone ever resisting.''

Two weeks after Mr. Teo Gomez died, there was a memorial for him at a funeral home in Riverhead, which highlighted the close-knit nature of the day laborer community. About half of the 40 people who came lived in encampments. They arrived on a bus organized by Hamptons Community Outreach, which had raised thousands of dollars to cover expenses, through a post on Instagram. ''Julio had big hopes and dreams, but life was not always easy,'' Ms. Molin said in a brief eulogy. Others talked about their friend's warmth and the sadness they now carried in his absence.

Genaro Garcia and Sergio Hernandez, the two men who had lived with Mr. Teo Gomez in the woods, stood in front of his coffin, which was open with white roses and hydrangeas beside it. Mr. Garcia had met Mr. Teo Gomez only a month before he died. He had become homeless after separating from his wife, and was sleeping behind a Kmart in Bridgehampton, where Mr. Teo Gomez discovered him and invited him to live in the encampment he and Mr. Hernandez had quietly built in the predawn hours last spring. They had used bamboo stalks cut from trees they found growing near the local train station to hold up tarps and create sleeping spaces. There was a cooking spot a few feet away and enough privacy that they remained off the radar.

During their time living together the three had grown close. At the funeral, the men wanted to honor their friend's memory, but it was hard to speak, and they both broke down crying. ''The help and advice he gave me will never leave my heart,'' Mr. Hernandez, who has been in the United States for 18 years, said later.

Four days after the service, Ms. Molin visited the encampment, reached via a short walk into the woods on a relatively clear path. It was 20 degrees, and there was snow on the ground. Because the weather was so unforgiving, she offered to put the men up in a motel, as she had done for Christmas.

Ms. Molin has used scenes like this one -- the encampment had papers and bottles scattered on the ground, a sheet functioning as a door to the tent -- to try to raise awareness and money in the hope of delivering more aid. In a video she posted on Instagram in advance of a February charity event for her organization, she stands in front of a messy tent pitched between two trees and says, ''Welcome to the Hamptons: A place where people live in mansions, and where they also live like this.'' At the event, which raised $60,000, she announced plans for a job-training program that could help people find more lucrative work year-round. Even during the summer, the competition for landing day jobs is significant.

The housing crisis that has afflicted so much of the country has been especially severe in beach and ski towns where astronomical real-estate prices, driven even higher during the pandemic, and the low, fluctuating wages common to service work and often tainted by exploitative labor practices can make it almost impossible to find a living space.

In East Hampton, 78 percent of two-bedroom rentals are priced above $6,000 a month; the cheapest fall between $3,000 and $4,500. In Southampton, the figure seems even more unsustainable, with 85 percent of two-bedroom rentals exceeding $6,000 a month.

In recent years, there has been some movement to combat the shortage of housing for workers on the East End, replicating similar efforts in resort towns around the country. In November 2022, voters in East Hampton, Southhampton and Southold approved a proposal to levy a 0.5 percent tax on the sale of homes and property above $400,000, the proceeds of which would go into an affordable housing fund. But exactly where affordable housing should go breeds endless debate and litigation.

Another strategy currently being sorted out may hold more promise. In tandem with a developer and the town of East Hampton, Christopher Kelley, a lawyer who has served on many different community boards over three decades, is devising a plan that would require tweaking the zoning code to allow employers to build higher-density housing that could be leased to their own moderate- and low-income workers. The current code in East Hampton allows for only eight housing units per acre, but was written in 1984 to accommodate the limitations of sewer technology, which has since advanced.

One of Mr. Teo Gomez's closest friends (an undocumented immigrant who asked to remain anonymous) was eventually able to attach himself to a single contractor and get regular work, which has allowed him to rent a room in Riverhead for $700 a month all year round. In the summer months, he can make about $800 a week, he explained through an interpreter, and is able to save some of it. When he and Mr. Teo Gomez got together, they talked about work and the ways that some employers had mistreated them: denying water on hot days, or hiring for two days of work and then demanding the job be completed in one.

In the view of his friends, Mr. Teo Gomez was the one to lift everyone up, to get them through these difficulties -- to promise them that there would be better jobs, that some day there would be more money, new women, a reprieve from so much loneliness and isolation. It was not his ambition to remain on Long Island forever. His hope was to get back to Guatemala and build a house for his family. Sixteen days after he died, his body was flown home.

Anna Watts and Manuel Sosa contributed translation.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/07/nyregion/hamptons-workers-long-island.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/07/nyregion/hamptons-workers-long-island.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Above, the encampment in the Hamptons that Julio Florencio Teo Gomez used to share with two other day laborers. Left, Genaro Garcia, who lived with Mr. Teo Gomez, grieving at his funeral. (MB1)

From top: the bus that brought mourners to Julio Florencio Teo Gomez's funeral in Riverhead, N.Y.

left, sleeping quarters at an encampment

right, Sergio Hernandez, who lived with Mr. Teo Gomez, leaving his funeral

sharing a meal

Mr. Teo Gomez. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANNA WATTS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (MB2) This article appeared in print on page MB1, MB5.

**Load-Date:** April 7, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Pandemic Effect: Absence From Schools Is Soaring***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BNT-1X61-DXY4-X4GP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 30, 2024 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1876 words

**Byline:** By Sarah Mervosh and Francesca Paris

**Body**

The pandemic changed families' lives and the culture of education: ''Our relationship with school became optional.''

In Anchorage, affluent families set off on ski trips and other lengthy vacations, with the assumption that their children can keep up with schoolwork online.

In a ***working-class*** pocket of Michigan, school administrators have tried almost everything, including pajama day, to boost student attendance.

And across the country, students with heightened anxiety are opting to stay home rather than face the classroom.

In the four years since the pandemic closed schools, U.S. education has struggled to recover on a number of fronts, from learning loss, to enrollment, to student behavior.

But perhaps no issue has been as stubborn and pervasive as a sharp increase in student absenteeism, a problem that cuts across demographics and has continued long after schools reopened.

Nationally, an estimated 26 percent of public school students were considered chronically absent last school year, up from 15 percent before the pandemic, according to the most recent data, from 40 states and Washington, D.C., compiled by the conservative-leaning American Enterprise Institute. Chronic absence is typically defined as missing at least 10 percent of the school year, or about 18 days, for any reason.

The increases have occurred in districts big and small, and across income and race. For districts in wealthier areas, chronic absenteeism rates have about doubled, to 19 percent in the 2022-23 school year from 10 percent before the pandemic, a New York Times analysis of the data found.

Poor communities, which started with elevated rates of student absenteeism, are facing an even bigger crisis: Around 32 percent of students in the poorest districts were chronically absent in the 2022-23 school year, up from 19 percent before the pandemic.

Even districts that reopened quickly during the pandemic, in fall 2020, have seen vast increases.

''The problem got worse for everybody in the same proportional way,'' said Nat Malkus, a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, who collected and studied the data.

The trends suggest that something fundamental has shifted in American childhood and the culture of school, in ways that may be long lasting. What was once a deeply ingrained habit -- wake up, catch the bus, report to class -- is now something far more tenuous.

''Our relationship with school became optional,'' said Katie Rosanbalm, a psychologist and associate research professor with the Center for Child and Family Policy at Duke University.

The habit of daily attendance -- and many families' trust -- was severed when schools shuttered in spring 2020. Even after schools reopened, things hardly snapped back to normal. Districts offered remote options, required Covid-19 quarantines and relaxed policies around attendance and grading.

Today, student absenteeism is a leading factor hindering the nation's recovery from pandemic learning losses, educational experts say. Students can't learn if they aren't in school. And a rotating cast of absent classmates can negatively affect the achievement of even students who do show up, because teachers must slow down and adjust their approach to keep everyone on track.

''If we don't address the absenteeism, then all is naught,'' said Adam Clark, the superintendent of Mt. Diablo Unified, a socioeconomically and racially diverse district of 29,000 students in Northern California, where he said absenteeism has ''exploded'' to about 25 percent of students. That's up from 12 percent before the pandemic.

Why Students Are Missing School

Schools everywhere are scrambling to improve attendance, but the new calculus among families is complex and multifaceted.

At South Anchorage High School in Anchorage, where students are largely white and middle-to-upper income, some families now go on ski trips during the school year, or take advantage of off-peak travel deals to vacation for two weeks in Hawaii, said Sara Miller, a counselor at the school.

For a smaller number of students at the school who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, the reasons are different, and more intractable. They often have to stay home to care for younger siblings, Ms. Miller said. On days they miss the bus, their parents are busy working or do not have a car to take them to school.

And because teachers are still expected to post class work online, often nothing more than a skeleton version of an assignment, families incorrectly think students are keeping up, Ms. Miller said.

Across the country, students are staying home when sick, not only with Covid-19, but also with more routine colds and viruses.

And more students are struggling with their mental health, one reason for increased absenteeism in Mason, Ohio, an affluent suburb of Cincinnati, said Tracey Carson, a district spokeswoman. Because many parents can work remotely, their children can also stay home.

For Ashley Cooper, 31, of San Marcos, Texas, the pandemic fractured her trust in an education system that she said left her daughter to learn online, with little support, and then expected her to perform on grade level upon her return. Her daughter, who fell behind in math, has struggled with anxiety ever since, she said.

''There have been days where she's been absolutely in tears -- 'Can't do it. Mom, I don't want to go,''' said Ms. Cooper, who has worked with the nonprofit Communities in Schools to improve her children's school attendance. But she added, ''as a mom, I feel like it's OK to have a mental health day, to say, 'I hear you and I listen. You are important.'''

Experts say missing school is both a symptom of pandemic-related challenges, and also a cause. Students who are behind academically may not want to attend, but being absent sets them further back. Anxious students may avoid school, but hiding out can fuel their anxiety.

And schools have also seen a rise in discipline problems since the pandemic, an issue intertwined with absenteeism.

Dr. Rosanbalm, the Duke psychologist, said both absenteeism and behavioral outbursts are examples of the human stress response, now playing out en masse in schools: fight (verbal or physical aggression) or flight (absenteeism).

Quintin Shepherd, the superintendent in Victoria, Texas, first put his focus on student behavior, which he described as a ''fire in the kitchen'' after schools reopened in August 2020.

The district, which serves a mostly low-income and Hispanic student body of around 13,000, found success with a one-on-one coaching program that teaches coping strategies to the most disruptive students. In some cases, students went from having 20 classroom outbursts per year to fewer than five, Dr. Shepherd said.

But chronic absenteeism is yet to be conquered. About 30 percent of students are chronically absent this year, roughly double the rate before the pandemic.

Dr. Shepherd, who originally hoped student absenteeism would improve naturally with time, has begun to think that it is, in fact, at the root of many issues.

''If kids are not here, they are not forming relationships,'' he said. ''If they are not forming relationships, we should expect there will be behavior and discipline issues. If they are not here, they will not be academically learning and they will struggle. If they struggle with their coursework, you can expect violent behaviors.''

Teacher absences have also increased since the pandemic, and student absences mean less certainty about which friends and classmates will be there. That can lead to more absenteeism, said Michael A. Gottfried, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education. His research has found that when 10 percent of a student's classmates are absent on a given day, that student is more likely to be absent the following day.

Is This the New Normal?

In many ways, the challenge facing schools is one felt more broadly in American society: Have the cultural shifts from the pandemic become permanent?

In the work force, U.S. employees are still working from home at a rate that has remained largely unchanged since late 2022. Companies have managed to ''put the genie back in the bottle'' to some extent by requiring a return to office a few days a week, said Nicholas Bloom, an economist at Stanford University who studies remote work. But hybrid office culture, he said, appears here to stay.

Some wonder whether it is time for schools to be more pragmatic.

Lakisha Young, the chief executive of the Oakland REACH, a parent advocacy group that works with low-income families in California, suggested a rigorous online option that students could use in emergencies, such as when a student misses the bus or has to care for a family member. ''The goal should be, how do I ensure this kid is educated?'' she said.

In the corporate world, companies have found some success appealing to a sense of social responsibility, where colleagues rely on each other to show up on the agreed-upon days.

A similar dynamic may be at play in schools, where experts say strong relationships are critical for attendance.

There is a sense of: ''If I don't show up, would people even miss the fact that I'm not there?'' said Charlene M. Russell-Tucker, the commissioner of education in Connecticut.

In her state, a home visit program has yielded positive results, in part by working with families to address the specific reasons a student is missing school, but also by establishing a relationship with a caring adult. Other efforts -- such as sending text messages or postcards to parents informing them of the number of accumulated absences -- can also be effective.

In Ypsilanti, Mich., outside of Ann Arbor, a home visit helped Regina Murff, 44, feel less alone when she was struggling to get her children to school each morning.

After working at a nursing home during the pandemic, and later losing her sister to Covid-19, she said, there were days she found it difficult to get out of bed. Ms. Murff was also more willing to keep her children home when they were sick, for fear of accidentally spreading the virus.

But after a visit from her school district, and starting therapy herself, she has settled into a new routine. She helps her sons, 6 and 12, set out their outfits at night and she wakes up at 6 a.m. to ensure they get on the bus. If they are sick, she said, she knows to call the absence into school. ''I've done a huge turnaround in my life,'' she said.

But bringing about meaningful change for large numbers of students remains slow, difficult work.

The Ypsilanti school district has tried a bit of everything, said the superintendent, Alena Zachery-Ross. In addition to door knocks, officials are looking for ways to make school more appealing for the district's 3,800 students, including more than 80 percent who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. They held themed dress-up days -- '70s day, pajama day -- and gave away warm clothes after noticing a dip in attendance during winter months.

''We wondered, is it because you don't have a coat, you don't have boots?'' said Dr. Zachery-Ross.

Still, absenteeism overall remains higher than it was before the pandemic. ''We haven't seen an answer,'' she said.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/29/us/school-attendance-absences.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/29/us/school-attendance-absences.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Regina Murff, left, has worked to re-establish the daily habit of school attendance for her sons. ''If kids are not here, they are not forming relationships,'' said Quintin Shepherd, a superintendent. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY SYLVIA JARRUS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

KAYLEE GREENLEE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

U.S. students are not caught up from their pandemic losses. Absenteeism is a key reason. Sara Miller, right, a counselor in Alaska, sees more absences from students across the socioeconomic spectrum. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY KAYLEE GREENLEE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

ASH ADAMS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A13) This article appeared in print on page A1, A13.

**Load-Date:** March 30, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Aftershocks***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69H6-CFV1-DXY4-X04P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 29, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 16; FICTION

**Length:** 785 words

**Byline:** By Lovia Gyarkye

**Body**

In Marie NDiaye's new novel, ''Vengeance Is Mine,'' a woman is haunted by a decades-old trauma she feels, but cannot quite remember.

VENGEANCE IS MINE, by Marie NDiaye. Translated by Jordan Stump.

The characters in Marie NDiaye's novels are an unsettling brood. They fret and pace around their homes, tormented by their pasts. Their minds trap and trick them. A daughter can't shake memories of her mother's murder; a man gropes for the truth about his imprisonment in a deserted vacation town; a chef pursues culinary perfection at any cost; a woman -- reminded of a friend, a schoolteacher or was it her mother? -- fatally chases an apparition in green.

We meet these figures in their worst states. They've been run ragged by despair, exhausted by distress. Their warped realities coagulate into a strange and curdled mass. NDiaye, a French author of a dozen books and a handful of plays, is a master at agitating, probing and upending expectations. In her latest offering, ''Vengeance Is Mine,'' dutifully translated by Jordan Stump, she presents a new litter of misfits and constructs one of her most beguiling and visceral tales.

The novel kicks off with a meeting between Maître Susane, an industrious lawyer who has just opened her own practice in Bordeaux, and Gilles Principaux, a charmed and alluring professorial man seeking legal representation for his wife, Marlyne, who murdered their three children. Maître Susane knows the couple's situation from the news, but she takes the case because she recognizes Gilles from her childhood. Wasn't he the teenage boy ''permanently lodged in her soul,'' she wonders. The one who made the modest attorney yearn for life beyond her ***working-class*** milieu?

Something happened in Principaux's bedroom 30 years ago, but exactly what remains opaque to Maître Susane, who can neither remember the details of the incident nor make sense of the fear she feels around Gilles. NDiaye describes their encounter in vague, almost shimmering terms -- Gilles ''enraptured'' Maître Susane; he was the ''encystment of pure joy'' -- that assume a more sinister sheen later on.

As in NDiaye's other novels, the story lives not in the incident but its aftermath. The mystery grips Maître Susane. She spirals toward a nervous breakdown. ''Who, to her, was Gilles Principaux?'' The question -- the novel's refrain -- contaminates the lawyer's relationships. It alienates her from her parents, who fearfully dismiss her memories, and disturbs her attorney-client meetings with Marlyne.

It snakes its way into Maître Susane's home, disrupting an already unstable relationship with Sharon, her diligent housekeeper from Mauritius. Desperation and distance define their interactions. Maître Susane pines for approval from this African woman, a yearning that aligns the lawyer with other NDiaye characters harboring a faint racial angst. Determined to do right by Sharon, she takes on her complicated citizenship case, which is stalled by the absence of the calm steward's marriage papers. Retrieving them unwittingly plunges Maître Susane into another adventure.

In ''Vengeance Is Mine,'' NDiaye circles a familiar configuration of ideas: trauma and memory, class anxiety, isolation and otherness, the warped savagery of domestic life, the rupture between parents and their children. But she also considers the texture of justice -- what it means, how it's determined and who enacts it. Maître Susane counsels on the law but can't find redress for her own problems. She's the lawyer, but who holds the power in her interactions with Gilles, with Marlyne, with Sharon?

NDiaye deals in impressions and captures a particular kind of emotional delirium in ''Vengeance.'' She leans into jaggedness, twisting her narrative to mimic Maître Susane's fraying psychological state as she searches for a kind of truth. Intrusive ellipses, a legion of conjunctions and abrupt paragraph breaks reflect the lawyer's unraveling. Appreciating this moody, sensual and sometimes feverish prose requires submission -- to the grooves of language, the performance of storytelling. Maître Susane's thoughts are strewn across the page in a way that, at first, feels haphazard, but there is an organizing principle at play. It's a subtle query, a haunting inversion of the novel's refrain. Perhaps the question is not who is Gilles Principaux but who, to us, is Maître Susane?

Lovia Gyarkye, formerly an associate editor at The New York Times Magazine Labs, is a critic at The Hollywood Reporter.

VENGEANCE IS MINE | By Marie NDiaye | Translated by Jordan Stump | 226 pp. | Knopf | $28Lovia Gyarkye, formerly an associate editor at The New York Times Magazine Labs, is a critic at The Hollywood Reporter.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/13/books/review/vengeance-is-mine-marie-ndiaye.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/13/books/review/vengeance-is-mine-marie-ndiaye.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO This article appeared in print on page BR16.

**Load-Date:** October 29, 2023

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[***How a Small-Time Soccer Team Draws a Crowd: With Its Activism***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BFT-J7R1-JBG3-61N4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 2, 2024 Saturday 19:52 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; europe

**Length:** 1477 words

**Byline:** Rory Smith Rory Smith is a global sports correspondent, based in the north of England. He also writes the &amp;#8220;On Soccer With Rory Smith&amp;#8221; newsletter.

**Highlight:** The Dublin club Bohemians has made support for social causes a crucial part of its identity. Critics say the hipsters have taken over, but the approach has attracted fans around the world.

**Body**

The Dublin club Bohemians has made support for social causes a crucial part of its identity. Critics say the hipsters have taken over, but the approach has attracted fans around the world.

In the back room of the threadbare offices of the Irish soccer team Bohemians, the printer clunks and chugs and whirs incessantly, spitting out a cascade of shipping labels. Some of the addresses bear the names of nearby Dublin streets. Others are from farther afield: across Ireland, across the Irish Sea, across the Atlantic.

Each label will be affixed to a package containing a Bohemians jersey. And these days, the club sells a lot of jerseys.

The appeal is not rooted in any of the traditional drivers of soccer’s merchandise market: success, glamour, [*a beloved star player*](https://static.nytimes.com/email-content/RS_sample.html). Daniel Lambert, the club’s chief operating officer, loves both Bohemians and the League of Ireland, the competition in which it plays, but he is under no illusions about the reality of either. “We’re a small team in a poor league,” he said.

Instead, fans are drawn to Bohemians by the jerseys themselves; or, rather, what the jerseys say, both about the team and the customer.

Some recent editions have drawn on the cultural iconography of Dublin: [*the Poolbeg cooling towers*](https://static.nytimes.com/email-content/RS_sample.html); the pattern from the city’s bus seats; the face of Phil Lynott, former frontman of the band Thin Lizzy. Others send a more explicit message: One of this season’s efforts has been designed in [*the colors of the Palestinian flag*](https://static.nytimes.com/email-content/RS_sample.html). A couple of years ago, another bore the slogan “[*Refugees Welcome*](https://static.nytimes.com/email-content/RS_sample.html).”

In a studiously apolitical sport, where most teams [*avoid staking out positions*](https://static.nytimes.com/email-content/RS_sample.html) except on the safest of ground — and at a time when Ireland is trying to douse the sparks of [*a flickering culture war*](https://static.nytimes.com/email-content/RS_sample.html) — that makes Bohemians an enthusiastic, unabashed outlier: a [*rare example*](https://static.nytimes.com/email-content/RS_sample.html) of a soccer club willing to wear its values on its sleeve, its torso and any other surface it can find.

At Dalymount Park, Bohemians’ tumbledown home, the corner flags bear the rainbow colors of the Pride movement. Fans walk the concourses in scarves bearing both the club crest and the Palestinian colors. Corrugated iron walls are decorated with images of Che Guevara and the Venezuelan flag.

Behind one section, home to the most boisterous of the club’s supporters, a fist rises against a red-and-black background. “Love football, hate racism,” it reads.

It has been placed there quite deliberately. Bohemians might lean, unapologetically, to the left, but the club has been more than willing to harness distinctly capitalist marketing strategies to amplify its reach. “The politics are absolutely sincere,” Dion Fanning, a writer, author and co-host of [*the podcast Free State*](https://static.nytimes.com/email-content/RS_sample.html), said. “But the way they do it is very clever.”

Much of that can be attributed to Mr. Lambert’s background in music. He thinks, essentially and habitually, like a promoter. “It’s in that section that younger fans are taking selfies and uploading them to Instagram,” Mr. Lambert said. “This way they have that message in there, too.”

It is hard to argue that the approach is not working. Bohemians’ appeal now stretches far beyond its traditional base in the north Dublin suburb of Phibsborough. It has captured the hearts and minds of a congregation of fans across the world, diffused by geography but united — in Mr. Lambert’s eyes — by common priorities.

Bohemians attracts fans, he said, who are “socially conscious, concerned about what has happened to the game, uncomfortable with state actors being in charge of these precious things that belong to the ***working class***.”

There are enough of them that Bohemians now stands as a remarkable commercial success story. A little more than a decade ago, the club stood on the verge of a first-ever relegation from the top tier of Irish soccer and the brink of financial oblivion. Now, it is a picture of health. In 2015, the club had only 530 members. That figure now stands at 3,000. “With a waiting list,” Mr. Lambert noted.

There are 10 teams in the League of Ireland, yet Bohemians accounts for a quarter of the league’s commercial revenue. The club’s merchandise sales alone have soared by 2,000 percent in a decade. The orders for jerseys that pour in every day are not just for the newest versions, either; old editions continue to sell well, something Mr. Lambert attributes to the fact that they are not ephemeral fashion items. “They tell a story,” he said.

That story, and the club’s rise alongside it, has not always been universally popular. Mr. Lambert conceded that some Bohemians fans may have been put off by the club’s activism — on subjects as diverse as gay marriage, climate justice and the ending of what he terms Ireland’s “inhumane” [*handling of asylum seekers*](https://static.nytimes.com/email-content/RS_sample.html) — and he has long detected a low-grade grumbling among supporters of rival teams.

It is, after all, fair to say that very few soccer teams have [*an in-house poet*](https://static.nytimes.com/email-content/RS_sample.html), or host halftime raves, or employ four members of staff devoted to establishing [*a climate strategy*](https://static.nytimes.com/email-content/RS_sample.html). “We’ve heard it all: the hipster club, a load of gimmicks,” Mr. Lambert said. “You do hear people say: ‘Why can’t Bohs just be normal?’”

The answer to that, Mr. Lambert said, is simple. Bohemians does not see the positions it takes as inherently political. To the club, they are humanitarian issues, the natural values of a team owned not by a private investor but by its fans. And expressing them, he and others said, is more pressing than ever, as [*Ireland’s incipient far right*](https://static.nytimes.com/email-content/RS_sample.html) grows in both strength and volume.

“There is something at stake now,” said Mr. Fanning, the podcast host. “A few years ago, when Bohemians started doing this, you would have said Ireland would never have a far right. Now, it is still several levels below a subculture, but it is there, and it will get bigger.”

That, Mr. Lambert said, is what makes the decision to bind the club to its beliefs even more important. “The purpose of a club is to be a force for good,” he said. “I think people are quite often desensitized to a lot of these issues. You can use sport to bring them to people’s attention, to engage with them, to put pressure on governments to address them. Sport has an obligation to do that.”

As much as Bohemians’ activism is rooted in its beliefs, though, it has also been good for business. Crowds across the League of Ireland have grown in recent years — the precise cause of that phenomenon is hotly debated — but tickets for Bohemians games are now particularly precious possessions.

Mary Nolan, who has been attending games with her father since she was a child, said, “You see more women, more kids, more families.”

“There’s still a few old men who moan that none of the newcomers know anything about football, but it’s generally a very welcoming space now,” she added. “Far more people have been drawn in than put off by the politics.”

And even those fans who might not naturally be inclined to see a soccer team as the correct vehicle for social justice have little reason to complain. There is no wealthy private benefactor to write the checks. There is no generous television deal. Transfer fees for selling player to larger leagues are unreliable and often measly.

The club’s messaging, and its willingness to take stands, puts Bohemians in a “far stronger position,” as Mr. Lambert put it. It helps to finance all the work the club does off the field, and helps to pay for the team that plays on it.

“My dad is naturally very liberal,” Ms. Nolan said. “He knows these causes matter. But he also understands, at the very least, that they help to sell a lot of jerseys.”

As long as that continues, there seems to be no reason for anyone to object. “When I was a kid and a young man there was no contradiction between loving books and loving football,” Roddy Doyle, the novelist and a lifelong Bohemians fan, wrote in an email. “They were all cultural choices we made, our badges of identity.”

He added: “Bohemians come close to delivering that blend that has always been my idea of culture: a stadium in an area that crackles with history and is also a magnet for newness; a team that wears jerseys that feature Dublin musicians and have ‘Refugees Welcome’ printed across their chests; fans who sing [*a song composed by Brendan Behan*](https://static.nytimes.com/email-content/RS_sample.html) just before kickoff. Supporting Bohemians is a stew. But the football is vital.”

For all the causes, the activism, the growth and the commercial success, Mr. Doyle wrote, the best part of being a Bohemians fan to him is the same as it has always been: “Being in the crowd when they score.”

PHOTOS: Bohemian F.C., above left, has made its values and Dublin iconography part of its identity. Social causes exist with cheers in its stadium, top. An image of Phil Lynott, the former frontman of the band Thin Lizzy, above right, was featured on a recent team jersey. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAULO NUNES DOS SANTOS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A16.

**Load-Date:** April 6, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Asian Americans, Shifting Right***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67PN-5KJ1-DXY4-X2H8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 6, 2023 Monday 15:01 EST

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1942 words

**Byline:** David Leonhardt

**Highlight:** The new politics of class in America.

**Body**

The new politics of class in America.

The Chinatown area of Sunset Park, Brooklyn, was long a Democratic stronghold. The party’s candidates would often receive more than 70 percent of the vote there. Last year, however, the neighborhood underwent a political transformation.

Lee Zeldin, the Republican nominee for governor, managed to win Sunset Park’s Chinatown, receiving more votes than Gov. Kathy Hochul. This map, by my colleague Jason Kao, shows the change:

This shift is part of a national story. In the past two elections — 2020 and 2022 — Asian Americans have moved toward the right, according to election returns and exit polls. Democrats still won Asian voters by a wide margin in last year’s midterms but by less than in the recent past:

In Texas, Gov. Greg Abbott, the Republican incumbent, beat Beto O’Rourke among Asian voters, [*52 percent to 46 percent*](https://www.aaldef.org/press-release/aaldef-releases-preliminary-asian-american-exit-poll-results-for-2022-midterm-elections/), and Texas House Republicans also did well, according to polls by the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund. In statewide races in Florida and Georgia, the Republican candidates received at least one-third of the vote, substantially more than in previous elections.

The Times has just published [*a series of maps and charts*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/03/05/nyregion/election-asians-voting-republicans-nyc.html) focusing on New York City neighborhoods where most eligible voters are of Asian descent, including Sunset Park, Flushing and Manhattan’s Chinatown. Jason told me that he had started thinking about this subject after his father, who rarely talks about politics, said that he had voted for Zeldin. Later, Jason saw a post-election map of New York and was shocked to see that some of the Chinatown neighborhoods where he grew up were colored red.

As Aminta Kilawan-Narine, a community activist who was raised in South Ozone Park, which is home to a large Indian American population, told Jason, “I’ve never seen so many signs for a Republican governor in the areas I grew up in.” She was one of the local leaders, academic researchers and political officials whom Jason interviewed, and he heard a few points repeatedly from those experts:

* Republican campaigns have recently increased their outreach to Asian voters, while Democratic candidates had grown complacent.

1. Education issues hurt Democrats. Asian voters have been unhappy with proposals to [*change the rules*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/25/us/selective-high-schools-brooklyn-tech.html) for magnet high schools like Stuyvesant that admit children based on test scores. Many students at those schools come from lower-income Asian families.
2. Perhaps most important, the Republicans’ anti-crime message resonated, following increases in both citywide crime and anti-Asian violence. Lester Chang, a military veteran and a new Republican member of the New York State Assembly, said that the overwhelming reason he won a Brooklyn district — beating a Democratic incumbent who had held the seat for 36 years — was crime.
3. Asian Americans are politically diverse. [*The most heavily Democratic groups*](https://www.aaldef.org/press-release/aaldef-exit-poll-asian-americans-favor-biden-over-trump-68-to-29-played-role-in-close-races-in-georgia-and-other-battleground-states/) include those of Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Arab descent. The least Democratic group is Vietnamese Americans, followed by Korean, Cambodian and Filipino Americans.

Upscale Democrats

Nationally, the rightward drift of Asian voters is connected to a new class divide in American politics. The Democratic Party, especially its liberal wing, has increasingly come to reflect [*the views of college-educated professionals*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/08/us/politics/how-college-graduates-vote.html). This development has had some benefits for Democrats, helping them win more suburban voters and flip Arizona and Georgia in recent elections.

To a growing number of ***working-class*** voters, however, the newly upscale version of the party has become less appealing. The trend has long been evident among white ***working-class*** voters, and many liberal analysts have claimed that it mostly reflects racial bigotry. But recent developments have weakened that argument. Class appears to be an important factor as well. Since 2018, more Asian and Latino voters have supported Republicans, and these voters appear to be disproportionately ***working-class***.

The Pew Research Center has conducted a detailed analysis of the electorate and categorized about 8 percent of voters as belonging to “the progressive left.” This group spans all races, but it is [*disproportionately white — and upper-income*](https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2021/11/09/the-democratic-coalition/). True, a large number of Democrats, including many Black voters, are more moderate. But the progressive left has an outsize impact partly because of its strong presence in institutions with access to political megaphones, like advocacy groups, universities, media organizations and Hollywood.

The Covid era

The shift of Asian and Latino voters has coincided with a period when the progressive left has become bolder and shaped the Democrats’ national image. The shift has also coincided with the pandemic and its aftermath.

Progressives supported [*extended Covid school closures*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/05/briefing/school-closures-covid-learning-loss.html) — which were easier for white-collar parents to manage — and often excoriated people who favored a return to normal activities. As crime surged during the pandemic, progressives often downplayed the importance of the trend even as it alarmed many people of color. “Being Asian, I felt I had a bigger target on my back,” Karen Wang, 48, a Queens resident and lifelong Democrat who voted Republican last year, [*told The Times*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/10/nyregion/asian-voters-republican-crime-nyc.html).

Immigration may also play a role. Democratic leaders like Barack Obama once emphasized the importance of border security. Today, many Democrats are uncomfortable talking about almost any immigration restrictions. In Texas, [*polls show*](https://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Politics/2022/1021/The-new-swing-vote-Why-more-Latino-voters-are-joining-the-GOP), immigration concerns have driven some Latino voters toward Republicans.

Then there are the debates over language. In the name of inclusion and respect, some progressives have argued that common terms such as “[*pregnant women*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/27/opinion/rbg-aclu-abortion.html),” “[*the poor*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/27/world/europe/ap-stylebook-the-french.html)” and “[*Latinos*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/01/opinion/inclusive-language-vocabulary.html)” are offensive. Many voters find these arguments befuddling and irrelevant to their everyday concerns.

Beyond individual policy issues, ***working-class*** voters tend to have a different worldview than much of the modern Democratic Party. They are often more religious and more patriotic. In a Times poll last year, only 26 percent of Democratic voters with a bachelor’s degree described the U.S. as the greatest country in the world; more than half of voters without a bachelor’s degree gave that answer.

The Republican Party obviously has its own problems with swing voters, including Asian Americans. Donald Trump [*has promoted white nationalism*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/01/15/opinion/leonhardt-trump-racist.html), and his descriptions of Covid fed anti-Asian racism. The Republican Party favors abortion bans, while most voters favor significant access to abortion. Many Republican politicians also oppose popular economic policies, like caps on medical costs.

Given the radicalism of today’s Republican Party, liberals had hoped that Asian and Latino voters would help usher in an era of Democratic dominance. And maybe that will happen one day. But it is not happening yet. Instead, Democrats’ struggles with Latino and Asian voters have helped Republicans solidify their hold on states where Democrats had hoped to start winning by now, like Texas, Florida and North Carolina.

To a growing number of ***working-class*** voters, the Democratic Party looks even more flawed than the alternative.

For more: Jason’s article compares the trends in New York’s majority Asian precincts with the trends in majority Black, Latino and white precincts. [*You can see his charts and maps here*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/03/05/nyregion/election-asians-voting-republicans-nyc.html).

THE LATEST NEWS

War in Ukraine

* Hundreds of Ukrainian troops joined the fight to repel Russian forces who were [*close to taking the city of Bakhmut*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/06/world/europe/ukraine-bakhmut-battle.html).

1. There are many ways to kill and be killed on the front lines. [*See inside the trenches*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/05/world/europe/trench-warfare-ukraine-frontline.html).
2. South Korea is filling a weapons shortage [*by arming Ukraine’s allies*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/05/world/asia/ukraine-south-korea-arms.html) — but not Ukraine itself, to try to avoid provoking Russia.

Politics

* Immigration, gun rights, education: Florida lawmakers are [*advancing Gov. Ron DeSantis’s agenda*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/05/us/ron-desantis-florida-legislature.html), helping him in a potential 2024 presidential run.

1. President Biden [*said voting rights*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/05/us/politics/biden-voting-rights-selma.html) were still “under assault” in a speech in Selma, Ala., on the anniversary of Bloody Sunday, a 1965 police attack on Black protesters.
2. Balancing the federal budget without limiting defense, Medicare or Social Security spending would require [*brutal cuts to the government*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/03/06/upshot/balancing-budget-painful-spending-cuts.html).
3. A Tennessee law prohibiting “adult cabaret” has raised [*uncertainty about drag events*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/05/us/tennessee-law-drag-shows.html).

Other Big Stories

* “The little things that run the world”: Insects like bees and butterflies are [*not considered wildlife in many states*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/03/04/climate/insects-wildlife-us.html), making it difficult for officials to protect them.

1. South Korea will set up a fund to pay citizens who were [*forced to work for Japanese companies*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/05/world/asia/south-korea-japan-forced-labor.html) during World War II, hoping to resolve a dispute between the countries.
2. A new treatment could [*help fix the heart’s “forgotten valve.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/04/health/tricuspid-valve-clip-leakage.html)
3. A Pennsylvania woman, now 83, who [*disappeared more than 30 years ago*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/04/us/pennsylvania-woman-found-puerto-rico.html) was found alive in Puerto Rico.
4. Homelessness is increasing again in the United States. [*Read the stories*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/10/headway/what-dont-you-know-about-homelessness.html) of people affected.

Opinions

Gail Collins and Bret Stephens discuss [*Chicago’s mayoral election*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/06/opinion/chicago-crime-democrats-masks.html).

Ford, a 120-year-old company, is [*leaving Tesla in the dust*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/04/opinion/ford-tesla-bluecruise-self-driving-remote-work.html), Ezra Dyer writes.

Go ahead, celebrate the chirping birds. But an early spring is a harbinger of [*our troubled future*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/06/opinion/climate-change-early-spring.html), Margaret Renkl says.

MORNING READS

Needing a freeze: Residents on one Ohio island [*earn a living with ice.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/05/us/put-in-bay-ohio-ice.html) It hasn’t come this winter.

Mythical skating: An 18-year-old speedskater [*astonished competitors with his turns*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/05/sports/olympics/jordan-stolz-speedskating-world-championships.html).

Youngest Vogue editor: She’s figuring out [*how to run a fashion magazine in China*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/02/style/vogue-china-how-to-run-a-fashion-magazine-in-china-in-2023.html).

Quiz time: Take [*our latest news quiz*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/03/03/briefing/news-quiz-chicago-student-debt.html) and share your score (the average was 7.9).

Advice from Wirecutter: [*Break up with your phone*](https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/reviews/break-up-with-your-phone/).

Lives Lived: Judy Heumann was an activist who championed disability rights and ultimately joined and reformed the political establishment she once fought against. [*She died at 75*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/05/obituaries/judy-heumann-dead.html).

SPORTS NEWS FROM THE ATHLETIC

A rule change “poster boy”: Kevin Gausman is a toe tapper. Thanks to baseball’s new rules, he has to [*unlearn years of work*](https://theathletic.com/article/4277023) to change his delivery.

A budding rivalry? Kevin Durant and Kyrie Irving [*shared a court*](https://theathletic.com/4278062/2023/03/05/kevin-durant-kyrie-irving-suns-mavericks/) for the first time since their respective trades. Durant scored 37 points, including the game-winner.

“The world stopped”: Teammates [*remember*](https://theathletic.com/article/4274439) Nilay Aydogan, a Turkish pro basketball player who died in the country’s earthquake last month.

ARTS AND IDEAS

A sake boom

Sake, the Japanese alcoholic drink, is [*gaining popularity*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/27/dining/drinks/sake-brewery-us-japan.html). Exports from Japan more than doubled between 2012 and 2022, and breweries are starting to pop up around the U.S. — including two in Brooklyn.

This spring, a 24,000-square-foot sake brewery is scheduled to open in Arkansas, which produces more rice than any other state. “The goal, really, is to move sake into the mainstream,” said Matt Bell, the brewery’s chief executive.

PLAY, WATCH, EAT

What to Cook

This [*pasta alla Norma*](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1014832-pasta-alla-norma) comes together in under an hour.

What to Watch

A year after Will Smith slapped him at the Oscars, [*Chris Rock responded fiercely*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/05/arts/television/chris-rock-netflix.html) in “Selective Outrage,” a new stand-up special.

What to Read

Sally Adee explores the [*body’s capacity for electricity*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/28/books/review/we-are-electric-sally-adee.html).

Now Time to Play

The pangram from yesterday’s Spelling Bee was although. Here is [*today’s puzzle*](https://www.nytimes.com/puzzles/spelling-bee).

Here’s [*today’s Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/crosswords/game/mini), and a clue: Criticism, slangily (five letters).

And here’s [*today’s Wordle*](https://www.nytimes.com/games/wordle/index.html). After, [*use our bot*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/upshot/wordle-bot.html) to get better.

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

P.S. A Spelling Bee fan created [*an unusual version of the puzzle*](https://www.reddit.com/r/NYTSpellingBee/comments/11eaa9l/proposed_to_my_gf_with_the_bee/) as part of a marriage proposal. Congrats!

Here’s [*today’s front page*](https://static01.nyt.com/images/2023/03/06/nytfrontpage/scan.pdf).

“[*The Daily*](https://www.nytimes.com/thedaily)” is about last month’s Ohio train derailment.

Matthew Cullen, Lauren Hard, Lauren Jackson, Claire Moses, Ian Prasad Philbrick, Tom Wright-Piersanti and Ashley Wu contributed to The Morning. You can reach the team at [*themorning@nytimes.com*](mailto:themorning@nytimes.com).

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

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Janice Chung for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 9, 2023

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[***Reflections on the E. Jean Carroll Verdict; letters***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B8B-68W1-JBG3-6046-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 5, 2024 Monday 23:37 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1218 words

**Highlight:** Readers react to Opinion pieces about her audacity and libel law. Also: The U.S. and Iran; Democratic alternatives; controversy at Penn; pets in cold weather.

**Body**

To the Editor:

Jessica Bennett’s compelling essay “[*The Audacity of E. Jean Carroll*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/29/opinion/e-jean-carroll-audacity-donald-trump.html)” (Opinion, Feb. 4) vividly captures the events in that New York courtroom last month.

It is truly astonishing to me, even in the wake of the verdict, that the former president continues to command a substantial base of support, especially among women of all ages. I find it perplexing how women of integrity can seemingly compartmentalize his abhorrent behavior and still cast their ballots for a notorious womanizer.

What’s even more disturbing is his public trashing, maligning and dehumanizing of anyone who dares to hold him accountable. Remarkably, the women who support him believe his lies, many asserting that his policies trump his behavior.

Additionally, the numerous indictments and upcoming trials seem to, unbelievably, only bolster his popularity. The prospect of his re-election as president of the United States is not just disconcerting; it’s also a chilling reminder of the challenges we face as a divided nation.

God help us all!

(Rabbi) Reuven H. Taff

Sacramento

To the Editor:

Like E. Jean Carroll, I’m a writer. I was also sexually assaulted. Not once, but twice.

Like E. Jean, I kept silent for years. Fifty to be exact.

I’m a member of the silent generation. I spent my career writing nonfiction and historical fiction, most recently “Sisters at War,” about brave women who fought back against the rape and brutality of the SS in wartime Paris.

Writing my book inspired me to come forward about my own story. The perpetrators who assaulted me still haunt me. The first was an unknown assailant in Italy; the second was date rape and kidnapping in graduate school.

I will soon celebrate 55 years since I graduated from the university. I’m on a committee to recreate the college experience in the 1960s. When I told the event coordinator my story, she suggested that I educate incoming students about date rape and what happened to me.

I can’t bring the men who hurt me to justice like E. Jean, but I can talk about it. After half a century, I can say the word “rape” and move on. Educate a new generation of young women.

And that is my win.

Jina Bacarr

Irvine, Calif.

To the Editor:

Re “[*Trump’s Libel Case Exposes the Law’s Limits*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/28/opinion/donald-trump-e-jean-carroll-libel-damages.html),” by RonNell Andersen Jones (Opinion guest essay, Jan. 30):

It’s true that even the $83.3 million in damages awarded against Donald Trump may not deter him from defaming E. Jean Carroll again. As Ms. Jones notes, “the incentives to serve up lies for politics or profit” may now be so strong that damages awards no longer suffice to deter repeat offenders.

But Ms. Jones overlooks an additional remedy that could be far more effective in stopping persistent defamers: an injunction against continued defamation. Ruby Freeman and Shaye Moss, the Georgia election workers who won a $148 million award against Rudolph Giuliani, [*have sought just this type of remedy.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/18/us/politics/georgia-election-workers-sue-giuliani.html)

If Mr. Giuliani repeated his defamatory statements after the issuance of such an injunction, he would face the risk of a contempt order and some time in prison. That would give him a powerful incentive to think long and hard before he defames them again.

Stuart Altschuler

New York

The writer is a lawyer.

The U.S., Iran and the Risks of War

To the Editor:

Re “[*As U.S. Acts, Biden Deems Iran Unlikely to Shoot Back*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/03/us/politics/us-strikes-iran-militias-israel.html?searchResultPosition=12),” by David E. Sanger and Farnaz Fassihi (news analysis, Feb. 4):

Mr. Sanger and Ms. Fassihi offer a very nuanced and thorough prognosis for what may ensue as a result of the American airstrikes on Iran-linked targets in Syria and Iraq.

They write that the expectation in Washington and among its allies is that the Iranians will not respond, in order to avoid a wider war. In my mind, this raises a critical question: When does military action intended to deter aggression become a tripwire for all-out war?

I am especially concerned that this is taking place in an election year, as the article notes.

For Western minds to try to project how countries in the Middle East will respond is a gamble that could result in all-out war, and not just in the Middle East. Tensions are rising between the U.S. and China over Taiwan, while the war between Ukraine and Russia still has unpredictable results.

John A. Viteritti

Laurel, N.Y.

Alternatives to Biden

To the Editor:

“[*The Democratic Party Is Having an ‘Identity Crisis,’*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/02/opinion/biden-trump-democratic-party-future.html)” by Ezra Klein (column, Feb. 4):

Yes, the Democratic Party has an image of being the party of the ***working class***, but is now finding its voters more college-educated and split between those wanting progressive change and those wanting the status quo.

But if President Biden seems too old to run for re-election, as many Democrats feel, the question remains, who better in the party to be nominated? Not Vice President Kamala Harris, many also feel. Perhaps the governor of Michigan, Gretchen Whitmer? Perhaps a Democratic senator from the Midwest?

While there are many able Democrats, both progressive and centrist, there are no obvious choices to run for president with national appeal. Why is this so? Because the Democratic leadership has failed to train up its next generation of leaders.

James Berkman

Boston

Fighting Back at Penn

To the Editor:

Re “[*At Penn, President’s Exit Fails to Quell Turmoil*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/29/us/university-of-pennsylvania-marc-rowan-magill.html?searchResultPosition=1)” (news article, Jan. 30):

I am extremely happy to see that professors at the University of Pennsylvania have reacted strongly to a document sent by the billionaire Marc Rowan to, in essence, create a more conservative campus.

With the recent Republican attacks on the presidents of Harvard, M.I.T. and Penn, the hostile government takeover of [*New College of Florida*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/14/us/ron-desantis-new-college-florida.html), [*the banning of D.E.I. initiatives*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/01/20/us/dei-woke-claremont-institute.html), the [*elimination of sociology*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/24/us/florida-universities-sociology.html?searchResultPosition=1) as a core course in Florida’s public universities, and so on, it’s about time that professors are beginning to fight back.

Moreover, as professors, we should not let university donors or politicians dictate to us about our profession. We are certainly capable of running our universities free of interference from wealthy individuals and biased politicians who pander to their base.

To my colleagues at Penn, I say: Together we stand, divided we fall, and keep up the good fight.

Michael Hadjiargyrou

Centerport, N.Y.

The writer is a professor of biological and chemical sciences at the New York Institute of Technology.

Pets in Cold Weather

To the Editor:

Re “[*How to Protect Pets From Cold Weather*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/24/well/family/pet-care-cold-weather-safety.html?searchResultPosition=1)” (Here to Help, Jan. 27):

Thank you for sharing information about protecting animal companions during cold weather.

I hope that readers will also look out for dogs whose owners have left them chained or penned outside. These animals are no better equipped to survive freezing temperatures than humans are, and they commonly suffer from frostbite and hypothermia. Some die from exposure.

Good Samaritans who see dogs kept outside for long periods without adequate shelter from the elements (at least a sturdy doghouse insulated with dry straw that has a covered entrance to block the wind) should note the animal’s exact location and alert local law-enforcement authorities immediately.

If officers don’t respond, they should call PETA. Anyone who leaves animals outside to suffer in severe weather may face criminal charges.

Kristin Rickman

Norfolk, Va.

The writer is the director of the emergency response team at PETA, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals.

This article appeared in print on page A19.

**Load-Date:** February 5, 2024

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[***A Biden Victory in November Turns on This State; Michelle Cottle***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BTV-V891-JBG3-60P7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 18, 2024 Thursday 03:31 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 2202 words

**Byline:** Michelle Cottle and Damon Winter Michelle Cottle writes about national politics for Opinion and is a host of the podcast &amp;#8220;Matter of Opinion.&amp;#8221; She has covered Washington and politics since the Clinton administration. Damon Winter is a Times photographer working for the Opinion section, based in Miami.

**Highlight:** Biden needs to find a narrative for his candidacy, then work like hell to push it out. But it’s hard to argue people out of their feelings.

**Body**

Let’s talk about why President Biden is spending three days in Pennsylvania this week — a lot of time, by campaign standards. By now, you probably know that just [*a few swing states are pivotal*](https://twitter.com/mcottle) to winning the White House in November. For Mr. Biden, the Keystone State is the most crucial.

It’s not just that Pennsylvania has 19 electoral votes — the biggest haul of any battleground. And it’s not just that it is part of the Blue Wall, the string of industrial states that helped Democrats win the presidency for years until Donald Trump cracked it in 2016. This fight is also personal: Mr. Biden is a native son of Pennsylvania who spent part of his childhood there, identifies with its ***working-class***, regular-folk vibe and gets intuitively how the state is a microcosm for America. If Scranton Joe cannot hang on to his Rosebud, he is probably in big trouble nationally.

The goodish news for Mr. Biden is that he appears to be running neck and neck here with Mr. Trump, according to [*polling*](https://twitter.com/mcottle) and campaign insiders, unlike in some other swing states where he is struggling a bit more. The tougher news is that many Democrats anticipate a tick-tight race, and it’s not yet clear what will energize and turn out voters. “My big fear is that people are exhausted by the chaos,” says U.S. Representative Mary Gay Scanlon, who hails from one of the suburban collar counties around Philadelphia.

So what does Team Biden need to do to prevail? High-profile visits like Mr. Biden’s three-day swing this week are important. But they are a tiny piece of what it takes to win a place as sprawling and complicated as Pennsylvania. To get a clearer sense of the puzzle, I set about picking the brains of over a dozen strategists, organizers, elected officials and other state political experts. A smattering of common themes and strategies bubbled up — some easier than others for the president and his campaign to tackle.

I started by approaching Gov. Josh Shapiro, a member of Mr. Biden’s [*campaign advisory board*](https://twitter.com/mcottle) who is considered a Democratic rock star since winning the state by nearly 15 points in 2022. (Mr. Biden squeaked by here in 2020 by 1.2 points. Though, to be fair, Mr. Shapiro had [*a truly lousy opponent*](https://twitter.com/mcottle).)

One story stuck with me from talking with the governor. It’s a bit canned, sure, but it made me think about some of the hurdles Mr. Biden is facing. Asked if anything took him by surprise in his own run, Mr. Shapiro told me about his first TV ad, which showed him sitting around the Sabbath dinner table with his family, and how, afterward, voters would come up to him to share their own faith stories and traditions. “The ad allowed them to speak to me in a personal way,” he recalled.

While Mr. Biden can emote with the best of them, many voters, especially among his base, just aren’t feeling that personal bond these days. Finding ways to reconnect, to make people feel understood and listened to, is one of his trickiest challenges.

Part of this will be letting voters know that he has been working for them. It’s important to spell out for people “what you delivered, how your work positively impacted their lives,” Mr. Shapiro says of his experience. It also means addressing the things that still need fixing — making clear that, yes, you feel voters’ pain. “I’ve heard people loud and clear. Things cost a lot. They want relief,” said the governor, stressing that you have to “acknowledge the challenges people feel.”

As Mr. Biden works to sell voters on his accomplishments, and himself, he will have to do it across wildly different parts of Pennsylvania. Winning here means playing everywhere, say the state’s political hands — pretty much all of whom can recite the vote margins a Democrat needs to aim for in Philadelphia, its collar counties, Allegheny (home to Pittsburgh), this western enclave, that area of the Lehigh Valley and even the T counties running up the center and across the top of the state that typically go Republican. Boiled down, the blue-team blueprint is: Run up the numbers in and around Philly, do well in Allegheny and other select spots and hold down Republicans’ margins of victory in the more rural areas.

“You can’t rely on the places traditionally friendly to us. You have to close the margins in places we’re not going to win,” said Lt. Gov. Austin Davis, a Democrat. Take the reliably red counties of Westmoreland, in the Pittsburgh region, and rural Northumberland, he offered: “You can lose 60-40, but you can’t lose 70-30. It makes a huge difference.”

“Margins matter!” confirmed State Representative Malcolm Kenyatta, who is running statewide for auditor general. This is especially true if turnout in Philadelphia is not so hot — which, Democrats say, has been the case for several years. But we’ll get to that in a minute.

Making inroads into hostile territory was crucial to both Mr. Shapiro’s and Senator John Fetterman’s victories in 2022. And while a presidential campaign is a different animal, some of the basics are transferable. Team Biden will need to build up its campaign infrastructure and outreach early in places where Democrats usually get clobbered.

So far, the campaign seems to be taking this challenge to heart.

Lancaster County is one of those places that don’t show Democrats a lot of love. Mr. Trump won this Republican stronghold by [*nearly 16 points*](https://twitter.com/mcottle) in 2020. Mr. Shapiro [*narrowly lost it*](https://twitter.com/mcottle) to the MAGA-tastic Doug Mastriano in 2022. But the Biden team sees potential here and began investing resources early this cycle. The campaign [*opened a local office*](https://twitter.com/mcottle) last month — one of 14 already up and running in the state — making a big to-do about the event and inviting MSNBC to cover it. Campaign hiring is gearing up, and volunteers are already out knocking on voters’ doors multiple times a week.

Last Saturday, I tagged along for some canvassing with Stella Sexton, the vice chairwoman of the county Democratic Committee. Armed with a list of registered Democrats, she was reminding people that the primary was this coming Tuesday and ensuring they knew their polling place was at a local funeral home. Getting people involved in the primary makes it more likely that they will show up for the general election, she told me.

Many of the folks on her list weren’t home. Or weren’t answering the door. (It’s gotten harder with video doorbells, she noted.) Others were not in the mood to chat, such as the older gentleman who came to the door in his fish-print pajama pants. But now and then, Ms. Sexton hit upon someone who shared her sense of mission — like Bernese Lyons, a feisty nonagenarian with strong feelings about the need to defeat Mr. Trump. “The man is mad!” she declared.

Playing in Republican areas can get Mr. Biden only so far, of course. His success will rest heavily on Philadelphia’s populous collar counties, which once leaned red but have shifted blue in recent years thanks in part to suburban women turning against Mr. Trump. MAGA extremism did not play well in this region even before the demise of Roe v. Wade. Now? Mobilizing its legions of moderates and independents over reproductive rights is central to the Democratic playbook.

And then there’s Philly. Any Democrat running statewide needs to run up the vote count in this city of more than 1.5 million people, with three-quarters of the voters registered as Democrats. Talking about Philly is where Dems sound the most nervous. Turnout there has been meh for the past several elections, they say. And since 2020, Mr. Biden has lost support among some core constituencies, including Black and Hispanic voters, of which Philly has an abundance.

Some people, including the former governor Ed Rendell, fear it will be tough for the president to match his 2020 numbers this time. The city was “hard hit during the pandemic. It’s had crime problems, economic problems,” he says. “There really is just a general feeling of — not a hopeless feeling — but a general feeling that people aren’t fired up.”

Political types focused on the city note that, among young Black men in particular, there is a lack of urgency regarding the importance of this election. The Biden campaign is hoping to change this with early engagement. It wants to turn its offices into community hubs, maybe even set up community fridges (like community pantries, only … cooler) in some neighborhoods. And it wants to get trusted local leaders out talking with people early and often.

Smart politicians also know better than to overlook the state’s Hispanic population. While still a relatively modest [*8.6 percent*](https://twitter.com/mcottle), this demographic group is on the rise well beyond Philadelphia. Notably, Allentown, Pennsylvania’s third-largest city, is now majority Hispanic and, in 2021, elected its first Latino mayor.

Mr. Shapiro’s team keeps in touch with Spanish-language media hosts, and the governor does interviews on Spanish-language radio. Not that you have to speak Spanish to us, clarifies Allentown’s mayor, Matt Tuerk. “But you need to show up early instead of just in October and seriously listen to our concerns.” Already this year, Mr. Biden has visited Allentown, as has the president’s health and human services secretary, Xavier Becerra.

The right surrogates, properly deployed, will be critical. Local talent will be the backbone. “It’s really important to tell your story through the people who live in the community,” says Mr. Shapiro. But superstars could have their place as well. “If I were in charge of the campaign, I would take Bill Clinton and send him to every small county in the state,” says Mr. Rendell. “And I’d have Barack Obama hit the major cities.” Many people expect Mr. Shapiro, who enjoys enviable approval numbers, to be Mr. Biden’s most effective surrogate. “He is the most popular Democrat in the state,” says Mr. Rendell. “Use him!”

The campaign’s messengers, of course, need a message that resonates. In terms of policy, Pennsylvanians put the economy at the top of their list of concerns, as is the case nationwide. (No surprise that this is the theme of Mr. Biden’s visit this week.) Indeed, many of the issues that trouble people here are what you hear all over. Gun violence is a worry in Philadelphia. Young voters are outraged over the war in Gaza. The opioid crisis has hit hard. Democracy is being threatened. Women’s reproductive rights are under attack.

The state has its particularities as well, including the sticky issue of fracking. Many Democrats hate the process because of its environmental costs. But in Pennsylvania, fracking took “a lot of people who were going to live and die poor,” made their land valuable and erased their “financial worries,” notes Mr. Rendell.

Tensions over energy development here are one reason the party has [*lost ground*](https://twitter.com/mcottle) in the southwestern part of the state, says Berwood Yost, who heads the Center for Opinion Research at Franklin &amp; Marshall College. At a rally in the Lehigh Valley last Saturday, Mr. Trump gleefully painted the president as an enemy of Pennsylvania’s energy sector. Mr. Biden needs to approach the issue with extreme care, says Mr. Rendell. Mr. Yost observes that Mr. Shapiro, who has been handling a similar balancing act successfully so far, could “offer ideas.”

The president’s heaviest lift may be combating the general bad vibes afoot in the land. “We’re at a point with polarization and politics where policy matters less than emotion,” says Mr. Yost. Moreover, while hawking specific achievements is all well and good, he says, “you have to have some kind of a vision.”

The vision thing is a tough one. For his part, Mr. Shapiro frames this election as a story about freedom: the freedom of women to control their bodies, the freedom to love who you want, the freedom to be who you are and so on. Ms. Scanlon sees it as “an election about choice — and not just on reproductive rights.” Mr. Biden will need to find his own narrative for his candidacy, then work like hell to push it out. But even with a great story, it is hard to argue people out of their feelings.

Still, as the race heats up and people tune in, Democrats are betting they will benefit, as they have since 2018, from the chaos that clings to Mr. Biden’s opponent. “There’s an old saying in politics: ‘The greatest motivator is hate not love,’” says Mr. Rendell. “And Trump is giving a lot of people reasons to hate, and fear, him.”

Democrats have their fingers crossed that this will prove the defining piece of the puzzle.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://twitter.com/mcottle) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://twitter.com/mcottle). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://twitter.com/mcottle).

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PHOTOS: Above left, Philadelphia’s nearby collar counties once leaned red but have shifted blue in recent years thanks in part to suburban women turning against Mr. Trump. Stella Sexton, near left, a local Democratic leader in Pennsylvania, canvasses in her area. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAMON WINTER/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A18.

**Load-Date:** April 20, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Paperback Row***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68PT-F581-JBG3-60YX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 16, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 24

**Length:** 406 words

**Byline:** By Shreya Chattopadhyay

**Body**

THE HAUNTING OF HAJJI HOTAK AND OTHER STORIES, by Jamil Jan Kochai. (Penguin Books, 288 pp., $17.) The 12 stories in this acclaimed collection explore themes of diaspora, violence, grief and return. ''You search for clues, signs, evidence of evil intentions,'' reads the eponymous final story, written from the point of view of a secret agent surveilling an Afghan American family. ''But to no avail. Life merely goes on.''

THE SUMMER FRIEND: A Memoir, by Charles McGrath. (Vintage, 240 pp., $18.) The former editor of the Book Review reflects on lakeside childhood summers and his friendship with a boy who shared his name. ''McGrath's book is an act of love, a fitting tribute to his old friend and a poignant reminder to all of us to squeeze every last drop out of the summers that remain,'' wrote Tom Perrotta in his review.

Elsewhere, by Alexis Schaitkin. (Celadon, 240 pp., $17.99.) Motherhood looms large in this novel set in an anonymous mountain town where mothers often disappear without warning, leaving the locals to speculate on their sins and wipe away their memories. Sixteen-year-old Vera's mom is one of the missing, but it's when a subversive stranger comes to town that her true troubles begin.

BLOOD RED LINES: How Nativism Fuels the Right, by Brendan O'Connor. (Haymarket, 350 pp., $19.95.) Using both original reporting and archival research, O'Connor puts forth an analysis of white supremacy and capitalism that emphasizes the ways those two forces work together to enforce what he calls the ''border fascism'' of the United States. To resist such fascism, he argues, ''a mass ***working-class*** movement'' is necessary.

KEYA DAS'S SECOND ACT, by Sopan Deb. (Simon & Schuster, 288 pp., $16.99.) In this touching novel of grief and growth by a reporter at The New York Times, Keya Das comes out as gay, but her Bengali American family doesn't take it well. When she dies in a car crash while apologies are still underway, it breaks them apart. Then her father finds an unfinished play by his daughter, and the Dases decide to stage it.

SOUNDINGS: Journeys in the Company of Whales: A Memoir, by Doreen Cunningham. (Scribner, 320 pp., $27.99.) Cunningham brought her 2-year-old son with her as she lived among the Iñupiaq people of Alaska and tracked the northward migration of gray whales. In this melodic memoir, the climate researcher turned journalist parallels the whales' journey with her own through parenthood.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/29/books/review/new-paperbacks.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/29/books/review/new-paperbacks.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS This article appeared in print on page BR24.

**Load-Date:** July 16, 2023

**End of Document**



[***In ‘Elsbeth,’ a Quirky Side Character Becomes a Quirky Lead***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BF6-FNY1-JBG3-64D2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 28, 2024 Wednesday 16:48 EST

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**Section:** ARTS; television

**Length:** 1471 words

**Byline:** Elisabeth Vincentelli

**Highlight:** This CBS procedural is new, but its star, Carrie Preston, has been playing the central character for almost 14 years.

**Body**

This CBS procedural is new, but its star, Carrie Preston, has been playing the central character for almost 14 years.

While filming the new crime show [*“Elsbeth”*](https://youtu.be/1J-fCrWcF14) in an Upper West Side apartment in January, Carrie Preston, playing the title character, tentatively patted the guest star Peter Grosz on the arm. The combination of the gesture and Elsbeth’s hesitant expression made the attempt at comfort come across as simultaneously awkward and funny — and unmistakably true to the consistently awkward, funny Elsbeth.

Robert King, who created the series with his wife, Michelle, and was directing that particular episode, chuckled in delight as he watched on a monitor. Nearby the showrunner, Jonathan Tolins, said, “She always finds things like that,” referring to Preston’s flourish. “That was probably not in the script.”

Premiering Thursday on CBS, “Elsbeth” is a new project but Elsbeth herself is not. One reason Preston inhabits her fully enough to improvise such small, telling gestures is because she has been playing her for almost 14 years.

Fans of legal dramas have long been acquainted with Elsbeth Tascioni, a seemingly scatterbrained but diabolically effective redheaded lawyer who popped up toward the end of the first season of [*“The Good Wife”*](https://youtu.be/1J-fCrWcF14) in May 2010. From the start, the Kings, who also created that hit show, thought of [*Elsbeth as an answer to Columbo*](https://youtu.be/1J-fCrWcF14), the Los Angeles homicide detective that Peter Falk played in a series, then specials, between 1968 and 2003.

“I didn’t really watch ‘Columbo’ — it was a little before my time,” said Preston, 56. But “I knew he was a little unorthodox in the way he did things. I was like, ‘OK, I get it: They want people to not see her coming.’”

The Kings kept bringing Elsbeth back for guest stints on both “The Good Wife” and its first spinoff, “The Good Fight.” Despite her relatively limited screen time, she became a fan favorite, and Preston landed two Emmy nominations and one win, in 2013, for playing her.

The character was a little more subdued in her early appearances than she is now, but she became ever more madcap. “I guess they liked what I did with it and began responding to my playing of the role over time,” Preston said, referring to the Kings.

“I think they started to bring me on to add a comic note to the proceedings,” she added. “And it evolved from there.”

Nobody could quite let go of Elsbeth, and Preston recalls that the Kings first mentioned possibly building a show around the character when “The Good Wife” was winding down. They went on to make “The Good Fight” instead, led by Christine Baranski as the powerhouse attorney Diane Lockhart. Then during the Covid-19 pandemic, the couple found themselves bingeing episodes of “Columbo,” and Elsbeth was once again back on their minds, promising tantalizing narrative avenues.

“Peter Falk’s character is almost perfect, but if you think of him as a woman it creates a new, interesting dynamic,” Robert King said in a joint video interview with his wife. “Especially post-#MeToo, without putting our hand on the politics.”

“With Columbo it was all class — he got overlooked because he was a ***working-class*** guy,” Michelle added. “With Elsbeth Tascioni, you layer gender on top of that.”

While the previous two shows were set in Chicago, “Elsbeth” takes place in New York. (The pilot does include a mention of the “Good Wife” stalwart Cary Agos.) The heroine has been dispatched to New York to be an outside observer at a police precinct headed by Captain Wagner (Wendell Pierce), where she ends up helping solve criminal cases.

Watching Preston and Pierce go through scenes on the show’s soundstage in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, where the precinct scenes are shot, the fraught relationship between the two characters was evident from their appearance and body language. She flitted around in a bright blouse, a colorful hummingbird darting quizzical looks every which way; he was a solid mass of a man in his dark-blue uniform, letting her eccentricity bounce off him.

“There’s something happening with us,” Pierce said of the budding chemistry between the two characters in a video interview. “Dare I say it? It reminds me of Lou Grant and Mary,” he continued, alluding to the characters played by Ed Asner and Mary Tyler Moore on “The Mary Tyler Moore Show” in the 1970s. “That’s a bold statement, but it really does.”

That analogy is especially apropos because when Lou Grant was spun off from Moore’s sitcom into his own self-titled series, it was a drama. Elsbeth, too, has changed formats, going from two legal dramas to a lighthearted procedural.

“I would say this is a comedy,” Preston said. “It’s an hourlong show on network, but it’s a comedy.”

Elsbeth is the latest in a line of unconventional TV puzzle-solvers, following the prickly heroes of “Monk,” “House” and, of course, most anything that borrows from “Sherlock Holmes.” But as its creators suggest, it is “Columbo” that the new series most openly honors.

Both shows are “howdunits” in which we know the culprit’s identity from the beginning. Elsbeth’s antagonists also are affluent and powerful, or at least power-hungry. In the first season, she is thrown into rarefied micro-worlds that include reality television, luxe co-op boards, elite matchmaking and high-level tennis. Naturally, their denizens run on hubris and look down on the ebullient Elsbeth as a naïve Midwestern bumpkin. Each episode involves verbal cat-and-mouse games between her and a murderers’ row of, well, murderers. (Guest stars in the first season include Jesse Tyler Ferguson, Jane Krakowski, Retta and Blair Underwood.)

Even those supposedly on Elsbeth’s side make the mistake of misreading her. As the cast ran through a scene on set, Gloria Reuben swanned in as Wagner’s wife, telling Elsbeth “Aren’t you a slice of heaven?” with a buttery undertone of condescension.

“I think all our shows have played with the idea of being underestimated, having characters who use their quirkiness and folksiness and their silliness to hide the fact that they’re really cunning,” Robert King said.

As Preston noted, being misjudged only helps Elsbeth win cases and, now, solve crimes. “She will cut you with a razor blade and you won’t know you’re bleeding until she walks away,” she said.

One of the reasons Elsbeth fascinates viewers is that it is unclear whether her sunny demeanor and free-associating non sequiturs stem from her unfiltered nature or are part of a strategy to ensnare her opponents. The show addresses this ambiguity in the pilot, in which the killer is an acting teacher (played by Preston’s “True Blood” co-star Stephen Moyer). He may be an overly confident, smarmy lech, but he is also good at his job, and at one point he tells Elsbeth, “You’re doing some very fine acting right now.”

Not even Elsbeth’s creators fully agree on her motivations, at least publicly. Michelle King said “the character is actually totally sincere. She’s not putting on an act.” But Preston was more equivocal.

“I don’t ever want the audience to know, because I think it’s more surprising and interesting,” she said. “Maybe she doesn’t even know sometimes when she’s manipulating.”

These divergences are par for the course for a character who remains largely opaque despite her many appearances over the years. Of her personal life, we only know that she has an ex-husband and a son. When asked if either would pop up in “Elsbeth,” Tolins was evasive.

“Possibly, possibly,” he said. “You’ll have to watch."

“Elsbeth has always been a side dish, and it’s a delicate thing to move a side dish to the center of the plate,” he added. “So we are finding lots of cool ways to hint at unexpected layers to this character and of this woman’s life.”

What will definitely remain front and center is Elsbeth’s idiosyncratic charm, kindness and “childlike enthusiasm,” Tolins said. “Throwing that kind of character in the world of a police procedural, it’s a fun tension, but also you root for her and you care about her.”

In other words, “Elsbeth” is a departure from the usually gritty world of modern police shows, and the woman herself is a counter to the dour parade of troubled cops with predictable dark sides instructing us about the poor state of the world.

“When I turn on TV, I’m aware that certain shows feel like vegetables, like ‘OK, this is meant to be good for me in the long run but that doesn’t really appeal,’” Michelle King said, as her husband let out a laugh. “This show is dessert. It is meant to be fun and entertaining and comic, and just enjoyable.”

PHOTOS: Top, Carrie Preston on the set of “Elsbeth.” Center, Preston in “Elsbeth” with Wendell Pierce. Above, Preston (as Elsbeth) and Julianna Margulies in Season 1 of “The Good Wife.” (PHOTOGRAPHS BY EVELYN FREJA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; ELIZABETH FISHER/CBS; DAVID M. RUSSELL/CBS) This article appeared in print on page AR13.

**Load-Date:** February 28, 2024

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[***Biden Joins Autoworkers As a Picketer***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:698B-DDX1-DXY4-X0NH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 27, 2023 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1368 words

**Byline:** By Katie Rogers and Erica L. Green

**Body**

The president's trip came a day before former President Donald J. Trump was scheduled to arrive in Michigan, as the two offer dueling messages in a key swing state.

President Biden grabbed a bullhorn and joined striking autoworkers in Michigan on Tuesday, becoming the first sitting president to join a picket line in an extraordinary show of support for workers demanding better wages.

Auto companies were doing well, Mr. Biden told dozens of workers outside a General Motors facility that employs more than 200 people in Belleville, Mich., outside Detroit.

''Guess what? You should be doing just as well,'' Mr. Biden told the crowd, drawing applause. He fist-bumped several members of the United Auto Workers union.

''You've heard me say many times: Wall Street didn't build this country,'' he said. ''The middle class built this country. And unions built the middle class. That's a fact. Let's keep going. You deserve what you've earned, and you've earned a hell of a lot more than you get paid now.''

The president's 15-minute visit, held under gray skies as classic-rock songs by John Mellencamp and Aerosmith played in the background, came at the invitation of Shawn Fain, U.A.W.'s president, as Mr. Biden tries to solidify support in a key swing state.

Mr. Biden's visit looked like a capstone for a politician who for decades has positioned himself as a champion of the middle class, but other political forces were at play as well. He joined the workers one day before his predecessor and likely 2024 rival, former President Donald J. Trump, is scheduled to visit a nearby county and deliver remarks to current and former union members.

Mr. Biden spoke for only a couple of minutes before turning the bullhorn back to Mr. Fain, who has criticized Mr. Trump's planned visit. While the president watched, Mr. Fain railed against executives and the billionaire class.

''They think they own the world,'' Mr. Fain said. ''But we make it run.''

The White House has been hesitant to say whether Mr. Biden supported what U.A.W. workers were asking for, but when asked whether the workers deserved a 40 percent pay raise, he responded: ''Yes. I think they should be able to bargain for that.''

Automakers, who have argued that wage increases beyond what they have already offered could damage their competitiveness as the industry shifts to embrace electric cars, did not exactly hail the president's visit. ''Our focus is not on politics but continues to be on bargaining in good faith with the U.A.W. leadership to reach an agreement as quickly as possible that rewards our work force and allows G.M. to succeed and thrive into the future,'' General Motors said in a statement, adding that ''nobody wins'' from a strike.

Still, the White House is betting that Mr. Biden's visit is enough to help counter Mr. Trump's visit to the area and earn the president points with U.A.W., which backed him in 2020 but has not yet endorsed him, citing concerns over the administration's push for a transition to electric vehicles.

It is the first time this campaign season that Mr. Biden and Mr. Trump, whose political styles are as divergent as their visions for the country, will be competing in real time for a powerful bloc of ***working-class*** voters.

In one corner, Mr. Biden has argued that his clean-energy agenda -- including a shift toward electric vehicles -- will create new manufacturing jobs, even as companies that make batteries and other electric-vehicle parts resist unionizing their workers.

In another, Mr. Trump has channeled the growing frustration among workers who fear for the future of their jobs. ''REMEMBER, HE WANTS TO TAKE YOUR JOBS AWAY AND GIVE THEM TO CHINA AND OTHER FOREIGN COUNTRIES.'' Mr. Trump wrote of Mr. Biden on social media on Monday, adding, ''I WILL KEEP YOUR JOBS AND MAKE YOU RICH!!!

Officials with both campaigns, of course, have pounced.

''No self-serving photo op can erase Trump's four years of abandoning union workers and standing with his ultrarich friends,'' Ammar Moussa, a spokesman for Mr. Biden's campaign, said in a statement.

Jason Miller, a senior adviser for Mr. Trump, said the president's visit showed he was on the defensive.

''This underscores the fact of how perilous Biden's political footing is: a state that Democrats would have you convinced is safely blue, to talk with a constituency that Democrats would have you convinced are safely in their camp,'' Mr. Miller said in an interview.

In the White House, Mr. Biden's advisers have insisted that his visit has little to nothing to do with his predecessor's, though they say Mr. Biden's appearance is sure to strike a contrast with Mr. Trump's planned visit to Drake Enterprises, a nonunion plant in Macomb County.

Michigan is seen as a critical state for Democrats in 2024. While it was one of Mr. Trump's most surprising victories in 2016, Mr. Biden carried the state in 2020.

Mr. Trump has no plans to meet with Mr. Fain, who has publicly criticized the former president's plans to travel to Michigan: ''We can't keep electing billionaires and millionaires that don't have any understanding what it is like to live paycheck to paycheck and struggle to get by and expecting them to solve the problems of the ***working class***,'' Mr. Fain said last week.

Still, many workers in his union have balked at the Biden administration's proposal of the country's most ambitious climate regulations, which would ensure that two-thirds of new passenger cars are all-electric by 2032, up from 5.8 percent today.

Presidents are typically expected to be neutral arbiters between striking laborers and the companies they work for, and many modern presidents have struggled to find a middle ground.

In 1981, President Ronald Reagan fired over 11,000 striking air traffic controllers, undermining a union effort by arguing that federal workers were in violation of an employment oath not to strike against the government. The decision traumatized the labor movement for decades and caused Democratic presidents to speak delicately about the power of unions.

Mr. Biden has stood firmly stood with U.A.W., which is calling for increased wages, shorter work hours and expanded benefits from three Detroit automakers: General Motors, Ford and Stellantis, the parent of Chrysler.

Since the strike began on Sept. 15, Mr. Biden has been calling on companies and workers to reach an agreement that would spare a ripple effect through the economy that could raise auto prices and disrupt supply chains.

Historians said that Mr. Biden, who came of age during an era of strong unions, is returning Democrats to their roots.

''The recent Democrats have slipped a little,'' said Ileen A. DeVault, a professor of labor history at Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations, ''but I think Biden really is pro-union and pro-labor, and he really is trying to improve working conditions for workers in the United States.''

She did not see the same with Mr. Trump. ''I do not see any evidence that he has done anything at all to either help unions in this country,'' she said, ''let alone to help ordinary people.''

The trip to Michigan is part of a gantlet of a week for Mr. Biden, who hosted a summit with Pacific island leaders on Monday before starting a three-day sprint across the country, beginning in Wayne County, which includes Detroit.

On Tuesday, Mr. Biden was scheduled to travel to San Francisco, where he will hold a campaign reception. On Wednesday, he will host a meeting with advisers who develop recommendations on science, technology and innovation policy.

On Thursday, he is set to deliver remarks centered on the state of democracy in Arizona, an appearance that is expected to be an implicit rebuttal to the Republican presidential debate and Mr. Trump's campaign activities. He will also honor the legacy of John McCain, the longtime Republican senator from Arizona who died in 2018 and who was a frequent foil of Mr. Trump's.

Before making his way to the picket line in Michigan, Mr. Biden asked what it would take to receive the U.A.W.'s endorsement.

''I'm not worried about that,'' he replied.

Jack Ewing contributed reporting.Jack Ewing contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/26/us/politics/biden-uaw-strike-picket-michigan.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/26/us/politics/biden-uaw-strike-picket-michigan.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: President Biden addressed striking autoworkers during a 15-minute visit to a picket line outside a General Motors plant near Detroit. (A1)

President Biden has long positioned himself as a champion of working Americans. ''Unions built the middle class,'' he told U.A.W. members, who have been on strike since Sept. 15. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETE MAROVICH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

PRESIDENT BIDEN, speaking to striking autoworkers on Tuesday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BRITTANY GREESON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A13) This article appeared in print on page A1, A13.

**Load-Date:** September 27, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Idiosyncratic Collection Makes Itself at Home***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69B8-54R1-DXY4-X0MW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 6, 2023 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; Movies, Performing Arts/Weekend Desk; Pg. 12; CRITIC'S PICK

**Length:** 619 words

**Byline:** By Roberta Smith

**Body**

The artist, displaying his own work along with his idiosyncratic holdings, invites rumination on the state of the nation at Demisch Danant gallery.

The artist Robert Gober must be a consummate shopper. ''Cows at a Pond,'' his fragmentary but resonant portrait of the United States at Demisch Danant, has been curated entirely from his own possessions. That is, from his own art and work by other artists living and dead that he has collected, combined with selections from the ephemera and Americana he has accumulated over the years, including some of his household furniture.

Visiting this show can seem stepping inside a grand, laser-sharp obsession. You can picture Gober -- whose best-known sculptures use familiar but distorted objects to conjure some of the perils of childhood -- paging through obscure auction catalogs and haunting thrift shops. In addition he seems to regularly pore over all kinds of printed matter, tracking down or coming across the odd bit of ephemera that may have a use that only he can see.

The things he finds may become artworks, or parts of them, or may stand on their own, adjacent to his art, as clues to or parts of a larger narrative. Every detail is noteworthy. For example, a photograph of Charles Darwin suggests life as a struggle -- psychically and physically -- which is certainly a theme here. The checklist reveals that the photograph was taken by Darwin's son Leonard, introducing the idea of family dynamics, which recurs in startling ways.

Also, some inclusions add weight to others. A red-and-black on yellow sign suspending parking in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 5 and 6, 2021, gives new relevance to a 1972 painting in the gallery's front window by the maverick conceptualist Jonathan Borofsky. It shows a young boy climbing into the family car after school, announcing ''Mom, I lost the election.'' From the mouths of babes ....

Moments of comfort -- art for sanity's sake you could say -- include a tender drawing of a dog's head by the Abstract Expressionist Elaine de Kooning. It hangs slyly above a first edition of Allen Ginsberg's ''Howl'' -- that is actually a meticulous replica of the book made in 1990 by the artist Steve Wolfe. Also on hand: Stuart Davis's ''Clothes on a Line,'' a 1910 painting of white garments levitating in the day's last light, like ghosts. Next to this ***working-class*** vista is a more privileged one: a sketch of sailboats by John F. Kennedy.

There are also references to individuals of inspirational determination. Barbara Jordan, the first Southern Black woman elected to the House of Representatives, is present in a photograph. A portrait of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by an unknown painter faces a book inscription by Helen Keller: ''I just read this book and like it so I am sending it to you.'' Both the book it was torn from and its intended recipient are lost to history.

But don't miss the threat implicit in the King portrait's neighbor: a cartoon-creepy drawing of a hand with Morticia-like long fingers and pointed nails; it's a Matisse study for the chapel in Vence, France, but in this context it evokes the white violence that plagued King's life.

Gober's early sculpture -- a large, functioning dollhouse titled ''Dollhouse 2,'' from 1977 -- occupies the center of the show. Childhood is also evoked in two nearby found objects, both handmade: a pair of child-size wood crutches and a decrepit wood-and-marble baptismal font. The combination may bring to mind the poignant title of D.W. Winnicott's great book on childhood development, ''Home is Where We Start From.''

Robert Gober: Cows at a Pond

Through Oct. 21 at Demisch Danant, 30 West 12th Street, Manhattan; 212- 989-5750, demischdanant.com.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/04/arts/design/robert-gober-review-demisch-danant.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/04/arts/design/robert-gober-review-demisch-danant.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: An installation view of Robert Gober's ''Cows at a Pond'' at Demisch Danant. At center, his ''Dollhouse 2'' (1977)

John Ahearn's plaster, ''Lazaro'' (1991)

and furnishings from Gober's home. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBERT GOBER, VIA DEMISCH DANANT, NEW YORK

WILLIAM JESS LAIRD) This article appeared in print on page C12.

**Load-Date:** October 6, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Biden Joins Autoworkers on Picket Line in Michigan***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6984-TNN1-JBG3-60P3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 26, 2023 Tuesday 09:00 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1442 words

**Byline:** Katie Rogers and Erica L. Green

**Highlight:** The president’s trip came a day before former President Donald J. Trump was scheduled to arrive in Michigan, as the two offer dueling messages in a key swing state.

**Body**

The president’s trip came a day before former President Donald J. Trump was scheduled to arrive in Michigan, as the two offer dueling messages in a key swing state.

President Biden grabbed a bullhorn and joined striking autoworkers in Michigan on Tuesday, becoming the first sitting president to join a picket line in an extraordinary show of support for workers demanding better wages.

Auto companies were doing well, Mr. Biden told dozens of workers outside a General Motors facility that employs more than 200 people in Belleville, Mich., outside Detroit.

“Guess what? You should be doing just as well,” Mr. Biden told the crowd, drawing applause. He fist-bumped several members of the United Auto Workers union.

“You’ve heard me say many times: Wall Street didn’t build this country,” he said. “The middle class built this country. And unions built the middle class. That’s a fact. Let’s keep going. You deserve what you’ve earned, and you’ve earned a hell of a lot more than you get paid now.”

The president’s 15-minute visit, held under gray skies as classic-rock songs by John Mellencamp and Aerosmith played in the background, came at the invitation of Shawn Fain, U.A.W.’s president, as Mr. Biden tries to solidify support in a key swing state.

Mr. Biden’s visit looked like a capstone for a politician who for decades has positioned himself as a champion of the middle class, but other political forces were at play as well. He joined the workers one day before his predecessor and likely 2024 rival, former President Donald J. Trump, is scheduled to visit a nearby county and deliver remarks to current and former union members.

Mr. Biden spoke for only a couple of minutes before turning the bullhorn back to Mr. Fain, who has criticized Mr. Trump’s planned visit. While the president watched, Mr. Fain railed against executives and the billionaire class.

“They think they own the world,” Mr. Fain said. “But we make it run.”

The White House has been hesitant to say whether Mr. Biden supported what U.A.W. workers were asking for, but when asked whether the workers deserved a 40 percent pay raise, he responded: “Yes. I think they should be able to bargain for that.”

Automakers, who have argued that wage increases beyond what they have already offered could damage their competitiveness as the industry shifts to embrace electric cars, did not exactly hail the president’s visit. “Our focus is not on politics but continues to be on bargaining in good faith with the U.A.W. leadership to reach an agreement as quickly as possible that rewards our work force and allows G.M. to succeed and thrive into the future,” General Motors said in a statement, adding that “nobody wins” from a strike.

Still, the White House is betting that Mr. Biden’s visit is enough to help counter Mr. Trump’s visit to the area and earn the president points with U.A.W., which backed him in 2020 but has [*not yet endorsed him*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/03/us/politics/biden-auto-workers-endorsement.html), citing concerns over the administration’s push for a transition to electric vehicles.

It is the first time this campaign season that Mr. Biden and Mr. Trump, whose political styles are as divergent as their visions for the country, will be competing in real time for a powerful bloc of ***working-class*** voters.

In one corner, Mr. Biden has argued that his clean-energy agenda — including a shift toward electric vehicles — will create new manufacturing jobs, even as companies that make batteries and other electric-vehicle parts resist unionizing their workers.

In another, Mr. Trump has channeled the growing frustration among workers who fear for the future of their jobs. “REMEMBER, HE WANTS TO TAKE YOUR JOBS AWAY AND GIVE THEM TO CHINA AND OTHER FOREIGN COUNTRIES.” Mr. Trump wrote of Mr. Biden on social media on Monday, adding, “I WILL KEEP YOUR JOBS AND MAKE YOU RICH!!!

Officials with both campaigns, of course, have pounced.

“No self-serving photo op can erase Trump’s four years of abandoning union workers and standing with his ultrarich friends,” Ammar Moussa, a spokesman for Mr. Biden’s campaign, said in a statement.

Jason Miller, a senior adviser for Mr. Trump, said the president’s visit showed he was on the defensive.

“This underscores the fact of how perilous Biden’s political footing is: a state that Democrats would have you convinced is safely blue, to talk with a constituency that Democrats would have you convinced are safely in their camp,” Mr. Miller said in an interview.

In the White House, Mr. Biden’s advisers have insisted that his visit has little to nothing to do with his predecessor’s, though they say Mr. Biden’s appearance is sure to strike a contrast with Mr. Trump’s planned visit to Drake Enterprises, a nonunion plant in Macomb County.

Michigan is seen as a critical state for Democrats in 2024. While it was one of Mr. Trump’s most surprising victories in 2016, Mr. Biden carried the state in 2020.

Mr. Trump has no plans to meet with Mr. Fain, who has publicly criticized the former president’s plans to travel to Michigan: “We can’t keep electing billionaires and millionaires that don’t have any understanding what it is like to live paycheck to paycheck and struggle to get by and expecting them to solve the problems of the ***working class***,” Mr. Fain said last week.

Still, many workers in his union have balked at the Biden administration’s proposal of [*the country’s most ambitious climate regulations*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/12/climate/biden-electric-cars-epa.html), which would ensure that two-thirds of new passenger cars are all-electric by 2032, up from 5.8 percent today.

Presidents are typically expected to be neutral arbiters between striking laborers and the companies they work for, and many modern presidents have struggled to find a middle ground.

In 1981, President Ronald Reagan fired over 11,000 striking air traffic controllers, undermining a union effort by arguing that federal workers were in violation of an employment oath not to strike against the government. The decision traumatized the labor movement for decades and caused Democratic presidents to speak delicately about the power of unions.

Mr. Biden has stood firmly stood with U.A.W., which is [*calling for increased wages, shorter work hours and expanded benefits*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/14/business/uaw-strike-plan.html) from three Detroit automakers: General Motors, Ford and Stellantis, the parent of Chrysler.

Since the strike began on Sept. 15, Mr. Biden has been calling on companies and workers to reach an agreement that would [*spare a ripple effect through the economy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/13/business/economy/uaw-strike-economic-impact.html) that could raise auto prices and disrupt supply chains.

Historians said that Mr. Biden, who came of age during an era of strong unions, is returning Democrats to their roots.

”The recent Democrats have slipped a little,” said Ileen A. DeVault, a professor of labor history at Cornell University’s School of Industrial and Labor Relations, “but I think Biden really is pro-union and pro-labor, and he really is trying to improve working conditions for workers in the United States.”

She did not see the same with Mr. Trump. “I do not see any evidence that he has done anything at all to either help unions in this country,” she said, “let alone to help ordinary people.”

The trip to Michigan is part of a gantlet of a week for Mr. Biden, who hosted [*a summit with Pacific island leaders*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/25/us/politics/biden-pacific-islands-china.html) on Monday before starting a three-day sprint across the country, beginning in Wayne County, which includes Detroit.

On Tuesday, Mr. Biden was scheduled to travel to San Francisco, where he will hold a campaign reception. On Wednesday, he will host a meeting with advisers who develop recommendations on science, technology and innovation policy.

On Thursday, he is set to deliver remarks centered on the state of democracy in Arizona, an appearance that is expected to be an implicit rebuttal to the [*Republican presidential debate*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/25/us/politics/next-debate-candidates-qualify.html) and Mr. Trump’s campaign activities. He will also honor the legacy of John McCain, the longtime Republican senator from Arizona who [*died in 2018*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/25/obituaries/john-mccain-dead.html) and who was a frequent foil of Mr. Trump’s.

Before making his way to the picket line in Michigan, Mr. Biden asked what it would take to receive the U.A.W.’s endorsement.

“I’m not worried about that,” he replied.

Jack Ewing contributed reporting.

Jack Ewing contributed reporting.

PHOTOS: President Biden addressed striking autoworkers during a 15-minute visit to a picket line outside a General Motors plant near Detroit. (A1); President Biden has long positioned himself as a champion of working Americans. “Unions built the middle class,” he told U.A.W. members, who have been on strike since Sept. 15. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETE MAROVICH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); PRESIDENT BIDEN, speaking to striking autoworkers on Tuesday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BRITTANY GREESON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A13) This article appeared in print on page A1, A13.

**Load-Date:** September 27, 2023

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[***2 Mayoral Wins for Michigan Democrats Come at a Cost***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69KH-B1H1-JBG3-60WK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 9, 2023 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 19

**Length:** 759 words

**Byline:** By Mitch Smith

**Body**

The shift is likely to only be temporary, but control of Michigan's House will be evenly divided after two members resign to become suburban mayors.

Ten months ago, Michigan Democrats took full control of state government for the first time in 40 years.

Despite slim legislative majorities, they wielded that newfound power quickly and decisively, enacting gun laws, codifying civil rights for L.G.B.T.Q. people, solidifying abortion rights and undoing Republican laws that they said weakened labor unions.

But on Tuesday night, Democrats learned that their 56-to-54 advantage in the Michigan House of Representatives would become a 54-to-54 tie, at least temporarily, because two Democratic legislators had won elections to become mayors of Detroit suburbs.

When the two vacate their House seats, as they are required to do in the coming days, Michigan's leftward march of 2023 is likely to reach a partisan stalemate.

Michigan was one of four states with a new Democratic trifecta -- single-party control of the governorship and both legislative chambers -- when this year began. Bolstered in last year's election by redrawn legislative maps, an abortion ballot question and a strong showing by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, who decisively won a second term, Michigan Democrats narrowly flipped control of both the State House and Senate.

Ms. Whitmer, a Democrat who is frequently mentioned as a possible future presidential candidate, is expected to call special elections to fill the seats of the soon-to-be mayors, Representatives Kevin Coleman and Lori M. Stone. Mr. Coleman is leaving the Legislature to become mayor of Westland, population 84,000, and Ms. Stone will become mayor of Warren, population 137,000. Both are expected to remain in the Capitol for the next few days.

Mr. Coleman and Ms. Stone each won legislative races in their districts last year by more than 25 percentage points, leaving Democratic leaders confident that the party will ultimately reassert its trifecta.

But special elections can be unpredictable. And even if Democrats hold both seats, many expect it will be a few months before new legislators take their oaths of office in Lansing. By that point, the state will be in the throes of the 2024 election cycle, in which Republicans hope to win back the House.

In recent months, some Democrats had worried that the two mayoral races could possibly disrupt their party's narrow hold on Michigan, a perennial battleground that Donald J. Trump won in 2016 and Joseph R. Biden Jr. won in 2020.

Mr. Coleman said he was proud of the Democrats' record this year in Lansing, especially on labor issues, and was excited about the chance to lead his ***working-class*** suburb. His new job carries a pay raise and spares him an 80-minute commute to Lansing. But the win, he said, was in some ways bittersweet.

Mr. Coleman said some fellow Democrats, including members of Ms. Whitmer's staff and Speaker of the House Joe Tate, expressed concerns to him about the mayoral run. But none of them, he said, did anything to undermine his campaign for mayor.

''My perception is she trusted my decision to run, and I think she understood where I was coming from,'' Mr. Coleman said of the governor. ''I think she understands, again, our seat's not going anywhere, it's just a matter of maybe it slows the process down a little bit.''

Ms. Stone did not immediately respond to an interview request.

Ms. Whitmer's office did not make her available for an interview or immediately respond to Mr. Coleman's characterization of her views. A spokeswoman for the governor, Stacey LaRouche, said in a statement that ''this legislative term has been one of the most productive in state history'' and that Ms. Whitmer had accomplished many of her top priorities.

Democrats said they believe Mr. Tate will remain the speaker and Democrats will retain committee chairmanships while the House is evenly divided, and Republican leaders have not indicated that they will challenge that. But the chamber is unlikely to pass bills without bipartisan support until the vacant seats are filled.

Representative Matt Hall, the Republican leader in the House, congratulated the ''two fine public servants'' on their mayoral wins in a statement and said ''we are entering a new era in Lansing with a House that is now evenly divided.''

He added: ''House Democrats have a choice to make: Together we can forge compromise and achieve the most productive months of the session, or the House Democrat leadership can take their ball and go home until next spring.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/08/us/michigan-state-legislature-democrats.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/08/us/michigan-state-legislature-democrats.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A19.

**Load-Date:** November 9, 2023

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[***Latinidad's Return***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68CV-NFF1-JBG3-6059-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 4, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section MM; Column 0; Magazine Desk; Pg. 46; THE CALIFORNIA ISSUE

**Length:** 1499 words

**Byline:** By Héctor Tobar and Deb Leal

**Body**

Stepping through the ornate facade of a faux City Hall, I enter the indoor swap meet at Plaza Mexico, the kitschy shopping center that's a landmark of California's resurgent Latino identity. I'm in the town of Lynwood, but the vibe is nothing like the WASPy Los Angeles of my 1970s youth. At the traffic circle that serves as the Plaza's entrance, I find a copy of the Angel of Independence, a famous monument in Mexico City that commemorates the beginning of Mexico's fight for secession from Spain. The replica Mexican municipal building, or ayuntamiento, features the eagle and the serpent of Mexico's coat of arms. This building was, in another time, a Montgomery Ward department store. Now I walk through it and enter the Latino equivalent of Disneyland.

Plaza Mexico is a phantasmagoric translation of a Mexican village, where vendors have created an aesthetic that Latino art critics call rasquachismo, meaning improvised and unpolished. During my visit, I see one store offering a garden fountain featuring a tiny Jesus inside an old washtub painted cerulean, and what appear to be four bronze bowling pins hovering like spaceships around him; it goes for $320. Asian women staff a nail salon bathed in bright fluorescent light. A food stand offers tamales, chimichangas and an exotic delicacy made with fresh corn -- elotes con Hot Cheetos. Call it Mexicoland: a new kind of ''Latinidad'' that's ***working class*** and distinctly Californian, grounded in the state's diversity and our faith in an increasingly elusive American dream. If ''Latino'' is already a kind of synonym for ''mixed,'' in California this mixing has become ever more complex.

A few decades ago, this resurgence of Latino culture would have seemed unlikely. In the 1960s, the future locale of the Plaza Mexico was known as ''lily-white Lynwood.'' The locals drank vanilla Cokes at a drugstore soda fountain downtown, and department stores catered to a blue-collar white clientele. A Los Angeles Times reporter would later remember it as a time of ''boosterism, Boy Scouts and high hopes.'' These halcyon days shined only for some, though. In the popular American imagination of that time, Latino identity was often equated with service, manual labor and servility. This lingers today, as Latino immigrants are routinely denigrated in the media, their homelands equated with barbarism and poverty.

By 2020, though, Lynwood was nearly 90 percent Hispanic. In the last half-century, ***working-class*** suburbs across Southern California have undergone a similar demographic and cultural shift. In Los Angeles County, roughly half the population self-identified as Hispanic on the 2020 census. Immigration from Latin America has transformed life in the Golden State in countless ways, from our food habits to our amorous entanglements. Whether at their workplaces or in their neighborhoods, many non-Latino Californians live in daily contact with Latinos. Cultural significance is often prelude to political power. A generation after Californians voted for ballot measures that limited Spanish instruction in schools and banned undocumented immigrants from public services, Latino leaders are now active in most levels of state government. In Sacramento, Latino legislators have helped approve laws granting driver's licenses and in-state college tuition to the undocumented. In Lynwood, there are Latino majorities on the City Council and school board.

Here, these changes have been driven, in part, by California's cycles of boom and bust, and the growing economic and racial disparities that accompany them. When the California Department of Transportation purchased huge swaths of real estate in the 1970s to build Interstate 105 -- the freeway that would link the newly developed suburbs of south Los Angeles County -- Lynwood was cut in half, and property values plummeted. Middle-class Black families moved into Lynwood as white families moved out, and ''lily-white Lynwood'' began to collapse. The Montgomery Ward shut down. Lynwood and neighboring Compton became Latino barrios as crises in Mexico and Central America sent large numbers of immigrants northward. Meanwhile, two Korean brothers, the Chaes, purchased the old Montgomery Ward building and transformed it into an indoor swap meet catering to a mostly Latino clientele.

The architect David Hidalgo, 65, saw Greater Los Angeles become a Latino metropolis in his lifetime. His father was raised in downtown Los Angeles during the Zoot Suit era, but moved the family to the then-mostly-white suburb of La Puente in the late 1950s (once, a neighbor mistook Hidalgo's mother for a housekeeper). As a teenager, Hidalgo became a surfer who caught waves at Huntington Cliffs, but he began to connect more deeply with his Mexican American identity when he traveled to Mexico as a college student. As a young architect, he made his reputation doing facade renovations on old commercial properties. In 2000, the Chae brothers came to his office and asked him to design a shopping center in Lynwood in the style of a Mexican town.

Give the Latino families in Lynwood a taste of the old country, the thinking went, and maybe they'll spend a little of their hard-earned cash, too. To create his marketplace, Hidalgo returned to Mexico several times and met with old relatives, including a great-uncle who was a general in the army. Above all, he played tourist. ''What is the essence of this culture?'' Hidalgo asked himself as he walked through old colonial cities and archaeological sites, including Chichén Itzá in Yucatán. ''I brought all these elements into the melting pot of my brain,'' he says.

At Plaza Mexico, the Latino community has accepted the invitation to celebrate their culture. In the open-air mall, I see homeboys taking selfies in front of a fountain of concrete feathered serpents, replicas of the ancient stone sculptures found at Teotihuacán. I find installations erected by Mexican states after the shopping center opened in 2004, including a statue of Pancho Villa and a reproduction of the iconic Aztec Sun Stone.

A stroll through the shopping center reminds you that Latin American culture can be monumental, beautiful and heroic. Here, Latino people reimagine themselves inside the Mexican and Central American villages of family lore, territories now separated from them by increasingly policed borders. When school lets out in the afternoons, the vendor Alvaro García watches as parents take their children to the old-fashioned merry-go-round next to his outdoor artesanía, or handicrafts, stand. García, 64, told me that he and his brother have operated their stand at Plaza Mexico for a dozen years. Zapotec is his first language; Spanish his second. He first migrated to the United States in 1995 and worked in the tomato harvest, then in a Chinese restaurant, before finally starting his own business. Most of what García sells are textiles imported from his native Oaxaca. Somehow, his Plaza Mexico stand survived the pandemic.

But not everyone made it through the hard times. ''I know 10 families that have moved backed to Oaxaca,'' he says. ''Entire families.'' When I ask him if he still thinks of California as the land of opportunity, he answers in Spanish: ''Se acabó.'' Meaning, that's over. People in Mexico don't realize how tough things are in California, he adds. Lynwood is a town where three-bedroom homes can go for more than $600,000. García says he tries to disabuse his Mexican relatives of the notion that California is Easy Street. ''We sleep on the floor,'' he tells them. ''Luxuries, cabrón: There aren't any here.''

Boosters have long portrayed California as a utopia where people can reinvent and enrich themselves. In some ways, Plaza Mexico is a Latino version of that story, told by those who were long excluded from what the state has to offer. Here, I've seen how a new, American way of being ''Latino'' is being assembled from contact with many different cultures. For example, the architectural historian Alec Stewart has noted that the many Southern California indoor swap meets were built, like Plaza Mexico, by Korean entrepreneurs to serve a predominantly Latino and Black clientele, and bear a strong resemblance to the textile markets of Seoul. These Asian-run businesses might hire folklórico dancers and mariachis to lure in a ***working-class*** clientele.

Like the individual architectural styles that Plaza Mexico incorporates, the old race and ethnic labels (Black, white, Hispanic, Asian) don't quite capture the drama of cultural intermingling we see on the ground. California is outracing all of that; its polyglot present foreshadows the nation we are becoming.

Héctor Tobar is a Los Angeles-born author of six books, including, most recently, ''Our Migrant Souls: A Meditation on Race and the Meanings and Myths of 'Latino.''' Deb Leal is an artist, director and photographer currently based in Brooklyn and Oakland, Calif. Her work explores time and memory through color and composition.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/01/magazine/latino-mall-los-angeles.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/01/magazine/latino-mall-los-angeles.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: All photos shot at Plaza Mexico, Lynwood, Calif., in May. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DEB LEAL) (MM46-MM47

MM48-MM49)

This article appeared in print on page MM46, MM47, MM48, MM49, MM50.

**Load-Date:** June 4, 2023

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[***Together Forever***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C10-NCY1-DXY4-X05F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 12, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section MM; Column 0; Magazine Desk; Pg. 22; THE RETIREMENT ISSUE

**Length:** 2840 words

**Byline:** By Susan Dominus

**Body**

This spring, Barbara and Joe, a retired couple in their 60s, sat down with me at a bistro in suburban Connecticut to talk about their relationship. That they were sitting there together at all was something of a triumph. In the past few days, they had hurled at each other the kinds of accusations that couples make when they are on the brink of mutual destruction. They were bruised from the words that had been exchanged, and although they sat close to each other, their energy was quiet and heavy.

Barbara and Joe met 13 years ago, two divorced people who had relentlessly climbed their way up from ***working-class*** backgrounds. Barbara rose to be the vice president of a wholesale apparel business before moving into retail, then winding down her career; to keep herself busy, she sells clothing online a few hours a day. Joe co-founded a delivery business that he sold in 2021 for an amount that meant he would never have to work again; he retired in January last year. He and Barbara had time; they had money; they had leisure. They also had a problem: They were driving each other mad.

Barbara briefed me on her experience before we met in person. Since retirement, she reported, Joe had found himself untethered. He was underfoot, always around and not exactly occupied. It was bad enough that he was spending hours on his phone scrolling through Instagram, bad enough that he was doing so on a couch in the living room, a space that had always been hers and hers alone throughout the day. Now he also wanted her to look at the funny dog videos that made him laugh, and yes, funny pig videos too. She did not find this particularly sexy, but he also wanted more sex than when he was working, one of many ways she felt the burden of keeping him entertained. ''Love him very much,'' she texted. ''But I'm going crazy or going back to work, whichever comes first.''

At lunch that day, Joe wore a pink flannel shirt that suited him and had clearly been picked out by someone with a tasteful eye. He seemed nervous about discussing his relationship, which reflected just one of the many differences the couple had to negotiate: Barbara was frank and open by nature; Joe was more private (which is why they've requested that only their first names be used).

For years, Joe said, he had been monomaniacally focused on his exit -- on selling the business. He had given almost no thought to what his life would look like once he finally did. ''I had visions of going to the gym,'' he said. That turned out to take up no more than an hour of his day. Then what? He was at something of a loss. ''It's been a kind of transition trying to move away from people that were like my second family,'' he said. ''It's been a little enlightening that once you're gone, you're gone.''

A life transition as significant as marrying or having children, retirement is a stage that many couples anticipate with little of the trepidation those earlier choices inspired. They look forward to it as a reward for years of hard work -- a long vacation, full of agency and freedom, to enjoy as long as their bodies hold up. Yet retirement, like any major transition, often entails destabilizing shifts that take many people by surprise. Although it's still rare for married couples over 60 to break up, the divorce rate is rising faster in that age group than in any other, as baby boomers accustomed to self-actualization reach retirement age and evaluate their lives anew.

''The relationship can have an identity crisis,'' says Allison Howe, a therapist who works primarily with couples in New York. Howe says retirement is a time when the issues that couples have been avoiding -- aided by the distractions of work or child rearing or both -- come roaring to the forefront. ''There are disagreements now about how to envision this new stage of life,'' she says. ''The retirement phase amplifies everything, actually -- the absence of true collaboration, whether they were really friends, whether they had a shared narrative. All of these things get heightened now because we have less time.''

Couples have less time on a grand scale while contending, suddenly, with more free time in their waking hours. Many disagree on how to spend it. ''I can do anything I want, but lack an activity partner,'' reported Danny Steiner, a recently retired 70-year-old high school teacher whose wife does not share his passion for travel -- a difference that really manifested only once it was an option. More time can lay bare the reality that some couples did better with less of it. ''Being together just does not feel as special as it once did,'' said Martha Battie, a retired college administrator in Hanover, N.H. ''Whatever conversations or sharing we have seems to be forgotten, or not really heard from the start.'' And more time means more exposure to whatever irritating habits were easily endured in smaller doses. Among the things that grated on her, Barbara had texted, was that Joe ''mansplains everything.'' He had always been that way, she knew, but now she had to deal with so much more of it.

After some 50 years of marriage, decades during which she often wished her husband worked fewer hours, Yvonne McCracken, at age 73, found herself hoping that the office might reclaim him. When her husband, Richard McCracken, retired from the business he built, Yvonne was still working from their home in Charlotte, N.C., as a quality-assurance specialist for a network of research sites, and she could feel him hovering near her desk off the kitchen as he did busy work on his laptop.

Having left her largely in charge, for most of their marriage, of raising two daughters, dealing with the home and managing her own career, Richard now seemed to have had some late-in-life revelation that his wife could clearly benefit from his input. He had ideas about how she should manage her team, which he sometimes shared after she completed Zoom calls: She should have told them to solve a problem a certain way, or given them more direction. The advice irritated Yvonne, who is not a fan of micromanagement (of herself or others). ''I'm a very private person,'' Yvonne said, ''and the fact that he was even listening to my phone calls was, my God, it was like: I can't believe you're doing this. What? Why are you here?'' Sometimes he walked past her computer and waved and smiled and mugged for her co-workers, which annoyed her just as much as his unsolicited counsel.

She wondered: Was this what he was like as a boss at the business he ran? She supposed so. She had never given her husband's work persona much thought. That part of his life was separate from her own, but instead of receding now that he was retired, it seemed to be taking up even more space. When Richard started picking up consulting work to stave off his own restlessness, he took over their kitchen, spreading papers and folders on various surfaces and leaving half-filled coffee cups and laptop chargers lying around. ''It destroys the energy in the house,'' Yvonne said. She told me they had agreed that he could no longer work in the kitchen; Richard seemed to have the impression that he had simply promised to clean up at the end of each day. He told me that his wife was becoming a minimalist. ''I'm kind of the opposite,'' he said. ''I always tend to spread out -- like mold.''

The couple had coexisted on separate tracks for many years, so much so that even the sweet moments of retirement, like weekends with their grandchildren, to whom Richard was devoted, kicked up feelings of regret and loss for Yvonne. As a working mother, she had done the large part of the child rearing on her own, without a fully invested partner. ''He'll say to me about the grandchildren, Wow, they're so bright and interesting,'' she said. ''And I'll say, You know, your own children were very bright and interesting, too.'' Regrets about the past were colliding with the minutiae of how they would coexist as they faced aging together.

Yvonne and Richard shared, at least, a similar vision of how to approach their finances, which can be a source of tension for many retired couples. Financial troubles can rob them of their peace of mind, and even those who are well prepared are often surprised to find that they have different instincts about how to manage their savings.

Frances and Tito Sisnett, pharmacists from California, had saved carefully for years. After they retired -- Frances in 2016, Tito in 2017 -- Frances was determined to hold on tight to the money they worked so hard to earn. Tito wanted to travel frequently to Panama and Barbados, where he had family. He had done the calculations and knew that with their savings and investments, they could afford it. But fear was baked into Frances's decision-making process; at age 12, she experienced the precipitous collapse of her family's financial security when her father died unexpectedly and her mother fell ill. No matter how many times Tito explained the math, she worried that they would run out of funds. ''You've got to change the way you think,'' Tito recalled telling her. ''That was many hours of discussion.''

Eventually, they hired a financial adviser, who delivered the same assurance that Tito was already providing; Frances could accept it from a professional, and she was able to move on from what seemed like an unshakable stance.

In 2020, Frances and Tito, who felt ready to live outside the United States, moved to Panama near his family. Now they faced the question of travel in reverse: How much time were they going to spend with their grandchildren back in Maryland? Having been more reluctant to leave for Panama in the first place, Frances was now trying to build a life in their new home, which meant making a fierce commitment to spending time there. Tito, who already had strong connections in Panama, was much more eager to spend extended periods with the grandchildren.

Not long after moving to Panama, Frances and Tito became friendly with Charlotte Van Horn, a fellow retiree who left a career as a legal assistant and has since built a business helping Black couples make homes there. Frances and Tito have found a way to negotiate their different preferences about travel, but sometimes, Van Horn says, the issue of how much time to spend where, and with whom, is the thing that ultimately divides previously happy couples.

''You have one person who says, I'm not leaving the grandchildren,'' she told me. ''And the other says: I've spent my whole life staying in certain places and doing certain things because I was raising my own kids. I'm not going to let someone else's kids keep me from doing what I really want to do in life.'' Van Horn has seen some couples decide that they will be apart for months of the year while visiting back and forth. ''But I don't think it's worked,'' she says. ''They're breaking up, but they're not admitting it. It's too painful. So they just ... let it go by the wayside.''

Early in his career, John Gottman, a founder of the Gottman Institute, a center devoted to the study of successful marriages, believed that the best predictor of happiness in retirement would be a robust ''second identity'' for one or both members of the couple outside of work. ''So if you were a mechanic but you also sang in the choir, in church on weekends, or you flew hang gliders or something like that, and it was important to you,'' Gottman thought, then the pain of the loss of one identity would be dulled by the full emergence of the second.

But research over the years has found only a limited effect of a second identity on happiness in that phase of life. The much more important factor, Gottman told me, is the quality of the marriage before retirement. The Health and Retirement Study, a sweeping national research project now in its 32nd year, found that an unhappy marriage predicts unhappiness in retirement more than declines in wealth or even health, says Mo Wang, a professor at the University of Florida who studies the retirement adjustment.

Whether couples are able to help each other stretch, a concept that social scientists call ''self-expansion,'' also matters. Strong self-expansion skills -- the ability to make new friends or pick up new interests that require dedicated learning -- are correlated with everything from general well-being to even weight loss and cognitive health. Not surprising, researchers in 2020 found that couples who reported high levels of that kind of reinforcement -- encouraging each other to try something new, for example -- were happier and were weathering the transition much better.

Barbara told me that she had been encouraging Joe to try new things. At the same time, she clearly didn't see it as her job to figure out for him what those things might be. She frustrated easily. She snapped often, by her own admission. Her irritation was a function of how perilously close she was to losing touch with what she admired in this tremendously industrious and competent partner. ''My friends tell me I'm going to lose him,'' Barbara said. ''They tell me, You have to be nicer. But ... I just can't. I am who I am. After all these years, I can't change.''

At lunch, Joe said that there were, in fact, things he would like to be doing with his time, if he could only get motivated to focus on them. ''I always wanted to play guitar,'' he said. ''I'm like a music banana.''

''He is,'' Barbara confirmed. (She seemed to know that this meant he was a music enthusiast.)

''I've tried a few times,'' he said, ''and I never could make it stick.'' He had looked at a few guitar classes online, to no avail, even though he said that once he commits to a project, he really commits. ''Usually, I'm pretty good once I get going,'' he said. (''He is,'' Barbara confirmed.) ''It's just, now I don't.'' And that was where they had left it: Joe paralyzed. Barbara annoyed, for months now.

Couldn't a guitar instructor visit the house one day a week? Provide some focus, some company, some structure?

Barbara and Joe seemed to brighten at the thought. That was something he could do. Maybe there were other things they could do too, like rethink how they used space if they were always in each other's way. Barbara had complained that when she was online in their living room, trying to post garments on eBay, she could feel Joe's presence in a way that was unnerving, even when he was ignoring her.

Wasn't his office upstairs empty? What if she worked there for a few discrete hours a day, so that expectations all around were clear?

''If I go up there,'' Barbara said, ''it's almost like saying, OK, you want me to be away.'' She thought this over. Maybe she wasn't the only one who needed the space. Maybe Joe wanted some, too. ''I do,'' he said.

''OK,'' Barbara said, ''well, we never really discussed this.'' She suddenly saw not just her perception of Joe but his perception of her. She was overcome with remorse about how she had been talking to him. ''I tell people stories about what's going on between us, expecting sympathy, and they're like, What's wrong with you?'' she admitted.

As they spoke, it became clear that they were each struggling with the reality that Joe was feeling something close to depression. He had taken it very hard when he had lunch with some former colleagues, people still working long hours at the business, and had the sense that once they said their farewells after the meal, they would rarely give him another thought. Seeing that vulnerability moved Barbara. For Joe, retirement meant looking back on the totality of his life and trying to weigh what all that effort had added up to. What did it mean?

In the weeks after our conversation, Joe and Barbara seemed to pull themselves back from the brink. It took him some time, but Joe had, on his own, found a guitar instructor. He spent hours on the phone with Barbara's ex-husband, an avid musician, talking about how to tune and clamp the instrument. After the instructor came and gave Joe his first lesson, he was even more enthusiastic. Since then, he had been working for hours on the song he was learning, Pearl Jam's cover of ''Last Kiss.''

Barbara loved hearing it. She was reflecting on how she had always prided herself on being strong, on being independent, her response to a hardscrabble childhood in which she was overlooked. ''You know, I just want to do what I want to do,'' she said. ''I'm not someone who's going to feel tremendous guilt about not doing something I don't want to do.'' But she was moving away from her insistence that she couldn't change, that she wouldn't change, to a recognition that maybe she could and should, even if it took effort. ''The thought of him not being around, of being with someone else, makes me think: What are these big sacrifices I'm making? The big sacrifice would be if we weren't together.''

David Hilliard is an artist and educator from Boston. He creates narrative multipaneled photographs, often based on his life or the lives of people around him.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/05/magazine/retirement-couples.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/05/magazine/retirement-couples.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Left and opening pages: Yvonne and Richard McCracken, who have had to figure out how to share their space since retiring. (MM23

MM24-MM25)

Tito and Frances Sisnett, who discovered after retirement that they had different philosophies about spending money. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID HILLIARD) (MM26-MM27) This article appeared in print on page MM22, MM23, MM24, MM25, MM26, MM27.

**Load-Date:** May 12, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Michigan Democrats Win 2 Mayoral Races but Lose Full Command of State Government***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69KC-0NW1-DXY4-X1DK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 8, 2023 Wednesday 01:30 EST

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 759 words

**Byline:** Mitch Smith

**Highlight:** The shift is likely to only be temporary, but control of Michigan’s House will be evenly divided after two members resign to become suburban mayors.

**Body**

The shift is likely to only be temporary, but control of Michigan’s House will be evenly divided after two members resign to become suburban mayors.

Ten months ago, Michigan Democrats took [*full control of state government*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/18/us/democrats-michigan-minnesota-maryland.html) for the first time in 40 years.

Despite slim legislative majorities, they [*wielded that newfound power*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/09/us/michigan-democrats-right-to-work-lgbtq-guns.html) quickly and decisively, [*enacting gun laws*](https://apnews.com/article/gun-red-flag-law-whitmer-michigan-338a168af6cd59b48a03d32dda34aa03), [*codifying civil rights for L.G.B.T.Q. people*](https://apnews.com/article/lgbtq-elliott-larsen-michigan-whitmer-discrimination-6dab85a296020e9612ed417028b6cf09), [*solidifying abortion rights*](https://apnews.com/article/abortion-ban-michigan-whitmer-1931-repeal-2abb0525618a6ac5ee5a45b02ef4de3b) and [*undoing Republican laws*](https://apnews.com/article/right-to-work-repeal-michigan-democrats-b4304a2780909d37e76f211c7b070a6b) that they said weakened labor unions.

But on Tuesday night, Democrats learned that their 56-to-54 advantage in the Michigan House of Representatives would become a 54-to-54 tie, at least temporarily, because two Democratic legislators had won elections to become mayors of Detroit suburbs.

When the two vacate their House seats, as they are required to do in the coming days, Michigan’s leftward march of 2023 is likely to reach a partisan stalemate.

Michigan was one of four states with a new Democratic trifecta — single-party control of the governorship and both legislative chambers — when this year began. Bolstered in last year’s election by redrawn legislative maps, an abortion ballot question and a strong showing by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, who decisively won a second term, Michigan Democrats narrowly flipped control of both the State House and Senate.

Ms. Whitmer, a Democrat who is frequently mentioned as a possible future presidential candidate, is expected to call special elections to fill the seats of the soon-to-be mayors, Representatives Kevin Coleman and Lori M. Stone. Mr. Coleman is leaving the Legislature to become mayor of Westland, population 84,000, and Ms. Stone will become mayor of Warren, population 137,000. Both are expected to remain in the Capitol for the next few days.

Mr. Coleman and Ms. Stone each won legislative races in their districts last year by more than 25 percentage points, leaving Democratic leaders confident that the party will ultimately reassert its trifecta.

But special elections can be unpredictable. And even if Democrats hold both seats, many expect it will be a few months before new legislators take their oaths of office in Lansing. By that point, the state will be in the throes of the 2024 election cycle, in which Republicans hope to win back the House.

In recent months, some Democrats had worried that the two mayoral races could possibly disrupt their party’s narrow hold on Michigan, a perennial battleground that Donald J. Trump won in 2016 and Joseph R. Biden Jr. won in 2020.

Mr. Coleman said he was proud of the Democrats’ record this year in Lansing, especially on labor issues, and was excited about the chance to lead his ***working-class*** suburb. His new job carries a pay raise and spares him an 80-minute commute to Lansing. But the win, he said, was in some ways bittersweet.

Mr. Coleman said some fellow Democrats, including members of Ms. Whitmer’s staff and Speaker of the House Joe Tate, expressed concerns to him about the mayoral run. But none of them, he said, did anything to undermine his campaign for mayor.

“My perception is she trusted my decision to run, and I think she understood where I was coming from,” Mr. Coleman said of the governor. “I think she understands, again, our seat’s not going anywhere, it’s just a matter of maybe it slows the process down a little bit.”

Ms. Stone did not immediately respond to an interview request.

Ms. Whitmer’s office did not make her available for an interview or immediately respond to Mr. Coleman’s characterization of her views. A spokeswoman for the governor, Stacey LaRouche, said in a statement that “this legislative term has been one of the most productive in state history” and that Ms. Whitmer had accomplished many of her top priorities.

Democrats said they believe Mr. Tate will remain the speaker and Democrats will retain committee chairmanships while the House is evenly divided, and Republican leaders have not indicated that they will challenge that. But the chamber is unlikely to pass bills without bipartisan support until the vacant seats are filled.

Representative Matt Hall, the Republican leader in the House, congratulated the “two fine public servants” on their mayoral wins in a statement and said “we are entering a new era in Lansing with a House that is now evenly divided.”

He added: “House Democrats have a choice to make: Together we can forge compromise and achieve the most productive months of the session, or the House Democrat leadership can take their ball and go home until next spring.”

This article appeared in print on page A19.

**Load-Date:** November 9, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Republicans Endure a Bruising Ohio Senate Race***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BK2-9401-JBG3-628M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 17, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 18

**Length:** 1719 words

**Byline:** By Anjali Huynh and Maddie McGarvey

**Body**

With just days to go before the election, the three-way Republican Senate primary in Ohio has turned into a food fight, fueling concerns about former President Donald J. Trump's favored candidate, Bernie Moreno.

The contest on Tuesday to decide who will face Senator Sherrod Brown has been contentious for months, with Mr. Moreno, a wealthy former car dealer who has never held elected office, struggling to outrun his rivals, State Senator Matt Dolan and Secretary of State Frank LaRose. But in recent weeks, a handful of independent surveys have indicated that Mr. Dolan, a more traditional conservative with deep pockets of his own, is gaining traction.

On Monday, Mr. Dolan received the endorsement of Gov. Mike DeWine of Ohio -- after gaining backing last week from another statewide Republican, former Senator Rob Portman. That same day, Mr. Trump's campaign announced that the former president would appear alongside Mr. Moreno on Saturday in Dayton, widely interpreted as a sign that Mr. Moreno could benefit from an 11th-hour boost. (The former president had planned to attend a rally in Arizona but was redirected because of concerns about Mr. Dolan's surge in internal polling, according to two people familiar with the planning.)

In the homestretch, Mr. Dolan and groups supporting him have outspent both Mr. Moreno and Mr. LaRose, blanketing the airwaves with attacks highlighting inconsistencies in Mr. Moreno's record that could be of concern in a Republican primary, such as the more liberal views on immigration he espoused in the past. Simultaneously, Mr. Moreno and his backers have portrayed Mr. Dolan as not sufficiently supportive of Mr. Trump.

''This is between the steady-at-the-wheel, consistent conservatives over the last 20-plus years, versus the more upstart, populist, Donald Trump-inspired candidates,'' said Ryan Stubenrauch, a Republican strategist in Ohio who has not endorsed any of the candidates.

He called Mr. DeWine and Mr. Portman ''conservative, popular politicians who did a lot of good'' in Ohio, adding, ''That still counts for something, is what we're seeing, and it'll be interesting to see how much it counts for.''

Republicans have viewed this year as their best opportunity yet to defeat Mr. Brown, the lone Democrat who retains a statewide position in Ohio. After Mr. Trump overwhelmingly won the former battleground state in 2016 and 2020, Ohioans sent J.D. Vance, who won his own nasty primary with Mr. Trump's backing, to the Senate in 2022. Adding to headwinds at home, Mr. Brown may be further challenged by a ticket topped by President Biden, who remains unpopular in Ohio.

Democrats have made no secret of their desire to compete against Mr. Moreno, who has already been the subject of a barrage of negative ads questioning his conservative bona fides and headlines calling attention to legal issues involving his businesses.

This week, a Democratic group began running an ad highlighting Mr. Moreno's hard-line stances and his closeness to Mr. Trump, something Democrats view as easier to run against in a general election. Mr. DeWine, in a post on X, said the meddling indicated Democrats ''know he's the weakest candidate to beat Sherrod Brown this fall.''

Bitterness over the muddled Republican contest has made its way to Washington, where Republican leaders and strategists have privately, and pre-emptively, assigned blame. The Senate minority leader, Mitch McConnell, who disagreed with Mr. Trump in 2022 over the selection of Republican primary candidates, said offhandedly that ''it would be nice to have a baseball owner here'' in the Senate, according to one person with direct knowledge of the comment. (The Dolan family is a majority owner of the Cleveland Guardians.)

At a meeting of Senate Republicans on Tuesday, Mr. McConnell went further, seeming to question Mr. Moreno's endorsements from the former president and Mr. Vance.

''Let's hope Trump and J.D. got this right,'' Mr. McConnell said, according to two people familiar with the conversation, before adding that ''Bernie's not looking too hot.'' The comments from Mr. McConnell drew a quick response from Mr. Vance, who was in the room, according to one person. A spokesman for Mr. McConnell declined to comment.

Mr. Moreno has attributed recent attacks and negative reports to his commitment to challenging the status quo, even among Republicans. On Friday, he posted a video on X of Donald Trump Jr., another prominent backer, telling him at a campaign stop that there were ''a lot of people working hard against you.''

''I wear attacks like a badge of honor,'' Mr. Moreno wrote. ''It means I'm a threat to the establishment.''

Reagan McCarthy, a spokeswoman for Mr. Moreno, said Mr. Dolan was ''trying to deceive voters and distract from his anti-Trump, left-wing record.''

''Ohio voters won't be fooled by these desperate and vile attacks, and on Tuesday will nominate the only true conservative in this race: Bernie Moreno,'' she said.

In addition to pitting factions of the state's Republican Party -- the old guard, versus Mr. Trump's loyalists -- against each other, the race has offered a test of Mr. Trump's influence that has rarely been found in G.O.P. primaries this year.

In 2022, Mr. Trump endorsed several Senate candidates in battlegrounds like Pennsylvania and Georgia who won primaries with his support but lost competitive general elections, helping Democrats maintain control of the Senate. This time, Mr. Trump and the National Republican Senatorial Committee, the Senate G.O.P. campaign arm, aligned more closely, largely staving off bruising primaries.

But the N.R.S.C. declined to make an endorsement in Ohio. The three Republicans and groups supporting them have collectively spent more than $30 million since January 2023, according to AdImpact, a media tracking firm. In the last weeks of the campaign, Mr. Dolan and the groups supporting him outspent his rivals by several million on advertising.

Jim Renacci, a former Republican congressman who ran against Mr. Brown in 2018 and has remained neutral in the primary, said that Mr. Dolan appeared to be ''moving in the right direction, and the other two candidates don't have the resources, in my opinion, to slow him down.''

But Mr. Dolan's support may have a ceiling: He declined to endorse Mr. Trump during the G.O.P. presidential primary, backing ''Trump policies'' rather than the former president personally, before saying he would ''support'' Mr. Trump once it was clear he would be the nominee. His reluctance could prove troublesome among a primary electorate that overwhelmingly backs Mr. Trump.

''What they see in me is somebody who actually gets things done, actually executes on things, has an agenda, knows the issues, and is not just simply running on the backs of other folks,'' Mr. Dolan said in an interview, taking a shot at Mr. Moreno.

Mr. Brown's campaign -- which, in the first two months of this year, raised $5.7 million, more than his potential opponents' sums combined -- is counting on the continued resonance of his ***working-class*** message as Democrats eagerly watch the Republican infighting.

''The Republicans in this race have been more focused on fighting each other than fighting for Ohioans,'' said Katie Smith, a spokeswoman for the Ohio Democratic Party. ''No matter which untested rich guy makes it through this expensive slugfest, they'll enter the general election damaged, with substantial baggage, and a steep hill to climb.''

Throughout the contest, Mr. Moreno has portrayed himself as the outsider candidate while leaning on prominent endorsements, appearing on the trail with Mr. Trump's oldest son and Mr. Vance, as well as Gov. Kristi Noem of South Dakota and Vivek Ramaswamy, the former Republican presidential candidate.

Mr. LaRose, the least wealthy of the candidates, has used his background in the U.S. Army and his years of government service to present himself as a conservative fighter, particularly on issues like abortion. And Mr. Dolan has pitched himself as a consensus-minded Republican with less hard-line approaches on handling undocumented immigrants and abortion access.

Still, with many of their policy positions virtually indistinguishable, all three men -- and the super PACs backing them -- have gotten personal. Mr. LaRose and Mr. Moreno have banded together to attack Mr. Dolan as disloyal to Mr. Trump, while both Mr. Dolan and Mr. LaRose have accused Mr. Moreno of shifting his views on everything from gun control to Mr. Trump himself.

In interviews with nearly two dozen voters at events featuring all three candidates just over a week before the election, the majority said that they were undecided on whom to vote for on Tuesday.

Mr. LaRose, once seen as a front-runner as the only candidate who has won statewide races, has trailed his opponents after backing two unsuccessful attempts to curtail abortion access in Ohio and failing to get Mr. Trump's endorsement. But at a Republican pancake breakfast last Saturday in Cincinnati where all three candidates spoke, Mr. LaRose urged attendees to consider whom they ''trust" the most.

''That word 'trust' is something that transcends big multimillion-dollar ad buys that people have, it transcends a bunch of famous people endorsing someone, and it gets down to the actual heart of the question: When you walk into a voting booth, who do you trust to represent you in Washington, D.C.?'' Mr. LaRose said in an interview after the event.

Ms. Noem, stumping for Mr. Moreno, told voters in Columbus on Monday that she had come ''at the direct orders'' of Mr. Trump, before issuing a warning: ''You do not want to pick a candidate this primary that Donald Trump isn't going to come here 1,000 percent for'' in November.

But for some voters, like Mitzi Baird of Elyria, Mr. Trump's word was not enough. She came to a Lincoln Day dinner in Vermilion certain that she would support Mr. LaRose but left leaning toward Mr. Dolan, despite being a ''huge supporter'' of Mr. Trump.

''I felt that Moreno was up there campaigning for Trump, not for himself,'' Ms. Baird said. ''I know Trump endorsed him, but he needs to say what he's going to do -- we know what Trump's going to do.''

Michael C. Bender contributed reporting.Michael C. Bender contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/16/us/politics/ohio-republican-senate-primary-trump.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/16/us/politics/ohio-republican-senate-primary-trump.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: A rally in Ashville, Ohio, last week for Bernie Moreno, a political novice endorsed by former President Donald J. Trump.

Mr. Moreno is considered a flawed candidate by Democrats, who may prefer that he be Sherrod Brown's opponent in November.

State Senator Matt Dolan, a more traditional conservative, has spent heavily on attack ads and has gained on Mr. Moreno. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MADDIE MCGARVEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A18.

**Load-Date:** March 17, 2024

**End of Document**



[***School of Hard Knocks***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69WN-3XR1-JBG3-62CB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 17, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 17; NONFICTION

**Length:** 949 words

**Byline:** By Nelson Lichtenstein

**Body**

In her second memoir, the author of ''Maid'' recounts the struggle of getting educated in America below the poverty line. CLASS: A Memoir, by Stephanie Land

The last time we encountered Stephanie Land, the author of the best-selling ''Maid,'' she was a single mother who cleaned houses in the Pacific Northwest to get away from an abusive boyfriend, stay out of a homeless shelter and sustain a seemingly far-fetched dream of one day returning to college to become a writer.

''Class'' finds Land at the University of Montana, where she is an almost- 35-year-old English major juggling classes and child care, rent payments and maxed-out credit cards.

Millions of others, in school or out, have shared Land's economically fraught experience; too often we know them only as statistics. But Land bares her soul and psyche, offering readers a look at her inner life with excruciating honesty. We get an intimate, utterly revealing sense of the anxiety generated by a bare kitchen cupboard or the guilt the author feels when deciding to squirrel away $50 to pay a grad school application fee rather than provide Emilia, her 6-year-old daughter, with an after-school snack of anything more than stale crackers and juice.

Land grew up in a middle-class household, but by the time of the memoir's setting, she receives no support -- emotional or financial -- from either of her long-divorced parents. The courts have mandated that Jamie, her ex-partner, pay child support and take care of Emilia for a few weeks each year, but that lifeline is hardly reliable. Jamie calls her selfish for staying in college when, instead, she could be working a job that would provide Emilia with a life of more than Walmart clothes and Happy Meals.

The government seems in agreement, slashing Land's food stamp allowance when Emilia turns 6 -- since, with a child of school age, the mother is now expected to take a full-time job. ''Nothing made me question my life choices more than knowing that my hours spent cleaning other people's toilets to put myself through college weren't enough -- and that my hours spent earning a degree didn't matter,'' she writes. By removing her food voucher, ''they were telling me that higher education was something I simply could not afford.''

Land makes a valiant effort to introduce a modicum of order and predictability to her life. She keeps a meticulous daybook planner and an accurate budget listing income and expenses. She commands a resourceful capacity to navigate the state's welfare bureaucracy and the university's degree requirements. She gets her papers in on time and plans her rare vacations well in advance. A professor calls both her writing and her personality ''relentless.'' It's not meant as a compliment -- but Land claims it as one.

Nevertheless, Land's life remains one of chaos and insecurity. On a snowy Montana morning her car might not start; cleaning work proves unpredictable; child care remains chancy; housemates abscond; lovers and friends are here today and gone tomorrow. She feels a profound sense of isolation.

''Nothing had any sense of safety or permanence,'' Land writes. ''The possibility of losing the home where my child slept was always at the forefront of my mind and caused a constant, mind-buzzing anxiety attack. Repeatedly, whenever things started to feel secure, the floor would drop out from under me.'' The fight to make rent, eat and find child care was constant. ''I never got a break from it.''

The one financial obligation Land tried her best to ignore was the $50,000 in student debt she was piling up -- a debt that she assumed would take decades to pay off, and could foreclose her purchase of a house, making Land one of America's 44 million ''indentured students,'' a phrase coined by the historian Elizabeth Shermer. ''Long-term financial planning is for people who aren't living in poverty,'' Land writes.

No book about what it means to be at the bottom of the ***working class*** can ignore the way our politics and culture have racialized poverty. Land knows that her whiteness affords Emilia and her a sort of ''camouflage.'' Except for the grocery store clerks who take her food stamps, few understand she is living on a desperate financial edge.

Indeed, throughout the book Land is enraged when those who do know of her precarity pronounce her ''resilient'' or ''a survivor,'' as if such a compliment elevates her status to that of the deserving poor -- which might be another word for white. Moreover, an endorsement of the fortitude of those with so little is yet another way of ignoring the real problem: the absence of the cold, hard cash to buy the material goods and peace of mind necessary to ameliorate Land's ''constant, crushing panic.''

Land ends the book with her status unresolved -- although it would have been easy enough for her to conclude on a far more gratifying note. Instead, we are left seething at the inequalities of our system.

It didn't have to be this way. Enacted during the pandemic, the American Rescue Plan's Child Tax Credit provided almost all American families with at least $3,000 for every dependent under 18. After reading Land's memoir, one can guess with fair accuracy where this mother and child would spend that money and the impact it would have on their lives. Indeed, child poverty was cut nearly in half while the credit lasted.

As for the author, as we all know, she did become the celebrated writer of her youthful ambition, publishing a first memoir that became a wildly successful Netflix series. But Land knows that not one in 1,000 single mothers arrives at such a Hollywood ending.

CLASS: A Memoir | By Stephanie Land | Atria/One Signal | 273 pp. | $28

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/06/books/review/class-stephanie-land.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/06/books/review/class-stephanie-land.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Stephanie Land and her daughter. (PHOTOGRAPH VIA STEPHANIE LAND) This article appeared in print on page BR17.

**Load-Date:** December 17, 2023

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[***Greetings From ‘Mexicoland’; The California issue***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68C6-61B1-DXY4-X4VW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 1, 2023 Thursday 14:14 EST

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**Section:** MAGAZINE

**Length:** 1521 words

**Byline:** Héctor Tobar and Deb Leal

**Highlight:** A Los Angeles shopping plaza is a preview of California’s Latino future.

**Body**

Stepping through the ornate facade of a faux City Hall, I enter the indoor swap meet at Plaza Mexico, the kitschy shopping center that’s a landmark of California’s resurgent Latino identity. I’m in the town of Lynwood, but the vibe is nothing like the WASPy Los Angeles of my 1970s youth. At the traffic circle that serves as the Plaza’s entrance, I find a copy of the Angel of Independence, a famous monument in Mexico City that commemorates the beginning of Mexico’s fight for secession from Spain. The replica Mexican municipal building, or ayuntamiento, features the eagle and the serpent of Mexico’s coat of arms. This building was, in another time, a Montgomery Ward department store. Now I walk through it and enter the Latino equivalent of Disneyland.

Plaza Mexico is a phantasmagoric translation of a Mexican village, where vendors have created an aesthetic that Latino art critics call rasquachismo, meaning improvised and unpolished. During my visit, I see one store offering a garden fountain featuring a tiny Jesus inside an old washtub painted cerulean, and what appear to be four bronze bowling pins hovering like spaceships around him; it goes for $320. Asian women staff a nail salon bathed in bright fluorescent light. A food stand offers tamales, chimichangas and an exotic delicacy made with fresh corn — elotes con Hot Cheetos. Call it Mexicoland: a new kind of “Latinidad” that’s ***working class*** and distinctly Californian, grounded in the state’s diversity and our faith in an increasingly elusive American dream. If “Latino” is already a kind of synonym for “mixed,” in California this mixing has become ever more complex.

A few decades ago, this resurgence of Latino culture would have seemed unlikely. In the 1960s, the future locale of the Plaza Mexico was known as “lily-white Lynwood.” The locals drank vanilla Cokes at a drugstore soda fountain downtown, and department stores catered to a blue-collar white clientele. A Los Angeles Times reporter would later remember it as a time of “boosterism, Boy Scouts and high hopes.” These halcyon days shined only for some, though. In the popular American imagination of that time, Latino identity was often equated with service, manual labor and servility. This lingers today, as Latino immigrants are routinely denigrated in the media, their homelands equated with barbarism and poverty.

By 2020, though, Lynwood was nearly 90 percent Hispanic. In the last half-century, ***working-class*** suburbs across Southern California have undergone a similar demographic and cultural shift. In Los Angeles County, roughly half the population self-identified as Hispanic on the 2020 census. Immigration from Latin America has transformed life in the Golden State in countless ways, from our food habits to our amorous entanglements. Whether at their workplaces or in their neighborhoods, many non-Latino Californians live in daily contact with Latinos. Cultural significance is often prelude to political power. A generation after Californians voted for ballot measures that limited Spanish instruction in schools and banned undocumented immigrants from public services, Latino leaders are now active in most levels of state government. In Sacramento, Latino legislators have helped approve laws granting driver’s licenses and in-state college tuition to the undocumented. In Lynwood, there are Latino majorities on the City Council and school board.

Here, these changes have been driven, in part, by California’s cycles of boom and bust, and the growing economic and racial disparities that accompany them. When the California Department of Transportation purchased huge swaths of real estate in the 1970s to build Interstate 105 — the freeway that would link the newly developed suburbs of south Los Angeles County — Lynwood was cut in half, and property values plummeted. Middle-class Black families moved into Lynwood as white families moved out, and “lily-white Lynwood” began to collapse. The Montgomery Ward shut down. Lynwood and neighboring Compton became Latino barrios as crises in Mexico and Central America sent large numbers of immigrants northward. Meanwhile, two Korean brothers, the Chaes, purchased the old Montgomery Ward building and transformed it into an indoor swap meet catering to a mostly Latino clientele.

The architect David Hidalgo, 65, saw Greater Los Angeles become a Latino metropolis in his lifetime. His father was raised in downtown Los Angeles during the Zoot Suit era, but moved the family to the then-mostly-white suburb of La Puente in the late 1950s (once, a neighbor mistook Hidalgo’s mother for a housekeeper). As a teenager, Hidalgo became a surfer who caught waves at Huntington Cliffs, but he began to connect more deeply with his Mexican American identity when he traveled to Mexico as a college student. As a young architect, he made his reputation doing facade renovations on old commercial properties. In 2000, the Chae brothers came to his office and asked him to design a shopping center in Lynwood in the style of a Mexican town.

Give the Latino families in Lynwood a taste of the old country, the thinking went, and maybe they’ll spend a little of their hard-earned cash, too. To create his marketplace, Hidalgo returned to Mexico several times and met with old relatives, including a great-uncle who was a general in the army. Above all, he played tourist. “What is the essence of this culture?” Hidalgo asked himself as he walked through old colonial cities and archaeological sites, including Chichén Itzá in Yucatán. “I brought all these elements into the melting pot of my brain,” he says.

At Plaza Mexico, the Latino community has accepted the invitation to celebrate their culture. In the open-air mall, I see homeboys taking selfies in front of a fountain of concrete feathered serpents, replicas of the ancient stone sculptures found at Teotihuacán. I find installations erected by Mexican states after the shopping center opened in 2004, including a statue of Pancho Villa and a reproduction of the iconic Aztec Sun Stone.

A stroll through the shopping center reminds you that Latin American culture can be monumental, beautiful and heroic. Here, Latino people reimagine themselves inside the Mexican and Central American villages of family lore, territories now separated from them by increasingly policed borders. When school lets out in the afternoons, the vendor Alvaro García watches as parents take their children to the old-fashioned merry-go-round next to his outdoor artesanía, or handicrafts, stand. García, 64, told me that he and his brother have operated their stand at Plaza Mexico for a dozen years. Zapotec is his first language; Spanish his second. He first migrated to the United States in 1995 and worked in the tomato harvest, then in a Chinese restaurant, before finally starting his own business. Most of what García sells are textiles imported from his native Oaxaca. Somehow, his Plaza Mexico stand survived the pandemic.

But not everyone made it through the hard times. “I know 10 families that have moved backed to Oaxaca,” he says. “Entire families.” When I ask him if he still thinks of California as the land of opportunity, he answers in Spanish: “Se acabó.” Meaning, that’s over. People in Mexico don’t realize how tough things are in California, he adds. Lynwood is a town where three-bedroom homes can go for more than $600,000. García says he tries to disabuse his Mexican relatives of the notion that California is Easy Street. “We sleep on the floor,” he tells them. “Luxuries, cabrón: There aren’t any here.”

Boosters have long portrayed California as a utopia where people can reinvent and enrich themselves. In some ways, Plaza Mexico is a Latino version of that story, told by those who were long excluded from what the state has to offer. Here, I’ve seen how a new, American way of being “Latino” is being assembled from contact with many different cultures. For example, the architectural historian Alec Stewart has noted that the many Southern California indoor swap meets were built, like Plaza Mexico, by Korean entrepreneurs to serve a predominantly Latino and Black clientele, and bear a strong resemblance to the textile markets of Seoul. These Asian-run businesses might hire folklórico dancers and mariachis to lure in a ***working-class*** clientele.

Like the individual architectural styles that Plaza Mexico incorporates, the old race and ethnic labels (Black, white, Hispanic, Asian) don’t quite capture the drama of cultural intermingling we see on the ground. California is outracing all of that; its polyglot present foreshadows the nation we are becoming.

Héctor Tobar is a Los Angeles-born author of six books, including, most recently, “Our Migrant Souls: A Meditation on Race and the Meanings and Myths of ‘Latino.’” Deb Leal is an artist, director and photographer currently based in Brooklyn and Oakland, Calif. Her work explores time and memory through color and composition.

PHOTOS: All photos shot at Plaza Mexico, Lynwood, Calif., in May. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DEB LEAL) (MM46-MM47; MM48-MM49); This article appeared in print on page MM46, MM47, MM48, MM49, MM50.

**Load-Date:** June 4, 2023

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[***Republican Senate Slugfest in Ohio Fuels Jitters About Trump’s Candidate***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BJT-T7W1-JBG3-61X8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 16, 2024 Saturday 15:37 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1787 words

**Byline:** Anjali Huynh and Maddie McGarvey Anjali Huynh, a member of the 2023-24 Times Fellowship class based in New York, covers national politics, the 2024 presidential campaign and other elections.

**Highlight:** The former president will appear alongside Bernie Moreno on Saturday, one potential sign that Mr. Moreno could use an 11th-hour assist.

**Body**

Follow live updates on Tuesday’s [*primary elections*](https://www.nytco.com/careers/newsroom/newsroom-fellowship/).

With just days to go before the election, the three-way Republican Senate primary in Ohio has turned into a food fight, fueling concerns about former President Donald J. Trump’s [*favored candidate*](https://www.nytco.com/careers/newsroom/newsroom-fellowship/), Bernie Moreno.

The contest on Tuesday to decide who will face Senator Sherrod Brown has been contentious for months, with Mr. Moreno, a wealthy former car dealer who has never held elected office, struggling to outrun his rivals, [*State Senator Matt Dolan*](https://www.nytco.com/careers/newsroom/newsroom-fellowship/) and Secretary of State Frank LaRose. But in recent weeks, a handful of [*independent surveys*](https://www.nytco.com/careers/newsroom/newsroom-fellowship/) have indicated that Mr. Dolan, a more traditional conservative with deep pockets of his own, is gaining traction.

On Monday, Mr. Dolan received the [*endorsement of Gov. Mike DeWine*](https://www.nytco.com/careers/newsroom/newsroom-fellowship/) of Ohio — after gaining backing last week from another statewide Republican, former Senator Rob Portman. That same day, Mr. Trump’s campaign announced that the former president would appear alongside Mr. Moreno on Saturday in Dayton, widely interpreted as a sign that Mr. Moreno could benefit from an 11th-hour boost. (The former president had planned to attend a rally in Arizona but was redirected because of concerns about Mr. Dolan&#39;s surge in internal polling, according to two people familiar with the planning.)

In the homestretch, Mr. Dolan and groups supporting him have outspent both Mr. Moreno and Mr. LaRose, blanketing the airwaves with attacks highlighting inconsistencies in Mr. Moreno’s record that could be of concern in a Republican primary, such as [*the more liberal views*](https://www.nytco.com/careers/newsroom/newsroom-fellowship/) on immigration he espoused in the past. Simultaneously, Mr. Moreno and his backers have portrayed Mr. Dolan as [*not sufficiently supportive*](https://www.nytco.com/careers/newsroom/newsroom-fellowship/) of Mr. Trump.

“This is between the steady-at-the-wheel, consistent conservatives over the last 20-plus years, versus the more upstart, populist, Donald Trump-inspired candidates,” said Ryan Stubenrauch, a Republican strategist in Ohio who has not endorsed any of the candidates.

He called Mr. DeWine and Mr. Portman “conservative, popular politicians who did a lot of good” in Ohio, adding, “That still counts for something, is what we’re seeing, and it’ll be interesting to see how much it counts for.”

Republicans have viewed this year as their best opportunity yet to defeat Mr. Brown, the lone Democrat who retains a statewide position in Ohio. After Mr. Trump overwhelmingly won the former battleground state in 2016 and 2020, Ohioans sent J.D. Vance, who won [*his own nasty primary*](https://www.nytco.com/careers/newsroom/newsroom-fellowship/) with Mr. Trump’s backing, to the Senate in 2022. Adding to headwinds at home, Mr. Brown may be further challenged by a ticket topped by President Biden, who remains unpopular in Ohio.

Democrats have made no secret of their desire to compete against Mr. Moreno, who has already been the subject of a barrage of negative ads questioning his conservative bona fides and headlines calling attention to [*legal issues involving his businesses*](https://www.nytco.com/careers/newsroom/newsroom-fellowship/).

This week, a Democratic group [*began running an ad*](https://www.nytco.com/careers/newsroom/newsroom-fellowship/) highlighting Mr. Moreno’s hard-line stances and his closeness to Mr. Trump, something Democrats view as easier to run against in a general election. Mr. DeWine, [*in a post on X*](https://www.nytco.com/careers/newsroom/newsroom-fellowship/), said the meddling indicated Democrats “know he’s the weakest candidate to beat Sherrod Brown this fall.”

Bitterness over the muddled Republican contest has made its way to Washington, where Republican leaders and strategists have privately, and pre-emptively, assigned blame. The Senate minority leader, Mitch McConnell, who disagreed with Mr. Trump in 2022 over the selection of Republican primary candidates, said offhandedly that “it would be nice to have a baseball owner here” in the Senate, according to one person with direct knowledge of the comment. (The Dolan family is a majority owner of the Cleveland Guardians.)

At a meeting of Senate Republicans on Tuesday, Mr. McConnell went further, seeming to question Mr. Moreno’s endorsements from the former president and Mr. Vance.

“Let’s hope Trump and J.D. got this right,” Mr. McConnell said, according to two people familiar with the conversation, before adding that “Bernie’s not looking too hot.” The comments from Mr. McConnell drew a quick response from Mr. Vance, who was in the room, according to one person. A spokesman for Mr. McConnell declined to comment.

Mr. Moreno has attributed recent attacks and negative reports to his commitment to challenging the status quo, even among Republicans. On Friday, he posted [*a video on X*](https://www.nytco.com/careers/newsroom/newsroom-fellowship/) of Donald Trump Jr., another prominent backer, telling him at a campaign stop that there were “a lot of people working hard against you.”

“I wear attacks like a badge of honor,” Mr. Moreno wrote. “It means I’m a threat to the establishment.”

Reagan McCarthy, a spokeswoman for Mr. Moreno, said Mr. Dolan was “trying to deceive voters and distract from his anti-Trump, left-wing record.”

“Ohio voters won’t be fooled by these desperate and vile attacks, and on Tuesday will nominate the only true conservative in this race: Bernie Moreno,” she said.

In addition to pitting factions of the state’s Republican Party — the old guard, versus Mr. Trump’s loyalists — against each other, the race has offered a test of Mr. Trump’s influence that has rarely been found in G.O.P. primaries this year.

In 2022, Mr. Trump endorsed several Senate candidates in battlegrounds like Pennsylvania and Georgia who won primaries with his support but [*lost competitive general elections*](https://www.nytco.com/careers/newsroom/newsroom-fellowship/), helping Democrats maintain control of the Senate. This time, Mr. Trump and the National Republican Senatorial Committee, the Senate G.O.P. campaign arm, aligned more closely, largely staving off bruising primaries.

But the N.R.S.C. declined to make an endorsement in Ohio. The three Republicans and groups supporting them have collectively spent more than $30 million since January 2023, according to AdImpact, a media tracking firm. In the last weeks of the campaign, Mr. Dolan and the groups supporting him outspent his rivals by several million on advertising.

Jim Renacci, a former Republican congressman [*who ran against Mr. Brown*](https://www.nytco.com/careers/newsroom/newsroom-fellowship/) in 2018 and has remained neutral in the primary, said that Mr. Dolan appeared to be “moving in the right direction, and the other two candidates don’t have the resources, in my opinion, to slow him down.”

But Mr. Dolan’s support may have a ceiling: He declined to endorse Mr. Trump during the G.O.P. presidential primary, backing “Trump policies” rather than the former president personally, before saying he would “support” Mr. Trump once it was clear he would be the nominee. His reluctance could prove troublesome among a primary electorate that overwhelmingly backs Mr. Trump.

“What they see in me is somebody who actually gets things done, actually executes on things, has an agenda, knows the issues, and is not just simply running on the backs of other folks,” Mr. Dolan said in an interview, taking a shot at Mr. Moreno.

Mr. Brown’s campaign — which, in the first two months of this year, raised $5.7 million, more than his potential opponents’ sums combined — is counting on the continued resonance of his ***working-class*** message as Democrats eagerly watch the Republican infighting.

“The Republicans in this race have been more focused on fighting each other than fighting for Ohioans,” said Katie Smith, a spokeswoman for the Ohio Democratic Party. “No matter which untested rich guy makes it through this expensive slugfest, they’ll enter the general election damaged, with substantial baggage, and a steep hill to climb.”

Throughout the contest, Mr. Moreno has portrayed himself as the outsider candidate while leaning on prominent endorsements, appearing on the trail with Mr. Trump’s oldest son and Mr. Vance, as well as Gov. Kristi Noem of South Dakota and Vivek Ramaswamy, the former Republican presidential candidate.

Mr. LaRose, the least wealthy of the candidates, has used his background in the U.S. Army and his years of government service to present himself as a conservative fighter, particularly on issues like abortion. And Mr. Dolan has pitched himself as a consensus-minded Republican with less hard-line approaches on handling undocumented immigrants and abortion access.

Still, with many of their policy positions virtually indistinguishable, all three men — and the super PACs backing them — have gotten personal. Mr. LaRose and Mr. Moreno have banded together to attack Mr. Dolan as disloyal to Mr. Trump, while both Mr. Dolan and Mr. LaRose have accused Mr. Moreno of shifting his views on everything from gun control to Mr. Trump himself.

In interviews with nearly two dozen voters at events featuring all three candidates just over a week before the election, the majority said that they were undecided on whom to vote for on Tuesday.

Mr. LaRose, once seen as a front-runner as the only candidate who has won statewide races, has trailed his opponents after [*backing two unsuccessful attempts*](https://www.nytco.com/careers/newsroom/newsroom-fellowship/) to curtail abortion access in Ohio and failing to get Mr. Trump’s endorsement. But at a Republican pancake breakfast last Saturday in Cincinnati where all three candidates spoke, Mr. LaRose urged attendees to consider whom they “trust" the most.

“That word ‘trust’ is something that transcends big multimillion-dollar ad buys that people have, it transcends a bunch of famous people endorsing someone, and it gets down to the actual heart of the question: When you walk into a voting booth, who do you trust to represent you in Washington, D.C.?” Mr. LaRose said in an interview after the event.

Ms. Noem, stumping for Mr. Moreno, told voters in Columbus on Monday that she had come “at the direct orders” of Mr. Trump, before issuing a warning: “You do not want to pick a candidate this primary that Donald Trump isn’t going to come here 1,000 percent for” in November.

But for some voters, like Mitzi Baird of Elyria, Mr. Trump’s word was not enough. She came to a Lincoln Day dinner in Vermilion certain that she would support Mr. LaRose but left leaning toward Mr. Dolan, despite being a “huge supporter” of Mr. Trump.

“I felt that Moreno was up there campaigning for Trump, not for himself,” Ms. Baird said. “I know Trump endorsed him, but he needs to say what he’s going to do — we know what Trump’s going to do.”

Michael C. Bender contributed reporting.

Michael C. Bender contributed reporting.

PHOTOS: A rally in Ashville, Ohio, last week for Bernie Moreno, a political novice endorsed by former President Donald J. Trump.; Mr. Moreno is considered a flawed candidate by Democrats, who may prefer that he be Sherrod Brown’s opponent in November.; State Senator Matt Dolan, a more traditional conservative, has spent heavily on attack ads and has gained on Mr. Moreno. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MADDIE MCGARVEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A18.

**Load-Date:** March 19, 2024

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[***The Labor Movement Hasn’t Taken Off. A New Book Explains Why.; Nonfiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BB0-WYH1-JBG3-60RH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 13, 2024 Tuesday 23:31 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 1392 words

**Byline:** Willa Glickman

**Highlight:** “The Hammer” offers portraits of organizing efforts from around the country at a time when the future of union power has reached an inflection point.

**Body**

“The Hammer” offers portraits of organizing efforts from around the country at a time when the future of union power has reached an inflection point.

THE HAMMER: Power, Inequality, and the Struggle for the Soul of Labor, by Hamilton Nolan

In 2022, after being elected president of the A.F.L.-C.I.O., the biggest federation of unions in the United States, Liz Shuler stood before a crowd of union officials gathered in a large ballroom in Philadelphia and announced a new goal: “In the next 10 years, we will organize and grow our movement by more than one million people!”

The longtime labor reporter and former Gawker journalist Hamilton Nolan was in the audience and he was not impressed; given projected job growth, sticking to this aim would actually cause the percentage of workers in the country who are unionized to drop. As Nolan writes in “The Hammer,” his lively account of the current landscape of American labor organizing, “It was reminiscent of Dr. Evil in ‘Austin Powers’ demanding as his ransom request for the entire world, ‘One million dollars!’”

Nolan’s book joins the ranks of Steven Greenhouse’s “[*Beaten Down, Worked Up*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/03/books/review/beaten-down-worked-up-steven-greenhouse.html)” and Jane McAlevey’s “[*A Collective Bargain*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/03/books/review/beaten-down-worked-up-steven-greenhouse.html)” in making a rousing case for a robust labor movement. “The Hammer” aims to show that unions are the best way to [*combat economic inequality*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/03/books/review/beaten-down-worked-up-steven-greenhouse.html), give disenfranchised people genuine political power and [*counter the allure of the far righ*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/03/books/review/beaten-down-worked-up-steven-greenhouse.html)t among the ***working class***.

At the same time, Nolan is critical of the labor establishment, writing that many large unions have embraced what the labor strategist Rich Yeselson calls “[*Fortress Unionism*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/03/books/review/beaten-down-worked-up-steven-greenhouse.html),” an argument that it’s better to avoid difficult, new campaigns in states and counties hostile to organizing or in industries with few existing unions in favor of waiting for a mass worker uprising to announce itself. What would such an announcement look like? “Perhaps every worker will emerge from the office and fire guns in the air,” Nolan muses, “until the smoke wafts over A.F.L.-C.I.O. headquarters.”

Nolan has felt the mess of organizing from the inside — “The labor movement can make you feel crazy,” he writes — and his depiction of his own vexations is one of the book’s charms. At Gawker, where he worked for the first decade of his career, antagonism was the house style. The union effort that began there in 2015 “was the first thing in my life that forced me to spend an extended period of time genuinely listening to the positions of people who disagreed with me and pissed me off.” A balm in its own right and an exercise, he says, that allowed him “to become a better person.” (The union also ensured that he and his colleagues weren’t laid off when the company was sold in the wake of [*Hulk Hogan’s Peter Thiel-backed lawsuit*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/03/books/review/beaten-down-worked-up-steven-greenhouse.html).)

“The Hammer” offers an impressive array of scenes from the front lines of the 21st-century economy: [*Child care workers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/03/books/review/beaten-down-worked-up-steven-greenhouse.html) run a decades-long campaign to bargain collectively with the state of California; [*a prep cook*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/03/books/review/beaten-down-worked-up-steven-greenhouse.html) launches a unionization effort at a biscuit restaurant in West Virginia. Even in the most traditional fight that Nolan describes, at a good old-fashioned factory, the antagonist is a giant conglomerate that describes itself in very modern terms as a “global snacking powerhouse.”

A recent wave of spontaneous labor agitation, in addition to [*more favorable political conditions*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/03/books/review/beaten-down-worked-up-steven-greenhouse.html) under the Biden administration, has suggested to some observers that a reverse in the persistent backslide of union power that has been underway since the 1970s might be possible. “For people who had toiled in the union world for the first two decades of the 20th century,” Nolan writes, “the post-pandemic labor boom was like emerging from a dark cave into a daytime fireworks show.”

But the small, grass-roots unions that took on behemoth companies [*like Starbucks*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/03/books/review/beaten-down-worked-up-steven-greenhouse.html) [*and Amazon*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/03/books/review/beaten-down-worked-up-steven-greenhouse.html) have faded from headlines — in part because those companies have used [*illegal*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/03/books/review/beaten-down-worked-up-steven-greenhouse.html) [*tactics*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/03/books/review/beaten-down-worked-up-steven-greenhouse.html) to deny their unionized employees contracts thus far. (Both companies [*are appealing*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/03/books/review/beaten-down-worked-up-steven-greenhouse.html) [*the judgments against them in such cases*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/03/books/review/beaten-down-worked-up-steven-greenhouse.html).) It infuriates Nolan that labor leaders did not more aggressively seize the day: [*The percentage of unionized workers fell*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/03/books/review/beaten-down-worked-up-steven-greenhouse.html) between [*2020 and 2022*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/03/books/review/beaten-down-worked-up-steven-greenhouse.html).

To illustrate why this happened (and fume about the missed opportunities), he tells [*the story of Felix Allen*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/03/books/review/beaten-down-worked-up-steven-greenhouse.html), a young man with no organizing experience who, inspired by union drives at Amazon and Starbucks, tried to unionize the Lowe’s store he worked at in New Orleans. He had reached out to a Teamsters local and found them to be friendly but not able to offer much material support, so he decided to organize independently. Anti-union lawyers and consultants descended on the store, and it was found that a minor paperwork error — Allen was taking this on without legal help — meant he would have to redo his petition for an election. While he was regrouping from this setback, he was fired.

Nolan argues that big unions leaving workers like Allen on their own is an act of “callous abdication.” Organizing new employees is usually a resource-intensive endeavor with uncertain results, but ignoring them, he writes, has left “a black hole” in the middle of the labor movement.

Nolan’s search for a leader to step into this void brings him to [*Sara Nelson*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/03/books/review/beaten-down-worked-up-steven-greenhouse.html), the charismatic president of the Association of Flight Attendants. Raised by Christian Scientists in a small city in Oregon, she first got involved with the A.F.A. after a fellow flight attendant and union member lent her $800 in her first month working for United: Her paychecks were delayed and she was going hungry.

Progressive, media-savvy and unafraid of a hectic travel schedule, Nelson zoomed around the country supporting workers of all kinds — baggage handlers in Chicago, miners in Alabama, Starbucks baristas in Richmond. She soon became one of the most prominent faces of the movement. Nolan fantasizes about a refreshed A.F.L.-C.I.O. under a Nelson presidency, but his hero was sidelined by a serious hip condition before she could even launch her candidacy.

Given the book’s passionate, muckraking spirit, it is a bit surprising that Nolan suggests the famously stodgy A.F.L.-C.I.O. as the answer to labor’s ills, even as he critiques its lumbering ineffectuality. He notes that a previous reformist president, John J. Sweeney, failed to make headway with top-down measures, but doesn’t explain how a Nelson-led coalition would be any different.

The argument that the labor movement needs a powerful center, or that the right leader might have been able to “turn it all around,” sits uneasily alongside Nolan’s observations about “the natural conservatism” of large institutions. On the other hand, grass-roots energy alone hasn’t been enough to expand union membership, especially in the face of coordinated and lawyered-up corporate pressure. As “The Hammer” shows, the kind of solidarity that might naturally arise from shared frustrations on the conveyor belt doesn’t necessarily translate to the broader movement all on its own.

In 2021, one of Nolan’s subjects, Donna Jo Marks, helped lead a strike at a Nabisco factory in Portland, Ore. Then the Democratic Socialists of America came knocking. Would Marks speak at a rally to bolster community support for the strike? She initially declined, because she didn’t see the point of leaving the picket line for a bigger platform. “I still didn’t understand the gravity because I lived in Nabisco world,” she says. “All I could see was Nabisco problems.”

Eventually, after weeks of little progress in the strike, Marks decided to attend a rally. She was frustrated with her fellow union members, who didn’t seem as committed to picketing day after day as she was, and she wanted to give them “a piece of her mind,” Nolan writes. But when she saw the crowd of local supporters, many of them from other unions, she choked up. A co-worker put an arm around her. Suddenly, her focus shifted. “They’re trying to show us our place,” she said, gesturing behind her to the factory. “It’s not about money. It’s about where we are in society.”

THE HAMMER: Power, Inequality, and the Struggle for the Soul of Labor | By Hamilton Nolan | Hachette | 260 pp. | $30

PHOTO: Sara Nelson, the president of the Association of Flight Attendants, speaks at a rally in 2022. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KENA BETANCUR/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page BR17.

**Load-Date:** March 28, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Change Reinforces the Culture Of Dance Theater of Harlem***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BDK-2TM1-DXY4-X06G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 25, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section AR; Column 0; Arts and Leisure Desk; Pg. 18; SPRING PREVIEW

**Length:** 1476 words

**Byline:** By Gia Kourlas

**Body**

Robert Garland has held many positions at Dance Theater of Harlem over many years -- principal dancer, resident choreographer, school director, archivist and company webmaster. At long last, he has caught the prize title: artistic director.

A couple of years ago, the company's executive director, Anna Glass, and Virginia Johnson, then its artistic director, invited him to dinner. To Garland, this was baffling. Normally his evenings were spent at Dance Theater's school, where he managed the pre-professional students. ''I was like, 'OK, why are you taking away from what I do?''' he said. ''They're like, 'Oh, come on!'''

Johnson, a former star dancer, told Garland that she had decided to step down. Was he interested?

''I took a long, hard think,'' Garland said. ''For our organization -- we're so particular as a family and as a culture. I thought it's best that we have someone that already understands that.''

And with more than five decades of ballet dancers and counting, that family and culture are significant. ''Moving the organization forward would depend not only on the art that the company produced, but also on the legacy through its alumni,'' Garland said. ''And that is a huge thing.'' In April, an alumni platform will go live, a place, he said, ''where we could galvanize and connect and become a community.''

Garland is big on history. His passion for linking ballet to the events of the real world, past and present, is an important part of his vision for Dance Theater, where he wants to educate the present generation about classical dance, about African American culture and history, and about how it all relates to Arthur Mitchell, who formed Dance Theater with Karel Shook after the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968.

Mitchell, the first Black principal at New York City Ballet under George Balanchine, wanted to prove to the world that ballet was for everyone -- and every body -- starting with children in Harlem. Garland, who danced with the company from 1985 to 1998, worked closely with him.

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He learned responsibility. Without that experience, Garland said he doubted he would be as at ease in his job now. From April 11 to April 14, he will preside over the company's 55th anniversary season at New York City Center featuring three of his stellar works, which weave Black vernacular dance with classical ballet: ''Nyman String Quartet No. 2,'' ''New Bach'' and ''Return.'' There will also be the company premiere of Balanchine's ''Pas de Dix.'' Garland is deeply influenced by Balanchine, who was a mentor to Mitchell; when Dance Theater was formed, Balanchine gave him the rights to several ballets.

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Garland sees how Balanchine was fascinated by the jazz aesthetic. ''At some level, Mr. Mitchell was the vessel, particularly with 'Agon,' through which Mr. Balanchine was able to wrestle with both the cultural and artistic antecedents of his art form,'' Garland said.

''Agon'' (1957) is the groundbreaking Balanchine ballet set to Stravinsky, which paired Mitchell with a white ballerina, Diana Adams. In a 2015 interview, Mitchell, who died in 2018, said: ''This is before racial equality. The fact that Mr. Balanchine took upon himself to put me with a Caucasian ballerina and to do a wonderful pas de deux was unheard-of.''

As Garland sees it, ''Mr. Balanchine was pretty much up on what was going on politically in the world as well. He knew that the person whose body he was creating on, other people in the world had other ideas about that body. And that's another part of his legacy that is just humongous, and people cannot underestimate the impact on the world that that choice made.''

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And what about his own choreographc aspirations? Garland is a much-admired creator of ballets that put a contemporary spin on rigorous classical vocabulary -- he loves pop music as well as classical -- but for now he is putting that work on hold in favor of establishing his relationship with his dancers.

When Johnson was in charge and Garland was the resident choreographer, he felt like ''the babysitter for the night,'' he said. ''Then the parent came home, and I'd leave and do what I did. Now I'm the parent, and I have to care differently. And that's care not only from myself to the dancers, but also managing the choreographers' relationships with the dancers.''

For his first ballet as artistic director next year, Garland wants to lean into the 1970s. But not like the way he did with ''Higher Ground,'' his acclaimed work exploring social injustice through Stevie Wonder's music. ''I'm going to go back to that other side, just for some fun,'' he said. ''Also, I love these dancers. They're in a moment now where they are wanting to express their joy.''

Recently, he tested this theory. During a rehearsal break, he played ''Movin','' by the funk group Brass Construction. ''I saw them moving, and I was like, Oh, they're getting this, they're feeling this,'' he said. ''Like, Alexandra Hutchinson gets up and starts doing her thing. I love them in that way. They are fully ballet dancers and fully Black people. It's kind of like, hello? What else do you expect? This is who we are.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/24/arts/dance/robert-garland-dance-theater-of-harlem.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/24/arts/dance/robert-garland-dance-theater-of-harlem.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Clockwise from top: Robert Garland, the artistic director of Dance Theater of Harlem

and the dancers Amanda Smith

Carly Greene (center)

and Derek Brockington. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DANA SCRUGGS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page AR18.

**Load-Date:** February 25, 2024

**End of Document**



[***‘True Detective: Night Country’ Season Premiere Recap:; True Detective***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B3S-KF11-JBG3-62C6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 14, 2024 Sunday 11:14 EST

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**Section:** ARTS; television

**Length:** 1120 words

**Byline:** Scott Tobias

**Highlight:** The new season, starring Jodie Foster and Kali Reis, moves north of the Arctic Circle. Unsurprisingly, the crimes are as bleak and chilly as the setting.

**Body**

The new season, starring Jodie Foster and Kali Reis, moves north of the Arctic Circle. Unsurprisingly, the crimes are as bleak and chilly as the setting.

Season 4, Episode 1: ‘Part 1’

In the absence of any other connective tissue, the “True Detective” series continues to move forward on bad vibes and attitude, a darker-than-dark noir ambience propped up by gruesome crimes, hard-living sleuths and philosophical discourse that dances on the edge of self-parody. When Evangeline Navarro (Kali Reis), a state trooper in the Arctic hinterland of Ennis, Alaska, is asked whether she believes in God, it doesn’t seem very “True Detective” for her to affirm that she does. “Must be nice,” says her inquisitor. “Knowing we’re not alone.”

“No,” she answers. “We’re alone. God, too.”

There we go. Some franchises have Freddy and Jason. This one has existential malaise.

In this first episode of “True Detective: Night Country,” the series’s new showrunner, the Mexican filmmaker Issa López, succeeds in making Navarro’s words ring true. (The show’s creator and previous showrunner, Nic Pizzolatto, is no longer creatively involved, retaining only an executive producer credit this season.) As another imposingly dense mystery starts to unfold, with past and present horrors cross-contaminating one another alongside supernatural events, López sketches a vivid, menacing community that lives in darkness.

Her Ennis is the mirror image of the daylight noir of the 1997 Norwegian thriller “Insomnia” and Christopher Nolan’s 2002 Hollywood remake, which took place in a season where the sun never set and the endless days exacted a psychological toll. Here, in permanent darkness, the town “at the end of the world” lives up to billing.

There are many questions, some of them metaphysical, to sort out after this premiere, but it’s a promising sign that the backdrop is at least as compelling as anything that happens in the fore. As the two main characters, Navarro and Liz Danvers (Jodie Foster), the current police chief, delves into two cases simultaneously, López gives Ennis interesting dimensions of its own, pausing to watch the town drunk slide across the intersection to collect her latest D.U.I. or noting the tenuous state of the drinking water. Most of the population in this ***working-class*** outpost is the native Inupiaq, who coexist uneasily with settlers who have turned a mine into a pollutant and cash cow.

On the fringes of the fringe, 150 miles north of the Arctic Circle, eight researchers go missing from the Tsalal research station, and it’s made to seem like either black magic or an extremely ill-advised walkabout. We get a few glimpses into their last moments together: One scientist kicking back to “Ferris Bueller’s Day Off” with a bowl of popcorn, another doing a video call in Spanish, and still more on a treadmill, in the laundry room, in the lab or constructing a ham sandwich. Then we see another man shake uncontrollably and utter the words, “She’s awake.”

Later, when a delivery truck pulls up with supplies, the driver finds an empty building. The camera finds a tongue on the floor.

As Danvers, Foster can’t help but suggest a thoroughly disillusioned version of her most famous character, Clarice Starling in “The Silence of the Lambs,” but there’s a little of Kate Winslet’s “[*Mare of Easttown*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/15/arts/television/mare-of-easttown-review-kate-winslet.html)” to her cynical, slightly discombobulated regional sleuth. She’s Liz of Snowtown. At the research facility, she’s able to estimate the time these men disappeared based on the mayo consistency in the uneaten ham sandwich. (“Mayo doesn’t go runny until a couple of days out of the fridge, but your processed cold cuts will survive the apocalypse.”) When she examines the severed tongue, the one piece of unsettling evidence they have, Danvers can deduce by subtle striations that it belonged to an Indigenous woman who licks the threads of fishing nets. She’s good.

Navarro is skeptical of Danvers, to put it mildly — not so much her skill as her initiative. While serving as a detective, Navarro obsessed for months over the savage murder of a young Indigenous activist who had attracted a lot of “haters” for her protests against the mine. Danvers inherited the case and let it go so cold that one of her deputies, Hank (John Hawkes), wound up keeping the file box tucked away in a spare bedroom. Hank’s son, Peter (Finn Bennett), Danvers’s baby-faced protégé, smuggles it out the window to get it to her.

In classically grotesque “True Detective” fashion, the two cases are connected by the severed tongue, which was an aspect of the earlier murder that was kept from the public. So when Danvers starts laying out photos from the research facility on the floor, the old file gets cracked open, too, and sized up like pieces in a jigsaw puzzle that were in the wrong box. She finds a possible thread in a patch that was torn from a parka, but that’s enough to pique her attention and settle Navarro’s concerns about how much Danvers cared about the investigation that derailed her career. Their frosty partnership is already starting to thaw.

The same cannot be said of the frozen bodies found jutting out of the ice in the episode’s final moments. How they got there and the manner in which they were found are among the many loose threads left dangling for Reddit subthread conspiracists to tie together. The supernatural aura of the season so far may well be explicable, tied to the fears and anxieties of a community that spends the winter padding around in the dark. But López isn’t in any hurry to dispel the illusion, not when she can leave us jumping at shadows.

Flat Circles

* The wildlife doesn’t seem to have it any better in Ennis, judging by the herd of howling caribou that rumble off a cliff or the one-eyed polar bear that parks itself in front of Navarro on the street.
* The Billie Eilish song in the opening credits, “Bury a Friend,” written from the perspective of a monster under her bed, has a line in the chorus that doubles as the title of her debut album, “When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?” Seems like a sound thesis for the season.
* “WE ARE ALL DEAD” on the whiteboard seems notable. Include that in your case notes.
* An underdressed young man named Travis showing Rose (Fiona Shaw) the bodies in the ice also seems significant, in that Travis is dead.
* John Hawkes is a character actor ringer for any TV show or movie, and it’s exciting to see him cast here against type as a flawed, lonely, seemingly dull-witted cop with a mail-order fiancée en route from Vladivostok.

PHOTO: As the police chief Liz Danvers, Jodie Foster Foster can’t help but suggest a disillusioned version of her most famous character, Clarice Starling. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Michele K. Short/HBO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** January 29, 2024

**End of Document**



[***At Dance Theater of Harlem, a New Lease on History and Ballet; SPRING PREVIEW***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BDB-K0S1-DXY4-X00D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 24, 2024 Saturday 18:02 EST

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**Section:** ARTS; dance

**Length:** 1494 words

**Byline:** Gia Kourlas Gia Kourlas is the dance critic for The Times. She writes reviews, essays and feature articles and works on a range of stories.

**Highlight:** Robert Garland, Dance Theater’s new artistic director and longtime resident choreographer, presides over his first season at New York City Center.

**Body**

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And what about his own choreographc aspirations? Garland is a much-admired creator of ballets that put a contemporary spin on rigorous classical vocabulary — he loves pop music as well as classical — but for now he is putting that work on hold in favor of establishing his relationship with his dancers.

When Johnson was in charge and Garland was the resident choreographer, he felt like “the babysitter for the night,” he said. “Then the parent came home, and I’d leave and do what I did. Now I’m the parent, and I have to care differently. And that’s care not only from myself to the dancers, but also managing the choreographers’ relationships with the dancers.”

For his first ballet as artistic director next year, Garland wants to lean into the 1970s. But not like the way he did with [*“Higher Ground,” his acclaimed work*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/18/arts/dance/virginia-johnson-dance-theater-of-harlem.html) exploring social injustice through Stevie Wonder’s music. “I’m going to go back to that other side, just for some fun,” he said. “Also, I love these dancers. They’re in a moment now where they are wanting to express their joy.”

Recently, he tested this theory. During a rehearsal break, he played [*“Movin’,” by the funk group Brass Construction*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/18/arts/dance/virginia-johnson-dance-theater-of-harlem.html). “I saw them moving, and I was like, Oh, they’re getting this, they’re feeling this,” he said. “Like, Alexandra Hutchinson gets up and starts doing her thing. I love them in that way. They are fully ballet dancers and fully Black people. It’s kind of like, hello? What else do you expect? This is who we are.”

PHOTOS: Clockwise from top: Robert Garland, the artistic director of Dance Theater of Harlem; and the dancers Amanda Smith; Carly Greene (center); and Derek Brockington. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DANA SCRUGGS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page AR18.

**Load-Date:** June 24, 2024

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[***A Huge Gender Gap Is Emerging Among Young Voters; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BXM-FRW1-DXY4-X368-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 1, 2024 Wednesday 14:15 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 2727 words

**Byline:** Thomas B. Edsall Thomas B. Edsall has been a contributor to the Times Opinion section since 2011. His column on strategic and demographic trends in American politics appears every Wednesday. He previously covered politics for The Washington Post.

**Highlight:** The oldest president is in big trouble with the youngest voters, especially men.

**Body**

It has become clear that one constituency — young voters, 18 to 29 years old — will play a key, if not pivotal, role in determining who will win the Biden-Trump rematch.

Four years ago, according to exit polls, voters in this age group kept Trump from winning re-election. They cast ballots decisively supporting Biden, 60 to 36, helping to give him a [*4.46-point victory*](https://www.fec.gov/resources/cms-content/documents/federalelections2020.pdf) among all voters, 51.31 percent to 46.85 percent.

This year, Biden cannot count on winning Gen Z by such a large margin. There is substantial variance in poll data reported for the youth vote, but to take one example, the [*NBC News national survey*](https://www.fec.gov/resources/cms-content/documents/federalelections2020.pdf) from April found Trump leading 43 to 42.

Young voters’ loyalty to the Democratic Party has been frayed by two distinct factors: [*opposition*](https://www.fec.gov/resources/cms-content/documents/federalelections2020.pdf) to the intensity of the Israeli attack on Hamas in Gaza and frustration with an economy many see as stacked against them.

Equally important, a large gender gap has emerged, with young men far less likely to support Biden than young women.

[*Bill McInturff*](https://www.fec.gov/resources/cms-content/documents/federalelections2020.pdf), a co-founder of the Republican polling firm Public Opinion Strategies — which conducts surveys for NBC along with the Democratic firm Hart Research — provided The Times with data covering a broad range of recent political and demographic trends.

Tracking the partisan identification and ideology of 18-to-34-year-olds, the McInturff analyses show that from 2012 to 2023, women became increasingly Democratic, going from 55 percent identifying as Democratic and 29 percent Republican in 2012 to 60 and 22 in 2023. The shift was even more striking in the case of ideology, going from 32 percent liberal and 29 percent conservative to 51 percent liberal and 17 percent conservative in 2023.

Among young men, the Democratic advantage in partisan identification fell from nine points in 2012 to five points in 2023.

What gives?

I asked the Democratic pollster [*Celinda Lake*](https://www.fec.gov/resources/cms-content/documents/federalelections2020.pdf), who recently joined the Biden campaign’s polling team, a job she also held in 2020. She sent a detailed reply by email:

Three reasons. First and foremost is the abortion issue and all the aspects of reproductive health, including medication abortion, I.V.F., birth control and criminalizing abortion. Young men are very pro-abortion and birth control, but young women really vote the issue.

Second is style and respect. Young men are not as troubled by the chaotic and divisive style of Trump, while young women want people to be respected, including themselves, want stability and are very concerned about division and the potential for violence. Young women think Trump’s style is an embarrassment abroad, a poor role model for their children and dangerous for the country. Younger men, especially blue-collar, have a grudging respect for his strength and “tell it like it is” attitude.

Third is the economy. Young men, especially blue-collar and people of color, feel left behind in this economy. They do not feel things have been delivered to them. They do not know anything about what this administration has done. Younger women are much more committed to a role for government to help people like themselves as a foundational view. They don’t know much more about the economic programs than young men, but they tend to respond more favorably to Democrats in general on the economy. Younger men also feel more left behind on the economy and more sense of grievance than young women do who are also increasingly dominating college and higher education.

The [*Times/Siena poll*](https://www.fec.gov/resources/cms-content/documents/federalelections2020.pdf) conducted April 7 to 11 asked voters “How much do you think Donald Trump respects women?” A majority of men, 54 percent, replied that Trump does respect women (23 percent “a lot” and 31 percent “some”), while 42 percent said he does not (14 percent “not much” and 28 percent “not at all”).

Women replied quite differently, with 68 percent saying Trump does not respect women (24 percent “not much,” 44 percent “not at all”) and 31 percent saying Trump does respect women (15 percent “a lot” and 16 percent “some”).

[*Jean Twenge*](https://www.fec.gov/resources/cms-content/documents/federalelections2020.pdf), a professor of psychology at San Diego State University and the author of “[*Generations*](https://www.fec.gov/resources/cms-content/documents/federalelections2020.pdf): The Real Differences Between Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, Boomers and Silents and What They Mean for America’s Future,” wrote by email that the question of why there is such a gender divide “is tough to answer,” but she made some suggestions: “It could be that the changes on the left have driven young men away from the Democratic Party. For example, the idea that identities can be divided into ‘oppressor’ and ‘oppressed’ may have alienated some young men.”

Another likely factor, according to Twenge, is:

Fewer young men get college degrees than young women, and in the last 10 to 15 years the parties have split by education, with more of those without a college degree conservative and Republican. This appears even among high school seniors, where young men who do not plan to attend a four-year college are 30 percent more likely to identify as conservative than young men who are planning to get a college degree.

[*Richard Reeves*](https://www.fec.gov/resources/cms-content/documents/federalelections2020.pdf), who wrote the book “[*Of Boys and Men*](https://www.fec.gov/resources/cms-content/documents/federalelections2020.pdf): Why the Modern Male Is Struggling, Why It Matters and What to Do about It,” argued in a January essay posted on his [*Substack*](https://www.fec.gov/resources/cms-content/documents/federalelections2020.pdf):

In the centrifugal dynamic of culture-war politics, the more the right goes to one extreme, the more the left must go to the other, and vice versa. The left dismisses biology; the right leans too heavily on it. The left see a war on girls and women; the right see a war on boys and men. The left pathologizes masculinity; the right pathologizes feminism.

In this context, Reeves wrote, “Young men see feminism as having metastasized from a movement for equality for women into a movement against men, or at least against masculinity.”

In an article published in January on the Business Insider website, “[*The War Within Gen Z*](https://www.fec.gov/resources/cms-content/documents/federalelections2020.pdf),” Daniel A. Cox, the director of the Survey Center on American Life at the [*American Enterprise Institute*](https://www.fec.gov/resources/cms-content/documents/federalelections2020.pdf), wrote:

Something strange is happening between Gen Z men and women. Over the past decade, poll after poll has found that young people are growing more and more divided by gender on a host of political issues. Since 2014, women between the ages of 18 and 29 have steadily become more liberal each year, while young men have not. Today, female Gen Zers are more likely than their male counterparts to vote, care more about political issues and participate in social movements and protests.

Cox noted that “at no time in the past quarter-century has there been such a rapid divergence between the views of young men and women,” suggesting that “something more significant is going on than just new demographic patterns, such as rising rates of education or declining adherence to a religion — the change points to some kind of cataclysmal event.”

After interviewing young voters, Cox and his colleagues at the A.E.I. survey center concluded:

Among women, no event was more influential to their political development than the #MeToo movement. In 2017, women around the world began speaking out about their experiences with sexual assault and harassment. Gen Zers were then in high school and college, and for them, the movement came at a formative moment.

But, Cox continued:

while women were rallying together, many Gen Z men began to feel like society was turning against them. As recently as 2019, less than one-third of young men said that they faced discrimination, according to Pew, but today, close to half of young men believe they face at least some discrimination. In a 2020 survey by the research organization P.R.R.I., half of men agreed with the statement: “These days society seems to punish men just for acting like men.”

For a growing percentage of young men, Cox wrote:

Feminism has less to do with promoting gender equality and more to do with simply attacking men. A 2022 survey by the Southern Poverty Law Center found that 46 percent of Democratic men under 50 agreed that feminism has done more harm than good, and even more Republican men agreed.

More young men, he added, “are adopting a zero-sum view of gender equality — if women gain, men will inevitably lose.”

How does this translate into politics?

According to Cox:

While women have turned to the left for answers to their problems, men are finding support on the right. Trump helped redefine conservatism as a distinctly masculine ideology, stoking grievances and directing young men’s frustration toward liberals and feminists. There are signs the message is resonating: Republican affiliation among white men aged 18 to 24 jumped from 28 percent in 2019 to 41 percent in 2023, according to a [*Harvard Youth Poll*](https://www.fec.gov/resources/cms-content/documents/federalelections2020.pdf).

On April 8, McInturff published a report, “[*Key Data by Generation*](https://www.fec.gov/resources/cms-content/documents/federalelections2020.pdf),” on his firm’s website:

“We are witnessing a profound generational break,” he wrote, “between Generation Z versus the baby boomers that is already reshaping our country, its values, media habits and its politics.”

At the outset, McInturff compared the values of Gen Z respondents ages 18 to 26 with those of the baby boomers, now 59 to 77.

Some 76 percent of baby boomers placed a high value on patriotism; for Gen Z, it was 32 percent. Nearly two-thirds of baby boomers, 65 percent, highly valued religion and their belief in God; Gen Z, 26 percent. Having kids: baby boomers, 52 percent; Gen Z, 23 percent. Asked if they agreed that “America is the best place to live,” 66 percent of boomers said yes, double the 33 percent of 18-to-26-year-olds.

In other words, the youngest voters are, at least for the moment, disaffected from traditional notions of family, country and religion.

Even so, young voters as a whole are decidedly more liberal on specific policies and issues than their elders.

On gay marriage, according to McInturff’s data, 84 percent of voters 18 to 34 were in favor, compared with 51 percent of voters 65 and over. Ending transgender discrimination: young, 55 percent; old, 24 percent. Climate change: 64 to 39. Cutting the defense budget, 48 to 24.

One particular issue is currently working against Biden and Democrats among young voters.

“The Israel/Hamas war in Gaza reflects one of the sharpest policy differences by age we have seen over a 40-year period,” McInturff wrote. “President Biden’s support for Israel has collapsed his standing with one of his key and previously most supportive subgroups, 18-to-29-year-old voters.”

McInturff compared data on voters 18 to 34 in two categories: surveys conducted from January to September 2023, before the war began, and surveys conducted after it started, from November 2023 to January 2024.

The shift among these young voters is terrible news for the Biden campaign. In the pre-Gaza polling, young voters backed Biden by 29 points, 61 to 32. In the post-Gaza surveys, Biden’s advantage over Trump fell to four points, 45 to 41.

If the decline in young people’s support for Democrats holds through Election Day, it will be a major setback for Democratic strategists who, before the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war, were banking on what appeared to be [*a secure partisan commitment*](https://www.fec.gov/resources/cms-content/documents/federalelections2020.pdf) by Gen Zers and millennials to the Democratic Party.

One of the key findings in the [*Harvard Youth Poll*](https://www.fec.gov/resources/cms-content/documents/federalelections2020.pdf) of 2,010 18-to-29-year-olds, conducted March 14 to 21, is that support for Biden among young voters fell far short of his support four years ago:

If the presidential election were held today, President Biden would outperform former President Trump among both registered (50 percent Biden, 37 percent Trump) and likely young voters under 30 (56 percent Biden, 37 percent Trump). When there is no voter screen (i.e., all young adults 18 to 29), the race narrows to single digits, 45 percent for President Biden, 37 percent for Trump, with 16 percent undecided.

At the same point in 2020, the [*Harvard Youth Poll*](https://www.fec.gov/resources/cms-content/documents/federalelections2020.pdf) “showed Biden leading Trump by 23 points among all young adults (51 percent to 28 percent),” compared with an eight-point lead in 2024. Among “likely” young voters in 2020, Biden led Trump by 33 points (60 percent to 27 percent), compared with 19 points in the current survey.

Young men account for virtually all the drop in support for Biden.

Joe Biden leads among both men (+6) and women (+33). Compared with this stage in the 2020 campaign, Biden’s lead among women is nearly identical (was +35 in 2020), but his lead among likely male voters has been dramatically reduced from +26 in 2020 to +6 today.

The same pattern emerged in partisan identification:

In 2020, 42 percent of young men in our poll identified as Democrats, and 20 percent were Republicans (+22 Democratic advantage); in this wave, 32 percent are Democrats, and 29 percent are Republicans (+3 Democratic advantage).

Over the same period, the Democratic advantage among women expanded by six points. In 2020, 43 percent of young women in our poll identified as Democrats, and 23 percent were Republicans (+20 Democratic advantage); in this wave, 44 percent are Democrats, and 18 percent are Republicans (+26 Democratic advantage).

The Harvard survey corroborates McInturff’s analysis of the damage inflicted on the Biden campaign by the Israel-Hamas war. The Harvard study found that anger over the conflict has produced a substantial bloc of young voters — although not a majority — opposed to Israel’s attacks in Gaza.

The Harvard Youth Survey found that when asked if the Oct. 7 attack on Israel by Hamas justified Israel’s continuing response, “a plurality indicates that they don’t know (45 percent). About a fifth (21 percent) report that Israel’s response was justified, with 32 percent believing it was not justified.”

According to the Harvard survey, “Young Americans support a permanent cease-fire in Gaza by a five-to-one margin (51 percent support, 10 percent oppose). No major subgroup of young voters opposes such action.”

If Biden is struggling to restore his majorities among young voters, how is it that he remains competitive with Trump, running behind by [*1.4 percentage points*](https://www.fec.gov/resources/cms-content/documents/federalelections2020.pdf), according to the RealClearPolitics average of recent polls?

One reason is that the [*share of the electorate*](https://www.fec.gov/resources/cms-content/documents/federalelections2020.pdf) made up of the white ***working class***, the core of Trump’s support, is steadily declining, while the number of college-educated white people, an increasingly strong source of Democratic support, is growing.

A second factor is that defections to the Republican Party that had been emerging among a small percentage of Black and Hispanic voters appear to have stopped, if not reversed. [*Matthew Blackwell*](https://www.fec.gov/resources/cms-content/documents/federalelections2020.pdf), a political scientist at Harvard who tracks polling trends, [*posted graphics on X*](https://www.fec.gov/resources/cms-content/documents/federalelections2020.pdf) last month, noting, “Biden mildly trending better among Black and Hispanic subgroups in the last few weeks of polling.”

In an email, Blackwell expanded on his post: “The big takeaways are that Biden has been polling worse with Black and Latino voters compared to 2016 and 2020, but over the course of April, we did see some movement of these groups back to the 2020 levels, even if they haven’t quite gotten there yet.”

Blackwell predicted that “we can probably expect many prior Biden voters to ‘return to the fold’ as the campaign goes on,” before adding that many surveys may underestimate support for Biden:

Most of the polls are of registered voters without likely-[*voter screens*](https://www.fec.gov/resources/cms-content/documents/federalelections2020.pdf). Many pollsters have found that regular voters are more supportive of Biden than nonregular voters. As we get closer to Election Day, we will probably see more likely-voter polls that may be more accurate.

Biden has [*improved*](https://www.fec.gov/resources/cms-content/documents/federalelections2020.pdf) on his 2020 margins with several very large blocs of voters: white people with college degrees (plus 1.3 points), white people without degrees (plus 0.6 points), 50-to-64-year-olds (plus 4 points) and voters 65 and older (plus 1.8 points). While the percentages are small, the groups are huge, making even a half a percentage point shift significant.

The closeness of the contest between Trump and Biden puts especially heavy pressure on Biden to negotiate a cease-fire, if not a conclusion to hostilities in Gaza. Nothing would do more to restore at least some of the crucial support he received from young men and women four years ago.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.fec.gov/resources/cms-content/documents/federalelections2020.pdf) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://www.fec.gov/resources/cms-content/documents/federalelections2020.pdf). And here&#39;s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.fec.gov/resources/cms-content/documents/federalelections2020.pdf).

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PHOTO: Nov. 7, 2020. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Damon Winter/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** May 1, 2024

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[***Union Members Authorize Strike at Las Vegas Resorts***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:698J-CT31-JBG3-6074-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 28, 2023 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section B; Column 0; Business/Financial Desk; Pg. 5

**Length:** 627 words

**Byline:** By Kurtis Lee

**Body**

Unions representing 60,000 workers across Nevada have been in talks with the resorts since April. The vote is a crucial step toward a walkout.

Hospitality workers in Las Vegas have voted overwhelmingly to authorize a strike against major resorts along the Strip, a critical step toward a walkout as the economically challenged city prepares for major sporting events in the months ahead.

The authorization vote on Tuesday by members of Culinary Workers Union Local 226 and Bartenders Union Local 165, which collectively represent 60,000 workers across Nevada, was approved by 95 percent of those taking part, according to union officials.

Although a vote is a forceful step, it does not guarantee that workers will strike before hashing out a new contract deal with the major resorts. Contracts for roughly 40,000 housekeepers, bartenders, cooks and food servers at MGM Resorts International, Caesars Entertainment and Wynn Resorts expired on Sept. 15, after being extended from a June deadline. Other workers remain on extended contracts that can be terminated at any time.

The locals, which are affiliated with the union UNITE HERE, have been in negotiations with the resorts since April over demands that include higher wages, more safety protections and stronger recall rights so that workers have more ability to return to their jobs during a pandemic or an economic crisis. (Union officials have said there are about 20 percent fewer hospitality workers in the city than before the Covid pandemic.)

''No one ever wants to go on strike,'' said Ted Pappageorge, the head of Local 226. ''But ***working-class*** folks and families have been left behind, especially since the pandemic.''

In a statement, MGM Resorts said it was optimistic the two sides could come to an agreement.

''We continue to have productive meetings with the union and believe both parties are committed to negotiating a contract that is good for everyone,'' said the company.

Wynn Resorts and Caesars Entertainment declined to comment on the vote. Negotiations continue next week between the union and the companies.

The contract battle comes as the tourism-dependent state, where the rebound from the pandemic's economic toll has been slower than in other regions, has hedged its bets on a big sports bump.

In November, Formula 1 will arrive with the Las Vegas Grand Prix, an international event that is expected to draw hundreds of thousands of tourists. A few months later, the region will be the site of the Super Bowl.

The authorization vote also comes amid major labor battles nationwide.

Thousands of members of the United Automobile Workers union have been on strike against the three major Detroit automakers for nearly two weeks. And while the Writers Guild of America recently reached a tentative agreement with major Hollywood studios after a monthslong walkout, contract talks with tens of thousands of striking actors are at an impasse.

In Southern California, thousands of hotel workers with UNITE HERE Local 11 have staged several months of temporary strikes.

The Culinary Union, which is a major base for Democrats in Nevada, a swing state, held a similar strike authorization vote in 2018 among 25,000 workers. A contract agreement with major hotels was reached before any strike occurred.

For Chelsea MacDougall, who works as a gourmet food server at the Wynn Las Vegas, watching months of negotiations with few results has been frustrating. Inside an arena crowded with fellow union workers -- some waving signs that read ''One Job Should Be ENOUGH,'' alluding to low pay -- she voted to authorize a walkout.

''This is our next show of force to companies,'' said Ms. MacDougall, 36, who makes $11.57 an hour before tips. ''The workers deserve a living wage.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/27/business/economy/las-vegas-strip-strike-authorization.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/27/business/economy/las-vegas-strip-strike-authorization.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: The members of two hospitality unions cast their ballots at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, on Tuesday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BRIDGET BENNETT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page B5.

**Load-Date:** September 28, 2023

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[***Strike Is a High-Stakes Gamble for Autoworkers and the Labor Movement; NEWS analysis***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:696M-P541-JBG3-6003-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 19, 2023 Tuesday 18:33 EST

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**Section:** BUSINESS; economy

**Length:** 1434 words

**Byline:** Noam Scheiber

**Highlight:** Experts on unions and the industry said the U.A.W. strike could accelerate a wave of worker actions, or stifle labor’s recent momentum.

**Body**

Experts on unions and the industry said the U.A.W. strike could accelerate a wave of worker actions, or stifle labor’s recent momentum.

Since the start of the pandemic, labor unions have enjoyed something of a renaissance. They have made inroads into previously nonunion companies like Starbucks and Amazon, and won [*unusually*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/21/business/american-airlines-pilots-union.html#:~:text=Delta's%20pilots%20set%20a%20baseline,percent%20in%20the%20coming%20years.) [*strong*](https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2022-12-23/uc-grad-student-workers-ratify-labor-agreement-end-historic-strike-with-big-wage-gains) [*contracts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/22/business/economy/ups-contract-vote-teamsters.html) for hundreds of thousands of workers. Last year, public approval for unions reached its [*highest level*](https://news.gallup.com/poll/510281/unions-strengthening.aspx) since the Lyndon Johnson presidency.

What unions haven’t had during that stretch is a true gut-check moment on a national scale. Strikes by railroad workers and UPS employees, which had the potential to rattle the U.S. economy, were [*averted at the last minute*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/22/business/economy/ups-contract-vote-teamsters.html). The fallout from the continuing writers’ and actors’ strikes has been [*heavily concentrated*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/01/business/economy/hollywood-strikes-jobs-report.html) in [*Southern California*](https://nytimes.com/2023/07/14/us/hollywood-los-angeles-economy.html).

The strike by the United Automobile Workers, whose members walked off the job at three plants on Friday, is shaping up to be such a test. A contract with substantial wage increases and other concessions from the three automakers could announce organized labor as an economic force to be reckoned with and accelerate a recent wave of organizing.

But there are also real pitfalls. A prolonged strike could undermine the three established U.S. automakers — General Motors, Ford and Stellantis, which owns Chrysler, Jeep and Ram — and send the politically crucial Midwest into recession. If the union is seen as overreaching, or if it settles for a weak deal after a costly stoppage, public support could sour.

“Right now, unions are cool,” said Michael Lotito, a lawyer at Littler Mendelson, a firm representing management.

“But unions have a risk of not being very cool if you have a five-month strike in L.A and an X-month strike in how many other states,” he added.

If the stakes seem high for the U.A.W., that’s partly because the union’s new president, Shawn Fain, has gone out of his way to elevate them. During frequent video meetings with members before the strike, Mr. Fain has portrayed the negotiations as a broader struggle pitting ordinary workers against corporate titans.

“I know that we’re on the right side in this battle,” he said in a [*recent video appearance*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1TM0L5DqQ5s). “It’s a battle of the ***working class*** against the rich, the haves versus the have-nots, the billionaire class against everybody else.”

Mr. Fain’s framing of the contract campaign in class terms appears to be resonating with his members, thousands of whom have watched the online sessions.

Shunte Sanders-Beasley, a U.A.W. member in Michigan who started working at a Chrysler plant in Indiana in 1999, said she saw the fight similarly.

“If you follow history, autoworkers tend to set the tone,” said Ms. Sanders-Beasley, who has served as [*vice president*](https://www.facebook.com/shunte.sanders/about) of her local and backed Mr. Fain’s campaign for the union’s presidency last year. “If we can win back some of the concessions we took, I’m hoping that it’ll be a trickle-down effect.”

A successful [*autoworker strike*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/19/business/amazon-union-choke-points.html) in 1937, which led G.M. to recognize the U.A.W. for the first time, helped set in motion a [*wave of union organizing*](https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w6012/w6012.pdf) across a variety of industries like steel, oil, textiles and newspapers over the next few years.

Labor activists agreed that the current strike could also reverberate across other industries, where workers appear to be paying close attention to the labor actions of the past year. “In organizing meetings, they say, ‘If they can do it, we can do it,’” said Jaz Brisack, an organizer with Workers United who had played a [*key role*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/19/business/starbucks-union-rhodes-scholar.html) in the Starbucks campaign.

But the flip side is that the strike could inflict collateral damage that creates frustration and hardship among tens of thousands of nonunion workers and their communities.

“The small and medium-sized manufacturers across the country that make up the automotive sector’s integrated supply chain will feel the brunt of this work stoppage, whether they are a union shop or not,” Jay Timmons, the chief executive of the National Association of Manufacturers, said in a [*statement*](https://www.nam.org/manufacturers-impact-of-strike-will-echo-far-beyond-detroit-28390/?stream=series-press-releases) Friday.

Higher wages and gains for rank-and-file workers can be good for the economy. But some argue that Mr. Fain’s and other labor leaders’ aggressive demands could discourage businesses from investing in the United States or render them uncompetitive with foreign rivals.

“Mr. Fain has to think about this, too — the long-term financial viability of these three companies,” said John Drake, vice president of transportation, infrastructure and supply chain policy at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Even those who welcome the union’s aggressive stance say it is fraught with risk. Gene Bruskin, a longtime union official who helped workers at a Smithfield meat-processing plant in North Carolina achieve, in 2008, one of the [*biggest organizing victories*](https://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/13/us/13smithfield.html) in decades, said he strongly favored the strike and how Mr. Fain and the union are seeking to rally the ***working class***.

But he said a long strike could disillusion workers if the union came up short on key demands.

“If the U.A.W. fails to make any significant gains, particularly on the two-tier stuff, their future could be seriously harmed,” said Mr. Bruskin, referring to a system in which newer workers are paid far less than veteran workers who perform similar jobs.

Mr. Bruskin also worried that the union could effectively win the battle and lose the war if the auto companies respond by shifting more production to Mexico, where they already have a significant presence.

The tens of billions of dollars in federal subsidies for domestic production of electric vehicles that President Biden [*has helped secure*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/13/business/economy/autoworkers-strike-biden.html) should limit that shift and help keep manufacturing jobs at home. Many automakers are already locating new plants in the United States to take advantage of the funds.

Still, Willy Shih, an expert on manufacturing at Harvard Business School, said the automakers could adjust their operations in ways that undercut the U.A.W. while continuing to produce cars domestically. Automation is one option, he said, as is locating new plants in lightly unionized Southern states.

The Detroit automakers have created joint ventures with foreign battery makers outside the reach of the U.A.W.’s national contracts and have sought to locate some of those plants in states like Tennessee and Kentucky. The union [*is seeking*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/13/business/economy/autoworkers-strike-biden.html) to bring workers at those plants up to the same pay and labor standards that direct employees of the Big Three enjoy, but it has not succeeded so far.

Given those threats, the union may feel justified in taking a more ambitious posture toward the automakers. The primary check on shifting work to other states will be the U.A.W.’s ability to organize new plants, especially in the South, where it has struggled to gain traction for years. Experts argued that the union would likely increase its chances of attracting members there if it could point to large concrete gains.

“The answer is winning a strong contact here and using it to organize huge groups of autoworkers who are currently nonunion,” said Barry Eidlin, a sociologist at McGill University in Montreal who studies labor.

And there are other ways in which being too cautious may be a bigger risk to the union than being too aggressive. Organizers point out that workers are often demoralized when union leaders talk tough and then quickly settle for a subpar deal.

Critics of the previous U.A.W. administration accused it of doing just that before Mr. Fain took over this year. “We’d be trying to make sense of how certain things passed in the first place,” Shana Shaw, another longtime U.A.W. member who backed Mr. Fain, said of the concessionary contracts autoworkers were asked to accept over the years.

Even Mr. Fain’s habit of framing the fight in broad class terms may prove to be a strategic advantage. A recent [*Gallup poll*](https://news.gallup.com/poll/510281/unions-strengthening.aspx) found that 75 percent of the public backed the autoworkers in the showdown, compared with 19 percent who were more sympathetic to the companies.

The widespread public support suggests that the autoworkers may be operating in a different context from workers in another strike that famously contributed to a loss of power for labor: air traffic controllers’ unsuccessful fight against the Reagan administration in the early 1980s, after which private-sector employers appeared to become more comfortable firing and replacing striking employees.

Dr. Eidlin said that while the air traffic controllers failed to court allies in the labor movement, “the fact that Fain and the U.A.W. are messaging more broadly, really trying to build that broad coalition, speaks to the possibility of a different outcome.”

This article appeared in print on page A1, A17.

**Load-Date:** September 19, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Ellen Gallagher’s Futuristic Archives; Artist’s Questionnaire***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BS6-PR01-JBG3-606T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 10, 2024 Wednesday 15:07 EST

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**Section:** T-MAGAZINE

**Length:** 2145 words

**Byline:** Kadish Morris

**Highlight:** The artist discusses marine life and African American myth from her studio in the Netherlands.

**Body**

The artist discusses marine life and African American myth from her studio in the Netherlands.

A fire erupted at the American artist Ellen Gallagher’s studio in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, in 2004. None of her paintings were damaged — she’d been installing them in a show in New York at the time — but she was left without a work space for some time. “I’d been making these massive Plasticine resin paintings. I was so into it. I’d just shown in the Venice Biennale, and I wasn’t ready to not make something ambitious,” she says. But the fire forced her to shift formats and work on a smaller scale. Those limiting conditions, somewhat ironically, led to her creating perhaps one of her best known bodies of work, “[*DeLuxe*](https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/gallagher-deluxe-t12301)” (2004-5), a collection of 60 absurdist images composed of vintage clippings from African American magazines such as Ebony, Our World and Sepia. She made collages of the cutouts and turned them into photogravures, a printing process that smoothed the various clippings into one flat image. Then she repeated the process, adding new images atop the existing prints and creating a layered, rich composition. “I love the idea that you can both destroy and maintain the archive,” she says.

On a cold day in February, we sit in that same building, a postwar former tin storage facility. Gallagher’s studio is a sprawling space with large windows and a wooden floor, part of which she and a friend built themselves. Scattered around us are some of her artworks in progress; stacks of paper, brushes and books; and a plate of Dutch cookies. Gallagher moved to Rotterdam from the U.S. two decades ago, out of a desire to distance herself from the demands of the New York art scene. It isn’t much of a walking city, she tells me. The landscape is industrial, flattened out and lined with wide paths that are more suited for cycling than the kind of sauntering one might do in Amsterdam, but Gallagher, an avid biker, prefers Rotterdam’s “spooky,” sparse scenery. The building is divided into multiple studios, primarily shared among 10 core artists. “We’re a [co-op], and everybody has an equal vote,” she says, before adding that the building is very male, in contrast to her artistic community in New York: “I miss a woman’s culture.”

Gallagher was born in Providence, R. I., in 1965 to a ***working-class*** family. In her 20s, she worked as a carpenter in the Pacific Northwest and as a fisherman in Alaska; moving away from home had always appealed to her. “That was my right,” she says, “something that was part of making myself as a young adult.” Those early jobs, in which she worked with her hands and engaged with the natural world, eventually led her to pursue an artistic practice that includes painting, drawing, collage, film and animation. After graduating from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, she debuted on the New York scene in 1995 with abstract works that included references to ’90s hip-hop culture, ’50s Black hair ads and Jim Crow-era blackface visuals. In her early painting “Oh! Susanna” (1995), which is dense with bulging eyes and “Sambo lips,” the allusion to minstrel cartoons is frank and direct. But it and other works were often flatly interpreted as highlighting, rather than subverting, the signs and symbols of racism. “When I first appeared in the ’90s, the first people reviewing the work were older white men,” Gallagher says. “What I didn’t know as a younger artist was that the misreading was purposeful. Being locked into someone else’s lack of sight, lack of vision: that was the point.”

Over the course of 30 years, Gallagher has carefully attended to her own visual language, deploying processes such as collage, erasure, extraction, reconstruction and revision to create works that blend elements of history, humor and horror. Her recent solo exhibition, “[*All of No Man’s Land Is Ours*](https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/gallagher-deluxe-t12301),” at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, explored her longtime preoccupation with marine life, the Middle Passage and the transportation of enslaved people. Gallagher is particularly interested in the phenomenon of whale falls — whale carcasses that sink to the ocean bed — and their resemblance to sunken slave ships. In her canvas painting “Whale Falls” (2017), currently featured in the exhibition “[*Entangled Pasts*](https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/gallagher-deluxe-t12301)” at The Royal Academy in London, a backdrop of sea blues is haunted by the faint suggestion of body parts; the work is also a nod to another of the artist’s enduring interests, the Drexciya myth of an underwater Black civilization populated by the unborn children of pregnant African women thrown overboard from slave ships.

A focal point of Gallagher’s Stedelijk show was an early painting by Paul Cézanne called “The Negro Scipio” (1867). It depicts the back of a Black man, the skin disfigured from whippings, and it inspired her own series of rubber-based black monochromatic paintings, made between 1998 and 1999. Gallagher also included “The Negro Scipio” in the show because of how it came to be known to the world: It was one of several then-overlooked Cézanne paintings that were sold to Claude Monet, in 1895, by the French art dealer Ambroise Vollard, who is thought to have been a person of color. For Gallagher, “it represents Black agency at the heart of modernism, as opposed to the story needing to be added in later.” The work’s subject and provenance confirm her idea of history as something that is elastic, alive and fused with Black myths. “There’s a futurity,” she tells me later, “waiting for us in the past.” Below, she answers T’s [*Artist’s Questionnaire*](https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/gallagher-deluxe-t12301).

What’s your day like? How much do you sleep, and what’s your work schedule?

I need at least 8 hours of good sleep a night. It took me a long time to figure that out.

How many hours of creative work do you think you do in a day?

It depends on where I am in the process. If I’m beginning a new body of work or shifting something in the work, I tend to work regular hours; I’m in the studio by 10 a.m. and I leave by 7 p.m. As the work develops, it speeds up, but at the same time I need to remain in the studio for as long as possible. I don’t go home. It’s a heightened state. The decisions get more clear and circle through one another, often revealing that an earlier gesture which might have appeared random or unmoored was somehow necessary all along.

What’s the first piece of art you ever made?

I had just arrived on St. Thomas, in the U.S. Virgin Islands, to meet a schooner. I was a day early. This was back in the mid-1980s. I must’ve only had enough money for my one-way ticket and a bit left over — but definitely not enough for any hotel stay. As dusk started to fall, I saw a really lovely firehouse overlooking a park by the bay. I went into the station and asked if I could have a bed for the night and, in return, I’d draw portraits of the company. The gentlemen graciously agreed and set me up right there next to the fire truck. I began to draw. They teased me, mercilessly at first, but I just focused and kept going, trying not to panic. And of course, I made flattering depictions, all muscley. Unfortunately, my sense of proportion was off and [at first] the bulging muscles only made the arms look skinnier, like Popeye. But I remained very serious and then I think the drawings got a bit better. The mood shifted, and everyone wanted a portrait.

What’s the worst studio you ever had?

In Boston, directly after graduating from art school, I shared a studio with [the playwright] David Mamet’s cook. She kept her dry-goods rack stored in the common space, an impressive floor-to-ceiling grid of glass jars and metal shelving. Her way of eating and preparing food was her art. Around the same time, my mother came to see the studio. She’d taken it upon herself to strap my childhood mattress to the roof of her powder blue Dodge Dart and drive over from Providence, R.I. At the back of the studio, just above our heads, was a wide wooden shelf. We swung the mattress up [to store it there] and it fit perfectly. That studio made two things painfully clear: “Artists are the high-class servants of the wealthy.” And, I could not go home.

What’s the first work you ever sold? For how much?

When I was a student at the Skowhegan [residency program in Maine], an artist I greatly admired brought along a companion, an art-world entrepreneur. The artist beckoned his friend over to my studio shack, calling out to him: “Come see this! There’s someone making minstrel vaginas.” The entrepreneur ran into my space and proceeded to make a lot of noise. Anyway, it was decided on the spot. The painting was “Oh! Susanna.” The year was 1993. Entering 1994, the entrepreneur still hadn’t managed to send me a check that didn’t bounce. Finally, on the third or fourth attempt, at the end of 1994, he sent a check, for $900, that cashed.

When you start a new piece, where do you begin?

I always begin with the idea that I’m making art material rather than the work itself. Then there’s a merging of the material and the actual work. The unit of material becomes animate.

How do you know when you’re done?

At a certain point in the work, I can clearly see where it’s going, and I just know how to get there — [my previous gestures] and my initial ideas interact almost radioactively.

What music do you play when you’re making art?

For almost a year I’ve been obsessed with listening to [the pianist and composer] Jason Moran’s rearrangements of the early 20th-century composer and bandleader James Reese Europe’s compositions. In the poise and physic energy of Moran’s work, you can feel that he came up musically alongside Nas and the Roots. I like to mix that up with another artist I admire, the experimental violinist and singer [*Sudan Archives*](https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/gallagher-deluxe-t12301). Jason Moran and Sudan Archives would be the best supergroup! I imagine Sudan Archives playing her goje, a violin-esque string instrument from West Africa, in a Reese Europe composition.

When did you first feel comfortable saying you’re a professional artist?

In that firehouse on St. Thomas.

Is there a meal you eat on repeat when you’re working?

Less than 2 kilometers from my studio is the best fishmonger in the Netherlands: Schmidt Zeevis. Any fresher and the fish would be swimming. They also know that I love sea urchins and make sure to let me know when they get some in. I like to make a simple pasta dish with those; otherwise I enjoy them directly from their test [hard shell] with a spoon.

Are you bingeing any shows right now?

[Tonya Mosley’s] [*Fresh Air interview*](https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/gallagher-deluxe-t12301) with the actor Jeffrey Wright. I’ve already listened to [the podcast episode] four times! It’s like a poem you can keep unpacking.

How often do you talk to other artists?

I’m part of a cooperative, and my partner is an artist, so I speak to artists every day. But I try to be economical in my approach [to those conversations], because we’re all so intertwined and have been for many years, and it’s good to keep things fresh. A few years ago, I took a position as a painting professor at Düsseldorf Academy, [an art school in Germany]. There’s a raw [current of] intimacy running between the artists there. It’s an incredible privilege to experience that sense of beginning [among artists at the start of their careers].

What do you usually wear when you work?

Big boots because I’m standing up for most of the day and I often draw with a scalpel.

If you have windows, what do they look out on?

The River Maas, in the direction of the North Sea. Currently, there’s an enormous ferry moored to the docks for asylum seekers that have become “Statushouders,” meaning they have been issued an ID card like the one I have. They are more or less temporarily living on that ferry, waiting for housing from the city.

What do you do when you’re procrastinating?

Watch the swans drift by my windows and, in the summer, the neighborhood kids swimming and swinging off the docks. I never get tired of this view.

What are you reading?

“The Letters of Paul Cézanne,” edited by Alex Danchev [and published in 2013]. Apparently, Cézanne memorized Charles Baudelaire’s volume of poetry “Les Fleurs du Mal” (1857) and quoted from it often and extensively. This piqued my curiosity because [the curator] Denise Murrell’s research explores so many connections between that volume and Baudelaire’s longtime muse and lover, the [Haitian-born] dancer Jeanne Duval — [*painted by Manet*](https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/gallagher-deluxe-t12301) in 1862 — and the burgeoning city-world being created in Paris at the time.

What’s your favorite artwork by someone else?

“[*Garden at Issy*](https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/gallagher-deluxe-t12301)” by Henri Matisse (1917).

What do you bulk buy with the most frequency?

Glue and pigment.

What embarrasses you?

How dirty my work process is — the shreds of glue, paint and paper that lead to my studio.

What’s the weirdest object in your studio?

An easel. I don’t know how it got in here.

PHOTO: The American artist Ellen Gallagher in her studio in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Marlena Waldthausen FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** April 10, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Warning Lights Flash For Biden, Times Poll Finds***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BG2-W1Y1-DXY4-X482-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 3, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1648 words

**Byline:** By Shane Goldmacher

**Body**

The share of voters who strongly disapprove of President Biden's handling of his job has reached 47 percent, higher than in Times/Siena polls at any point in his presidency.

President Biden is struggling to overcome doubts about his leadership inside his own party and broad dissatisfaction over the nation's direction, leaving him trailing behind Donald J. Trump just as their general-election contest is about to begin, a new poll by The New York Times and Siena College has found.

With eight months left until the November election, Mr. Biden's 43 percent support lags behind Mr. Trump's 48 percent in the national survey of registered voters.

Only one in four voters thinks the country is moving in the right direction. More than twice as many voters believe Mr. Biden's policies have personally hurt them as believe his policies have helped them. A majority of voters think the economy is in poor condition. And the share of voters who strongly disapprove of Mr. Biden's handling of his job has reached 47 percent, higher than in Times/Siena polls at any point in his presidency.

The poll offers an array of warning signs for the president about weaknesses within the Democratic coalition, including among women, Black and Latino voters. So far, it is Mr. Trump who has better unified his party, even amid an ongoing primary contest.

Mr. Biden has marched through the early nominating states with only nominal opposition. But the poll showed that Democrats remain deeply divided about the prospect of Mr. Biden, the 81-year-old chief executive, leading the party again. About as many Democratic primary voters said Mr. Biden should not be the nominee in 2024 as said he should be -- with opposition strongest among voters younger than 45 years old.

Mr. Trump's ability to consolidate the Republican base better than Mr. Biden has unified the base of his own party shows up starkly in the current thinking of 2020 voters. Mr. Trump is winning 97 percent of those who say they voted for him four years ago, and virtually none of his past supporters said they are casting a ballot for Mr. Biden. In contrast, Mr. Biden is winning only 83 percent of his 2020 voters, with 10 percent saying they now back Mr. Trump.

''It's going to be a very tough decision -- I'm seriously thinking about not voting,'' said Mamta Misra, 57, a Democrat and an economics professor in Lafayette, La., who voted for Mr. Biden in 2020. ''Trump voters are going to come out no matter what. For Democrats, it's going to be bad. I don't know why they're not thinking of someone else.''

Mr. Trump's five-point lead in the survey, which was conducted in late February, is slightly larger than in the last Times/Siena national poll of registered voters in December. Among the likely electorate, Mr. Trump currently leads by four percentage points.

In last year's survey, Mr. Trump led by two points among registered voters and Mr. Biden led by two points among the projected likely electorate.

One of the more ominous findings for Mr. Biden in the new poll is that the historical edge Democrats have held with ***working-class*** voters of color who did not attend college continues to erode.

Mr. Biden won 72 percent of those voters in 2020, according to exit polling, providing him with a nearly 50-point edge over Mr. Trump. Today, the Times/Siena poll showed Mr. Biden only narrowly leading among nonwhite voters who did not graduate from college: 47 percent to 41 percent.

An excitement gap between the two parties shows up repeatedly in the survey: Only 23 percent of Democratic primary voters said they were enthusiastic about Mr. Biden -- half the share of Republicans who said they were about Mr. Trump. Significantly more Democrats said they were either dissatisfied or angry at Mr. Biden being the leader of the party (32 percent) than Republicans who said the same about Mr. Trump (18 percent).

Both Mr. Trump and Mr. Biden are unpopular. Mr. Trump had a weak 44 percent favorable rating; Mr. Biden fared even worse, at 38 percent. Among the 19 percent of voters who said they disapproved of both likely nominees -- an unusually large cohort in 2024 that pollsters and political strategists sometimes call ''double haters'' -- Mr. Biden actually led Mr. Trump, 45 percent to 33 percent.

The candidate who had won such ''double haters'' was victorious in the elections in both 2016 and 2020.

For now, though, unhappiness with the state of the country is plainly a drag on Mr. Biden's prospects. Two-thirds of the country feels the nation is headed in the wrong direction -- and Mr. Trump is winning 63 percent of those voters.

The share of voters who believe the nation is on the right track remains a dismal and diminutive minority at 24 percent. Yet even that figure is a marked improvement from the peak inflationary days in the summer of 2022, when only 13 percent of voters felt the nation was headed in the proper direction.

''If we get Trump for another four years, we get a little better on economics,'' said Oscar Rivera, a 39-year-old independent voter who owns a roofing business in Rochester, N.Y.

Mr. Trump's policies were generally viewed far more favorably by voters than Mr. Biden's. A full 40 percent of voters said Mr. Trump's policies had helped them personally, compared to only 18 percent who said the same of Mr. Biden's.

Only 12 percent of independent voters like Mr. Rivera said Mr. Biden's policies had personally helped them, compared to 43 percent who said his policies had hurt them.

Mr. Rivera, who is Puerto Rican, said he doesn't like the way Mr. Trump talks about immigration and the southern border, but is planning to vote for him anyway. ''Biden? I don't know,'' Mr. Rivera said. ''It looks like we're weak, America's weak. We need someone stronger.''

Overall, Mr. Biden and Mr. Trump were dead even among prized independent voters, drawing 42 percent each.

But over and over, the Times/Siena poll revealed how Mr. Trump has cut into more traditional Democratic constituencies while holding his ground among Republican groups. The gender gap, for instance, is no longer benefiting Democrats. Women, who strongly favored Mr. Biden four years ago, are now equally split, while men gave Mr. Trump a nine-point edge. The poll showed Mr. Trump edging out Mr. Biden among Latinos, and Mr. Biden's share of the Black vote is shrinking, too.

There are, of course, unpredictable X factors in a race where the Republican front-runner is facing four indictments, 91 felony counts and a criminal trial set to begin at the end of March in New York State Supreme Court.

The poll showed that 53 percent of voters currently believe Mr. Trump has committed serious federal crimes, down from 58 percent in December. But viewed another way, Mr. Trump's current lead over Mr. Biden is built with a significant number of voters who believe he is a criminal.

The country, meanwhile, remains divided on some of the thorniest domestic and international issues.

By a narrow margin, more voters favor making it more difficult for migrants at the southern border to seek asylum (49 percent to 43 percent). Mr. Trump and Mr. Biden made dueling appearances at the border this week; illegal border crossings set record highs at the end of 2023.

As the Israel-Hamas conflict rages in its fifth month, 40 percent of voters said they sympathized more with Israel compared to 24 percent who said they sympathized more with the Palestinians. Mr. Trump was winning 70 percent of those who backed Israel primarily; Mr. Biden was winning 68 percent of those who sided with the Palestinians, even as he has faced demonstrations and a protest vote over his pro-Israel stance.

Philip Kalarickal, a 51-year-old anesthesiologist in Decatur, Ga., is a Democrat dismayed by Mr. Biden's handling of the humanitarian fallout from the conflict in Gaza.

''Joe Biden should be doing more to ensure that the Israeli government goes about this in a way that provides safety for them but without the civilian toll,'' Dr. Kalarickal said, adding that he would reluctantly back Mr. Biden this fall, given that he lives in a swing state.

''I understand that my vote or lack of vote carries a consequence, and I look at the alternative and that's worse than the current thing,'' Dr. Kalarickal said. ''But I do want to register my displeasure. The way I vote doesn't mean I like it.''

The Biden campaign hopes that more and more voters like Mr. Kalarickal snap back into their usual partisan patterns in the coming months. The return of such reluctant Democrats is one reason the Biden campaign has been optimistic that polling will narrow, and eventually flip, as the choice between Mr. Trump and Mr. Biden becomes clearer.

Nikki Haley, Mr. Trump's Republican rival, who has made the case that he will lose in November, leads Mr. Biden by double the margin of the former president: a hypothetical 45 percent to 35 percent. But she has struggled to gain traction in the primary and the poll portends landslide losses on Super Tuesday next week, with 77 percent of Republican primary voters picking Mr. Trump over her.

Alyce McFadden and Ruth Igielnik contributed reporting.

The New York Times/Siena College poll of 980 registered voters nationwide was conducted on cellular and landline telephones, using live interviewers, from Feb. 25 to 28, 2024. The margin of sampling error for the presidential ballot choice question is plus or minus 3.5 percentage points among registered voters. Cross-tabs and methodology are available here.Alyce McFadden and Ruth Igielnik contributed reporting.The New York Times/Siena College poll of 980 registered voters nationwide was conducted on cellular and landline telephones, using live interviewers, from Feb. 25 to 28, 2024. The margin of sampling error for the presidential ballot choice question is plus or minus 3.5 percentage points among registered voters.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/02/us/politics/biden-trump-times-siena-poll.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/02/us/politics/biden-trump-times-siena-poll.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Donald J. Trump's policies were generally seen far more favorably by voters than President Biden's. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY KENT NISHIMURA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

TAYLOR BAUCOM FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A22) This article appeared in print on page A1, A22.

**Load-Date:** March 3, 2024

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[***Entire Village Joins Celebration Of Nation's Oldest***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B94-MXC1-DXY4-X03V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 9, 2024 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 12

**Length:** 1331 words

**Byline:** By Soumya Karlamangla

**Body**

When Edith Ceccarelli was born in February 1908, Theodore Roosevelt was president, Oklahoma had just become the nation's 46th state and women did not yet have the right to vote.

At 116, Ms. Ceccarelli is the oldest known person in the United States and the second oldest on Earth. She has lived through two World Wars, the advent of the Ford Model T -- and the two deadliest pandemics in American history.

For most of that time, she has lived in one place: Willits, a village tucked in California's redwood forests that was once known for logging but now may be better known for Ms. Ceccarelli.

At Willits City Hall, where 100-foot redwoods tower overhead, a gold-framed photograph of Ms. Ceccarelli sits in a display case. Last year, the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors proclaimed Feb. 5 as a day to celebrate the county's favorite daughter.

''When she hit her hundredth birthday, the whole community was kind of in awe, and she became a bit of a local celebrity,'' said Mayor Saprina Rodriguez, who at 52 is less than half Ms. Ceccarelli's age.

Nestled in a valley surrounded by forested peaks in rural Mendocino County, in California's North Coast region, Willits prospered from its booming lumber industry when Ms. Ceccarelli was a little girl. But that boom is long gone, and Willits remains a small, ***working-class*** community of about 5,000 people.

Because it is about 30 miles inland from the Pacific Ocean, Willits has never attracted the tourists who flock to coastal destinations like Mendocino and Fort Bragg, with their Instagrammable wineries and cottages perched on seaside bluffs, along with whale-watching opportunities.

But neither of those places has Ms. Ceccarelli.

On Sunday, Willits hosted its annual celebration for its most treasured resident, who watched from the porch of her care home. It was raining, the beginning of another atmospheric river -- what they just called downpours for most of Ms. Ceccarelli's life -- but nobody in Willits gave a thought to canceling the annual festivities.

A parade of flashing police cruisers and fire trucks passed by. Then a garbage truck. Sedans adorned with garlands, balloons and flowers followed, ferrying residents who waved and sang to their beloved Edie.

''She's a local icon,'' said Suzanne Picetti-Johnson, a longtime Willits resident who had donned a rain jacket and beanie and was directing an S.U.V. with ''Happy Sweet 116!'' scrawled on its rear window. ''She's always been just a total delight, and we're thrilled to celebrate her one more year.''

On Feb. 5, 1908, Edith Recagno was delivered by her aunt in a house in Willits that her father had built by hand. The home had no electricity or running water, so a hand-dug well provided the family with drinking water and, in lieu of a refrigerator, a cool place to hang milk and meat.

She was the first of seven children born to Agostino and Maria Recagno, who were Italian immigrants drawn to Mendocino County by opportunity. Willits, where bright green moss covers tree trunks and giant ferns unfurl along the banks of icy creeks, was settled by pioneering ranchers in the 1850s as fortune-seekers flocked to California during the Gold Rush.

But then big trees became big business here. Groves of ancient redwoods and other trees were chopped down and sent south to help build a fast-growing San Francisco. Ms. Ceccarelli's father worked as a carpenter to extend the railroad to Willits, which by the early 1900s allowed Bay Area tourists to come and vacation in the Redwood Empire's crisp mountain air. For $2.50 a night, guests at the 100-room Hotel Willits enjoyed on-site tennis courts, a bowling alley and a dining room known as the finest north of San Francisco.

Growing up, Ms. Ceccarelli played basketball, tennis and saxophone -- her mother had to save up money to buy the instrument -- and she loved to sing and dance. She recalled that her father, who opened a grocery store in Willits in 1916, would chop firewood and haul it home after work.

''He would sit with us after dinner and help us read,'' Ms. Ceccarelli once wrote. ''He only had a third-grade education, but he was smart. I can still see the oil lamp on the table where we read.''

From there, Ms. Ceccarelli's life unfolded like many others. She married her high school sweetheart, Elmer Keenan, when she was 25, and they moved to nearby Santa Rosa, where he took a job as a typesetter at The Press Democrat newspaper. The couple soon adopted a baby daughter. In 1971, after her husband retired, the pair returned to Willits.

Ms. Ceccarelli continued to age, but not everyone in her life was so lucky. Her husband died in 1984, after more than 50 years of marriage. Ms. Ceccarelli remarried, and her second husband, Charles Ceccarelli, died in 1990. Her daughter died, at age 64, in 2003. Ms. Ceccarelli has since outlived her six younger siblings, as well as her three granddaughters, who each died in their 40s because of a genetic condition.

''They're all gone -- they've been gone for years and years,'' Evelyn Persico, 84, said while thumbing through black-and-white photo albums captioned in Ms. Ceccarelli's cursive. Ms. Persico, who is married to Ms. Ceccarelli's second cousin and lives on a ranch in Willits, is one of her few remaining relatives.

So when her 100th birthday approached in 2008, Ms. Ceccarelli herself extended the invitation to all of Willits. Despite decades of change, such as the 101 highway cutting through Main Street and the growth of marijuana farms, Willits remained a tight-knit community. The elegant Ms. Ceccarelli had become known for never missing a dance at the senior center and for her daily walks through town.

Wearing a fuchsia suit and heels, she waltzed alongside more than 500 people who had come to celebrate her new status as a centenarian, and a tiara was placed on her white hair by the mayor at the time.

From then on, Ms. Ceccarelli's birthday each year has been marked by a party, a lunch or, in the Covid era, a parade, open to all Willits residents. Often wearing a colorful scarf and pearls, she would pass on her wisdom on how to live a long life: ''Have a couple of fingers of red wine with your dinner, and mind your own business.''

Other years, she would regale guests with stories of bygone days, of meeting a man who had lunched with Abraham Lincoln or of hearing all the bells in Willits ring on Nov. 11, 1918, signaling the end of World War I.

''I like the small town, you know more people,'' Ms. Ceccarelli told the local paper just before her 107th birthday party. ''You go to a big city, you don't know anybody.''

When her longtime dance partner and companion died, she turned again to Willits for support. She put an ad in the local paper:

''I, Edith Ceccarelli, also known as 'Edie' by her family and a multitude of friends, would like to keep on dancing,'' she wrote in 2012. ''Dancing keeps your limbs strong. What is nicer than holding a lovely lady in your arms and dancing a beautiful waltz or two-step together?

''Try it, you will like it,'' she added, along with her phone number. She was 104 at the time.

Ms. Ceccarelli lived on her own until she was 107, and then moved into a residential care home in Willits. She has now lived 37 years longer than American women on average. The only person known to be older than her is Maria Branyas Morera, who lives in Spain, but was born in San Francisco 11 months before Ms. Ceccarelli.

The town has taken over the planning of her birthday parties, as her dementia has recently advanced, so she isn't always aware of what is happening. On the morning of her party, she seemed satisfied to learn that everyone was there for her. She enjoyed a taste of her carrot cake adorned with ''116.''

''I just marvel at her,'' said Ms. Persico, who greeted Ms. Ceccarelli that day with a kiss on the forehead. ''I can't believe that this little Italian baby has such an amazing record for longevity, coming from such a small town like we are.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/07/us/edith-ceccarelli-116-years-willits-california.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/07/us/edith-ceccarelli-116-years-willits-california.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Mendocino County proclaimed Feb. 5 as a day to celebrate Edith Ceccarelli, who turned 116 this week.

Above, Edith Ceccarelli with Evelyn Persico, 84, who is one of her few remaining relatives. Below, clockwise from top left: Several generations attended the annual celebration

a family photo album

a car in the parade of residents who waved and sang to their beloved Edie.

SUZANNE PICETTI-JOHNSON, a longtime resident of Willits, Calif., who attended the celebration for Ms. Ceccarelli. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALEXANDRA HOOTNICK FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A12.

**Load-Date:** February 9, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Word of the Day: disdainful; Word of the day***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68M0-T901-DXY4-X113-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 3, 2023 Monday 02:00 EST

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**Section:** LEARNING

**Length:** 403 words

**Byline:** The Learning Network

**Highlight:** This word has appeared in 26 articles on NYTimes.com in the past year. Can you use it in a sentence?

**Body**

This word has appeared in 26 articles on NYTimes.com in the past year. Can you use it in a sentence?

disdainful \ dis-ˈdān-fəl \ adjective

1. having or showing arrogant superiority to and scorn for people or things perceived to be unworthy

2. expressing scorn or contempt

The word disdainful has appeared in 26 articles on NYTimes.com in the past year, including on May 27 in the book review “[*My Father the Frustrated Artist*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/27/books/review/domenico-starnone-house-on-via-gemito.html)” by Christopher Sorrentino:

A career employee with Italy’s state railway, Federì is convinced that he’s financially exploited by his in-laws, stuck with a woman who is “not good enough,” and above all snubbed by a clubby art establishment, which he’s convinced is disdainful of his ***working-class*** status and envious of his talent.

Whatever else he may be, Federì is neither delusional about his gifts nor a casual dabbler. (The book’s dust jacket reproduces “The Drinkers,” an impressive painting whose exacting creation by the author’s real-life father is recounted in the text.) It isn’t hard to identify with Federì’s frustration as he’s insulted by critics and peers, excluded from exhibitions, deprived of prizes and ultimately forgotten, his paintings moldering for years on municipal-office walls where they barely register with the bored civil servants working beneath them.

Daily Word Challenge

Can you correctly use the word disdainful in a sentence?

Based on the definition and example provided, write a sentence using today’s Word of the Day and share it as a comment on this article. It is most important that your sentence makes sense and demonstrates that you understand the word’s definition, but we also encourage you to be creative and have fun.

Then, read some of the other sentences students have submitted and use the “Recommend” button to vote for two original sentences that stand out to you.

If you want a better idea of how disdainful can be used in a sentence, read these usage examples [*on Vocabulary.com*](https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/disdainful).

If you enjoy this daily challenge, try our [*vocabulary quizzes*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/vocabulary-quizzes).

Students ages 13 and older in the United States and the United Kingdom, and 16 and older elsewhere, can comment. All comments are moderated by the Learning Network staff.

The Word of the Day is provided by [*Vocabulary.com*](http://www.vocabulary.com/). Learn more and see usage examples across a range of subjects in the [*Vocabulary.com Dictionary*](http://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/). See every Word of the Day in [*this column*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/learning-word-of-the-day).

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Cindy Lozito FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 3, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Must a Jewish Nonprofit Choose Sides?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69V5-9NP1-JBG3-603G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 10, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section MB; Column 0; Metropolitan Desk; Pg. 3; BIG CITY

**Length:** 961 words

**Byline:** By Ginia Bellafante

**Body**

The war has created an existential reckoning for the Workers Circle, a community organization that traces its roots to Yiddish activists in the early 1900s.

In an example of the political flexibility now absent from public life, President Dwight D. Eisenhower stepped outside the boundaries of standard Republican sympathies in 1954 to honor a Jewish fraternal organization with deep historical ties to labor and the Socialist Party. The occasion was the annual convention of the Workmen's Circle. In a written message, the president praised the organization for spending the preceding half-century promoting and strengthening ''our democratic ideals by helping immigrants adjust to their American environment.''

It was a succinct appraisal of an agenda that could be hard to explain because the group's work straddled so many facets of the 20th-century urban experience. Founded on the Lower East Side in 1900, the Workmen's Circle created branches around the country and fought all the various maladies of industrialization -- the exploitation of children in factories, punishingly long workdays, unlivable tenement conditions.

It would be hard to exaggerate its imprint on the American story. Beyond its activism, the organization provided medical care, life insurance, elder housing, summer camps, schooling and burial assistance to tens of thousands of members. It managed to do all this while deftly balancing the need for assimilation with the preservation of Yiddish identity.

The war in Gaza has brought a kind of existential reckoning to a community whose work has had almost nothing to do with Israel. In more recent years the organization -- now known as the Workers Circle -- has fought for fairly mainstream causes like a $15 hourly minimum wage and an end to voter suppression. It has operated under the abiding principle that the immigrants it was created to serve were often fleeing authoritarian governments and that fighting threats to democracy in this country ought to remain central to its mission.

At its annual benefit held in Tribeca on Monday night, it honored the group Black Voters Matter. The Workers Circle has never been driven by religious zeal (in its earliest days it kept its schools open on Yom Kippur) or tribalism or even more modest expressions of self-interest.

If anything, it recognized that its early successes grew from a commitment to defuse the ethnic rivalries that characterized poor and ***working-class*** life in turn-of-the-century New York and build strength through coalition. Today, 123 years later, it is left to operate in a world in which pluralism does not necessarily play well.

If neutrality has become unpopular within academic and corporate communities, it has seemed even less tenable for institutions affiliated with Jewish life -- including secular institutions that operate at a distance from foreign policy interests.

''There is a lot of pressure to make statements,'' Ann Toback, chief executive of the Workers Circle, said recently, ''and I am not a huge fan of statements.'' The organization issued a single declaration on the war, delivered on Oct. 9, two days after the terror attacks by Hamas, condemning them but urging ''all parties to uphold international law and create a pathway forward for human rights and peace for Israelis and Palestinians alike.''

The Workmen's Circle supported the founding of Israel after the Holocaust but has leaned away from Zionism since the beginning. It has long stood for a two-state solution as the best way forward, but remains a nonpartisan nonprofit focused on what is happening to people who live here. ''We have always focused on a domestic agenda. It's not anti anything,'' Ms. Toback, whose great-grandfather was a Workmen's Circle member, said. ''This is our history.''

The current challenges have chiefly involved fund-raising. What was striking about the gala was not who was there -- the actor Jesse Eisenberg was -- but who was not, notably major figures in the city's charity circles who so often generously contribute to Jewish causes. The event was underwritten in large part by the United Federation of Teachers and Tito's vodka.

Like other Jewish groups focused on social welfare, Ms. Toback told me, the Workers Circle finds itself in a precarious place. ''We're all seeing donors pausing because they are focusing their philanthropy on Israel and the needs that have come out of Oct. 7, and we are struggling.'' The numbers are expected to be significantly lower this year than they have been in the past, but what worries her is not just the money but the engagement. ''We're seeing a change,'' she said.

''We say to people that we are living in a moment when U.S. democracy is in peril and that Oct. 7 is tragic and continues to draw so much of our attention, but even as that is going on there are ongoing attacks on democracy here,'' Ms. Toback continued. ''We never seem to have the luxury to focus on one thing.''

At a moment when labor is once again ascendant, the Workers Circle offers a long, instructive history in the value of focusing on many things. In the early 1900s, it joined Irish and Italian groups to fight for safer working conditions, campaigned to ensure women's suffrage and opened treatment centers for sufferers of tuberculosis. In 1947, it raised more than $100,000 to acquire a French château to convert into an orphanage. During the 1960s, members threw themselves into the civil rights movement where they found an ally in Bayard Rustin.

They saw little value in siloing their own ambitions. What has inspired Ms. Toback is a Yiddish term, ''doykayt,'' that underlies some of these philosophies. Roughly, it translates to ''hereness.''Email [*bigcity@nytimes.com*](mailto:bigcity@nytimes.com); follow Ginia Bellafante on X: @GiniaNYT

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/08/nyregion/jewish-nonprofit-history.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/08/nyregion/jewish-nonprofit-history.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: The Workers Circle, a fraternal organization with Jewish roots, honored the group Black Voters Matter at a benefit on Monday in TriBeCa. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BRITTAINY NEWMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page MB3.

**Load-Date:** December 10, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Las Vegas Hospitality Workers Authorize Strike at Major Resorts***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:698B-5KM1-JBG3-60BJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 27, 2023 Wednesday 00:10 EST

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**Section:** BUSINESS; economy

**Length:** 655 words

**Byline:** Kurtis Lee

**Highlight:** Unions representing 60,000 workers across Nevada have been in talks with the resorts since April. The vote is a crucial step toward a walkout.

**Body**

Unions representing 60,000 workers across Nevada have been in talks with the resorts since April. The vote is a crucial step toward a walkout.

Hospitality workers in Las Vegas have voted overwhelmingly to authorize a strike against major resorts along the Strip, a critical step toward a walkout as the economically challenged city prepares for major sporting events in the months ahead.

The authorization vote on Tuesday by members of Culinary Workers Union Local 226 and Bartenders Union Local 165, which collectively represent 60,000 workers across Nevada, was approved by 95 percent of those taking part, according to union officials.

Although a vote is a forceful step, it does not guarantee that workers will strike before hashing out a new contract deal with the major resorts. Contracts for roughly 40,000 housekeepers, bartenders, cooks and food servers at MGM Resorts International, Caesars Entertainment and Wynn Resorts expired on Sept. 15, after being extended from a June deadline. Other workers remain on extended contracts that can be terminated at any time.

The locals, which are affiliated with the union UNITE HERE, have been in negotiations with the resorts since April over demands that include higher wages, more safety protections and stronger recall rights so that workers have more ability to return to their jobs during a pandemic or an economic crisis. (Union officials have said there are about 20 percent fewer hospitality workers in the city than before the Covid pandemic.)

“No one ever wants to go on strike,” said Ted Pappageorge, the head of Local 226. “But ***working-class*** folks and families have been left behind, especially since the pandemic.”

In a statement, MGM Resorts said it was optimistic the two sides could come to an agreement.

“We continue to have productive meetings with the union and believe both parties are committed to negotiating a contract that is good for everyone,” said the company.

Wynn Resorts and Caesars Entertainment declined to comment on the vote. Negotiations continue next week between the union and the companies.

The contract battle comes as the tourism-dependent state, where the [*rebound from the pandemic’s economic toll has been slower*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/04/business/economy/nevada-economy-las-vegas-jobs.html) than in other regions, has hedged its bets on a big sports bump.

In November, Formula 1 will arrive with the Las Vegas Grand Prix, an international event that is expected to draw hundreds of thousands of tourists. A few months later, the region will be the site of the Super Bowl.

The authorization vote also comes amid major labor battles nationwide.

Thousands of members of the [*United Automobile Workers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/22/business/uaw-strike-general-motors-stellantis.html) union have been on strike against the three major Detroit automakers for nearly two weeks. And while the [*Writers Guild of America*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/25/business/media/hollywood-writers-strike-deal.html) recently reached a tentative agreement with major Hollywood studios after a monthslong walkout, contract talks with tens of thousands of striking actors are at an impasse.

In Southern California, thousands of hotel workers with [*UNITE HERE Local 11*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/01/us/workers-labor-unions-los-angeles-california.html) have staged several months of temporary strikes.

The Culinary Union, which is a major base for Democrats in Nevada, a swing state, held a similar strike authorization vote in 2018 among 25,000 workers. A contract agreement with major hotels was reached before any strike occurred.

For Chelsea MacDougall, who works as a gourmet food server at the Wynn Las Vegas, watching months of negotiations with few results has been frustrating. Inside an arena crowded with fellow union workers — some waving signs that read “One Job Should Be ENOUGH,” alluding to low pay — she voted to authorize a walkout.

“This is our next show of force to companies,” said Ms. MacDougall, 36, who makes $11.57 an hour before tips. “The workers deserve a living wage.”

PHOTO: The members of two hospitality unions cast their ballots at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, on Tuesday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BRIDGET BENNETT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page B5.

**Load-Date:** September 28, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Haley Is Coming for Your Retirement***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69RJ-SFT1-DXY4-X0R3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 28, 2023 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 18; PAUL KRUGMAN

**Length:** 907 words

**Byline:** By Paul Krugman

**Body**

It feels like years ago, but actually only a few months have passed since many big Republican donors seemed to believe that Ron DeSantis could effectively challenge Donald Trump for the Republican nomination. It has been an edifying spectacle -- an object lesson in the reality that great wealth need not be associated with good judgment, about politics or anything else.

At this point, both conventional wisdom and prediction markets say that Trump has a virtual lock on the nomination. But Wall Street isn't completely resigned to Trump's inevitability; there has been a late surge in big-money support for Nikki Haley, the former governor of South Carolina. And there is, to be fair, still a chance that Trump -- who is facing many criminal charges and whose public rants have become utterly unhinged -- will manage to crash and burn before securing the nomination.

So it seems worth looking at what Haley stands for.

From a political point of view, one answer might be: nothing. A recent Times profile described her as having ''an ability to calibrate her message to the moment.'' A less euphemistic way to put this is that she seems willing to say whatever might work to her political advantage. ''Flip-flopping'' doesn't really convey the sheer cynicism with which she has shifted her rhetoric and changed her positions on everything from abortion rights to immigration to whether it's OK to try overturning a national election.

And anyone hoping that she would govern as a moderate if she should somehow make it to the White House is surely delusional. Haley has never really shown a willingness to stand up to Republican extremists -- and at this point the whole G.O.P. has been taken over by extremists.

That said, Haley has shown some consistency on issues of economic and fiscal policy. And what you should know is that her positions on these issues are pretty far to the right. In particular, she seems exceptionally explicit, even among would-be Republican nominees, in calling for an increase in the age at which Americans become eligible for Social Security -- a bad idea that seems to be experiencing a revival.

So let's talk about Social Security.

The first thing you should know about Social Security is that the actual numbers don't justify the apocalyptic rhetoric one often hears, not just from the right but from self-proclaimed centrists who want to sound serious. No, the exhaustion of the system's trust fund, currently projected to occur in roughly a decade, wouldn't mean that benefits disappear.

It would mean that the system would need additional revenue to continue paying scheduled benefits in full. But the extra revenue required would be smaller than you probably think. The most recent long-term projections from the Congressional Budget Office show Social Security outlays rising to 6.2 percent of gross domestic product in 2053 from 5.1 percent this year, not exactly an earth-shattering increase.

It's true that the budget office projects a much bigger rise in spending on Medicare and other major health programs. But much of this projected rise reflects the assumption that medical costs will rise much faster than economic growth, which has been true in the past but need not be true in the future. Indeed, since 2010, Medicare spending has been far less than expected. And there is every reason to believe that smart policies could further curb health care costs, given how much more America spends than other wealthy nations.

Still, Social Security does face a funding gap. How should it be closed?

Anyone who says, as Haley does, that the retirement age should rise in line with increasing life expectancy is being oblivious, perhaps willfully, to the grim inequality of modern America. Until Covid struck, average life expectancy at 65, the relevant number, was indeed rising. But these gains were concentrated among Americans with relatively high incomes. Less affluent Americans -- those who depend most on Social Security -- have seen little rise in life expectancy, and in some cases actual declines.

So anyone invoking rising life expectancy as a reason to delay Social Security benefits is, in effect, saying that aging janitors must keep working (or be cast into extreme poverty) because bankers are living longer.

How, then, should the Social Security gap be closed? The obvious answer -- which happens to be favored by a majority of voters -- is to raise more revenue. Remember, America collects less revenue as a percentage of G.D.P. than almost any other advanced economy.

But Haley, of course, wants to cut income taxes.

My guess is that none of this will be relevant, that Trump will be the nominee. But if he stumbles, I would beg political reporters not to focus on Haley's personal affect, which can seem moderate, but rather on her policies. On social issues and the fate of democracy, she appears to be a pure weather vane, turning with the political winds. On fiscal and economic policy, she's a hard-right advocate of tax cuts for the rich and benefit cuts for the ***working class***. If calling someone a ''populist'' has any meaning these days, she's the exact opposite.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/27/opinion/nikki-haley-social-security.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/27/opinion/nikki-haley-social-security.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A18.

**Load-Date:** November 28, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Nikki Haley Is Coming for Your Retirement; Paul Krugman***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69RH-GVW1-DXY4-X04G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 27, 2023 Monday 14:45 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 906 words

**Byline:** Paul Krugman

**Highlight:** Wall Street’s new favorite is far from a populist.

**Body**

It feels like years ago, but actually only a few months have passed since [*many big Republican donors*](https://www.cbsnews.com/miami/news/desantis-gains-7-figure-checks-from-top-gop-donors/) seemed to believe that Ron DeSantis could effectively challenge Donald Trump for the Republican nomination. It has been an edifying spectacle — an object lesson in the reality that great wealth need not be associated with good judgment, about politics or anything else.

At this point, both conventional wisdom and [*prediction markets*](https://www.predictit.org/markets/detail/7053/Who-will-win-the-2024-Republican-presidential-nomination) say that Trump has a virtual lock on the nomination. But Wall Street isn’t completely resigned to Trump’s inevitability; there has been a late [*surge in big-money support*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/24/us/politics/nikki-haley-trump-2024.html) for Nikki Haley, a former governor of South Carolina. And there is, to be fair, still a chance that Trump — who is facing many criminal charges and whose public rants have become utterly unhinged — will manage to crash and burn before securing the nomination.

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From a political point of view, one answer might be: nothing. A recent [*Times profile*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/26/us/politics/haley-trump-issues-2024.html) described her as having “an ability to calibrate her message to the moment.” A less euphemistic way to put this is that she seems willing to say whatever might work to her political advantage. “Flip-flopping” doesn’t really convey the sheer cynicism with which she has shifted her rhetoric and changed her positions on everything from abortion rights to immigration to whether it’s OK to try to overturn a national election.

And anyone hoping that she would govern as a moderate if she should somehow make it to the White House is surely delusional. Haley has never really shown a willingness to stand up to Republican extremists — and at this point the whole G.O.P. has been [*taken over by extremists*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/25/us/mike-johnson-far-right-republicans.html).

That said, Haley has shown some consistency on issues of economic and fiscal policy. And what you should know is that her positions on these issues are [*pretty far to the right*](https://www.taxpolicycenter.org/taxvox/what-nikki-haleys-tax-and-budget-platform). In particular, she seems [*exceptionally explicit*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/09/19/us/politics/republican-candidates-2024-social-security-medicare.html), even among would-be Republican nominees, in calling for an increase in the age at which Americans become eligible for Social Security — a bad idea that seems to be experiencing a revival.

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Anyone who says, as Haley does, that the retirement age should rise in line with increasing life expectancy is being oblivious, perhaps willfully, to the grim inequality of modern America. Until Covid struck, average [*life expectancy at 65*](https://data.oecd.org/healthstat/life-expectancy-at-65.htm), the relevant number, was indeed rising. But these gains were concentrated among Americans with [*relatively high incomes*](https://sgp.fas.org/crs/misc/R44846.pdf). Less affluent Americans — those who depend most on Social Security — have seen little increase in life expectancy and, in some cases, declines.

So anyone invoking rising life expectancy as a reason to delay Social Security benefits is, in effect, saying that aging janitors must keep working (or be cast into extreme poverty) because bankers are living longer.

How, then, should the Social Security gap be closed? The obvious answer — which happens to be favored by a [*majority of voters*](https://news.gallup.com/opinion/polling-matters/258335/social-security-american-public-opinion.aspx) — is to raise more revenue. Remember, America collects [*less revenue*](https://data.oecd.org/tax/tax-revenue.htm) as a percentage of G.D.P. than almost any other advanced economy.

But Haley, of course, wants to cut income taxes.

My guess is that none of this will be relevant, that Trump will be the nominee. But if he stumbles, I would beg political reporters not to focus on Haley’s personal affect, which can seem moderate, but rather on her policies. On social issues and the fate of democracy, she appears to be a pure weather vane, turning with the political winds. On fiscal and economic policy, she’s a hard-right advocate of tax cuts for the rich and benefit cuts for the ***working class***. If calling someone a populist has any meaning these days, she’s the exact opposite.

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This article appeared in print on page A18.

**Load-Date:** November 28, 2023

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[***Michigan Voters' Anger Is a Problem for Biden***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BCB-KCP1-JBG3-64JJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 19, 2024 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 23; FARAH STOCKMAN

**Length:** 1542 words

**Byline:** By Farah Stockman

**Body**

Betrayal is a powerful emotion, especially at the ballot box. Voters who feel betrayed tend to act like spurned lovers, punishing the offending party even if it means electing somebody who will actually be worse.

That's how America got Donald Trump as president. Many blue-collar workers in factory towns in battleground states like Michigan, Ohio and Pennsylvania -- who were once pillars of the Democratic Party -- voted for a man who promised to rip up free trade agreements, which they blamed for the loss of manufacturing jobs. It didn't seem to matter to them that Mr. Trump had no track record of standing up for workers or that employees at his hotels faced union-busting tactics when they tried to organize.

More important was using their votes to punish Democrats for abandoning the ***working class***.

Joe Biden understood that, and in 2020 he set out to atone for the sins of the Democratic Party by promising to be the most pro-union president ever -- a promise he has kept. It's not just that he became the first sitting president to join a picket line. It's not just that he appointed the most pro-union National Labor Relations Board since the 1930s, as the labor historian Jeff Schuhrke told me. It's all the things his appointees are doing behind the scenes.

Mr. Biden's National Labor Relations Board, for example, handed down the Cemex decision, which makes it easier for workers to win collective bargaining rights against employers. Thanks to that ruling, companies must act in a timely manner to either recognize a union or allow workers to vote on whether to form one. Companies that delay -- a common tactic used to crush organizing -- will be ordered to recognize the union and start bargaining with it as if it had won a vote. That requirement will be invaluable to the United Auto Workers as it pursues an audacious plan to unionize 150,000 autoworkers at Hyundai, Mercedes-Benz and other factories around the country.

The Biden administration even fights for the rights of workers abroad when they are violated by American companies. Just this month, the Labor Department successfully pushed Goodyear Tire & Rubber to pay $4.2 million in back pay to more than 1,300 workers in Mexico. Instead of asking American workers to accept less to compete in the global economy, the Biden administration is trying to make sure workers abroad get more. That's not easy, but it's an inspiring use of American power.

Union leaders are obviously paying attention.

Will it make a difference to the rank and file? I asked that question in Michigan, a must-win state where unions hold tremendous sway, and got conflicting answers.

Antoine McKay, an actor who is appearing in an August Wilson play at the Detroit Repertory Theater, told me that it ''absolutely matters'' to him that Mr. Biden supports unions and joined workers on the picket line. Mr. McKay is a member of the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, which conducted a successful strike last year. ''I think workers in our society are encouraged on every level because of the strikes that have happened and the outcomes of those strikes,'' he said.

But other interviews suggested that Mr. Biden is not going to be rewarded.

Brooke Davis, who works at the MGM Grand Detroit casino and participated in her first strike this year -- she's a U.A.W. member -- told me she's not sure whom she would vote for in the fall. People had to stand in the cold during the strike, she said, sometimes with their children, and live on $500 a week of strike pay, a small fraction of what they usually made. She said she appreciated the benefits they won but didn't relish doing it all over again in 2028, in a general strike that the U.A.W. is planning.

She said that the G.O.P. seemed more practical and more forward-looking. ''You might not always like what they're saying,'' she said of the Republicans, ''but you know where they stand.'' Democrats ''are always trying to sell us hopes, sell us dreams'' about solving health care and student debt, she said. It sounded good, she said, but they seemed to promise more than they could deliver. Ms. Davis is a Black woman and a union member -- two constituencies that Democrats leaned on heavily to win the state in 2020. It's not a good sign that she's undecided.

The most devastating assessment came from Merwan Beydoun, a former crane operator at a steel mill in Dearborn who once served as vice president of bargaining for his local unit. As a former U.A.W. representative, he said, he knew how important Mr. Biden's policies were to unions. ''I loved it,'' he told me, when the president showed up at the picket line in September.

The following month, Hamas brutally attacked Israel, and Israel began its assault on Gaza. Mr. Beydoun, who is of Lebanese descent, is furious at Mr. Biden for his unwavering support of Israel's government as it flattens neighborhoods, killing thousands of children, in what he called ''genocide'' and collective punishment. He and his Arab American community voted for Mr. Biden in 2020. Now, he said, they felt deeply betrayed.

Mr. Beydoun used to encourage his conservative co-workers to cast their ballots for Democrats, arguing that however they felt about abortion, gun rights or gay marriage, their first allegiance should be to the union. But he has stopped telling people that. In fact, he's planning to not vote for either candidate in November. He even canceled his contribution to the U.A.W.'s political action committee after the union endorsed Mr. Biden. If Mr. Trump would win as a result, he said, ''so be it.''

I pressed him on it. Wouldn't Mr. Trump be worse for Palestinians? Didn't Benjamin Netanyahu want his buddy Mr. Trump re-elected? Mr. Beydoun paused.

''There's something to be said for that,'' he said. But he stood firm.

Voting makes sense only if there's a chance that your vote will matter, and he had no hope that either party would change American policy on Israel. ''Whether it's a Republican or Democrat, I know they're going to stand by Israel 100 percent,'' he told me.

The biggest way to make his voice heard, he insisted, was to withhold his vote. ''We need to make a statement to say, 'Hey, we can do this to you.'''

That's the politics of betrayal. There are lots of voters like Mr. Beydoun in the metro Detroit area, which is crucial to any path to victory for Mr. Biden in the state. Wayne County, the most populous in Michigan, is home to both the United Auto Workers International headquarters and the largest Arab American community in the U.S. Thousands of Arabs settled here in the 1960s and '70s and got jobs in the Ford plants, including Mr. Beydoun's father, who came from Lebanon in 1968, beginning a decades-long tradition of political activism through their unions.

Today there are 190,000 Arabic speakers in Wayne County alone, out of about 1.8 million people. Dozens of elected leaders in the area have signed a pledge to vote uncommitted in the Feb. 27 primary in Michigan as a signal of their willingness to abandon Mr. Biden unless the administration changes course.

Now the White House is scrambling to show that it values Palestinian lives after initially questioning the Palestinian death toll in Gaza and calling demands for a cease-fire ''repugnant.'' Last week, senior administration officials traveled to Dearborn and expressed regret, according to a leaked recording of the meeting. And the president called Israel's operation in Gaza ''over the top.'' But those words will be seen as empty unless they are accompanied by policy changes, especially a call for a permanent end to hostilities.

In an interview, James Zogby, a founder of the Arab American Institute, said that it was difficult to motivate Arab Americans to vote for Hillary Clinton in 2016 because her supporters had rejected efforts to add language to the Democratic Party platform calling for an end to ''occupations and illegal settlements.'' She still won Wayne County by about 290,000 votes -- but that margin wasn't enough to make up for losses elsewhere. She lost Michigan by fewer than 12,000 votes. (Her campaign also suffered from her association with free trade, which Bill Clinton championed in office.)

In 2020 the insults of Mr. Trump's Muslim ban and his State Department's neglect of the problem of stateless Palestinians were fresh in the minds of Arab American voters. The Biden campaign wooed them by issuing its Arab American Agenda, which said that the president ''opposes annexation and settlement expansion.'' Mr. Biden won Wayne County by more than 332,000 votes, a margin that helped him carry Michigan by 154,000 votes.

''I hear this from people in the White House -- 'They'll come around in November,''' Mr. Zogby told me. ''It's demeaning, and it's dangerous. It ignores the depth of their feelings.''

Can new positive energy from unions make up for the feelings of betrayal over Gaza? I'm skeptical.

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**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Merwan Beydoun is a former vice president of the U.A.W. Local 600 Steel Unit in Dearborn, Mich. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY CYDNI ELLEDGE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A23.

**Load-Date:** February 19, 2024

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[***These Couples Survived a Lot. Then Came Retirement.; The Retirement issue***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BYG-BC81-JBG3-611N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 5, 2024 Sunday 16:52 EST

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**Section:** MAGAZINE

**Length:** 2875 words

**Byline:** Susan DominusSusan Dominus has been a staff writer at The New York Times Magazine since 2011.

**Highlight:** For many relationships, life after work brings an unexpected set of challenges.

**Body**

This spring, Barbara and Joe, a retired couple in their 60s, sat down with me at a bistro in suburban Connecticut to talk about their relationship. That they were sitting there together at all was something of a triumph. In the past few days, they had hurled at each other the kinds of accusations that couples make when they are on the brink of mutual destruction. They were bruised from the words that had been exchanged, and although they sat close to each other, their energy was quiet and heavy.

Barbara and Joe met 13 years ago, two divorced people who had relentlessly climbed their way up from ***working-class*** backgrounds. Barbara rose to be the vice president of a wholesale apparel business before moving into retail, then winding down her career; to keep herself busy, she sells clothing online a few hours a day. Joe co-founded a delivery business that he sold in 2021 for an amount that meant he would never have to work again; he retired in January last year. He and Barbara had time; they had money; they had leisure. They also had a problem: They were driving each other mad.

Barbara briefed me on her experience before we met in person. Since retirement, she reported, Joe had found himself untethered. He was underfoot, always around and not exactly occupied. It was bad enough that he was spending hours on his phone scrolling through Instagram, bad enough that he was doing so on a couch in the living room, a space that had always been hers and hers alone throughout the day. Now he also wanted her to look at the funny dog videos that made him laugh, and yes, funny pig videos too. She did not find this particularly sexy, but he also wanted more sex than when he was working, one of many ways she felt the burden of keeping him entertained. “Love him very much,” she texted. “But I’m going crazy or going back to work, whichever comes first.”

At lunch that day, Joe wore a pink flannel shirt that suited him and had clearly been picked out by someone with a tasteful eye. He seemed nervous about discussing his relationship, which reflected just one of the many differences the couple had to negotiate: Barbara was frank and open by nature; Joe was more private (which is why they’ve requested that only their first names be used).

For years, Joe said, he had been monomaniacally focused on his exit — on selling the business. He had given almost no thought to what his life would look like once he finally did. “I had visions of going to the gym,” he said. That turned out to take up no more than an hour of his day. Then what? He was at something of a loss. “It’s been a kind of transition trying to move away from people that were like my second family,” he said. “It’s been a little enlightening that once you’re gone, you’re gone.”

A life transition as significant as marrying or having children, retirement is a stage that many couples anticipate with little of the trepidation those earlier choices inspired. They look forward to it as a reward for years of hard work — a long vacation, full of agency and freedom, to enjoy as long as their bodies hold up. Yet retirement, like any major transition, often entails destabilizing shifts that take many people by surprise. Although it’s still rare for married couples over 60 to break up, the divorce rate is rising faster in that age group than in any other, as baby boomers accustomed to self-actualization reach retirement age and evaluate their lives anew.

“The relationship can have an identity crisis,” says Allison Howe, a therapist who works primarily with couples in New York. Howe says retirement is a time when the issues that couples have been avoiding — aided by the distractions of work or child rearing or both — come roaring to the forefront. “There are disagreements now about how to envision this new stage of life,” she says. “The retirement phase amplifies everything, actually — the absence of true collaboration, whether they were really friends, whether they had a shared narrative. All of these things get heightened now because we have less time.”

Couples have less time on a grand scale while contending, suddenly, with more free time in their waking hours. Many disagree on how to spend it. “I can do anything I want, but lack an activity partner,” reported Danny Steiner, a recently retired 70-year-old high school teacher whose wife does not share his passion for travel — a difference that really manifested only once it was an option. More time can lay bare the reality that some couples did better with less of it. “Being together just does not feel as special as it once did,” said Martha Battie, a retired college administrator in Hanover, N.H. “Whatever conversations or sharing we have seems to be forgotten, or not really heard from the start.” And more time means more exposure to whatever irritating habits were easily endured in smaller doses. Among the things that grated on her, Barbara had texted, was that Joe “mansplains everything.” He had always been that way, she knew, but now she had to deal with so much more of it.

After some 50 years of marriage, decades during which she often wished her husband worked fewer hours, Yvonne McCracken, at age 73, found herself hoping that the office might reclaim him. When her husband, Richard McCracken, retired from the business he built, Yvonne was still working from their home in Charlotte, N.C., as a quality-assurance specialist for a network of research sites, and she could feel him hovering near her desk off the kitchen as he did busy work on his laptop.

Having left her largely in charge, for most of their marriage, of raising two daughters, dealing with the home and managing her own career, Richard now seemed to have had some late-in-life revelation that his wife could clearly benefit from his input. He had ideas about how she should manage her team, which he sometimes shared after she completed Zoom calls: She should have told them to solve a problem a certain way, or given them more direction. The advice irritated Yvonne, who is not a fan of micromanagement (of herself or others). “I’m a very private person,” Yvonne said, “and the fact that he was even listening to my phone calls was, my God, it was like: I can’t believe you’re doing this. What? Why are you here?” Sometimes he walked past her computer and waved and smiled and mugged for her co-workers, which annoyed her just as much as his unsolicited counsel.

She wondered: Was this what he was like as a boss at the business he ran? She supposed so. She had never given her husband’s work persona much thought. That part of his life was separate from her own, but instead of receding now that he was retired, it seemed to be taking up even more space. When Richard started picking up consulting work to stave off his own restlessness, he took over their kitchen, spreading papers and folders on various surfaces and leaving half-filled coffee cups and laptop chargers lying around. “It destroys the energy in the house,” Yvonne said. She told me they had agreed that he could no longer work in the kitchen; Richard seemed to have the impression that he had simply promised to clean up at the end of each day. He told me that his wife was becoming a minimalist. “I’m kind of the opposite,” he said. “I always tend to spread out — like mold.”

The couple had coexisted on separate tracks for many years, so much so that even the sweet moments of retirement, like weekends with their grandchildren, to whom Richard was devoted, kicked up feelings of regret and loss for Yvonne. As a working mother, she had done the large part of the child rearing on her own, without a fully invested partner. “He’ll say to me about the grandchildren, Wow, they’re so bright and interesting,” she said. “And I’ll say, You know, your own children were very bright and interesting, too.” Regrets about the past were colliding with the minutiae of how they would coexist as they faced aging together.

Yvonne and Richard shared, at least, a similar vision of how to approach their finances, which can be a source of tension for many retired couples. Financial troubles can rob them of their peace of mind, and even those who are well prepared are often surprised to find that they have different instincts about how to manage their savings.

Frances and Tito Sisnett, pharmacists from California, had saved carefully for years. After they retired — Frances in 2016, Tito in 2017 — Frances was determined to hold on tight to the money they worked so hard to earn. Tito wanted to travel frequently to Panama and Barbados, where he had family. He had done the calculations and knew that with their savings and investments, they could afford it. But fear was baked into Frances’s decision-making process; at age 12, she experienced the precipitous collapse of her family’s financial security when her father died unexpectedly and her mother fell ill. No matter how many times Tito explained the math, she worried that they would run out of funds. “You’ve got to change the way you think,” Tito recalled telling her. “That was many hours of discussion.”

Eventually, they hired a financial adviser, who delivered the same assurance that Tito was already providing; Frances could accept it from a professional, and she was able to move on from what seemed like an unshakable stance.

In 2020, Frances and Tito, who felt ready to live outside the United States, moved to Panama near his family. Now they faced the question of travel in reverse: How much time were they going to spend with their grandchildren back in Maryland? Having been more reluctant to leave for Panama in the first place, Frances was now trying to build a life in their new home, which meant making a fierce commitment to spending time there. Tito, who already had strong connections in Panama, was much more eager to spend extended periods with the grandchildren.

Not long after moving to Panama, Frances and Tito became friendly with Charlotte Van Horn, a fellow retiree who left a career as a legal assistant and has since built a business helping Black couples make homes there. Frances and Tito have found a way to negotiate their different preferences about travel, but sometimes, Van Horn says, the issue of how much time to spend where, and with whom, is the thing that ultimately divides previously happy couples.

“You have one person who says, I’m not leaving the grandchildren,” she told me. “And the other says: I’ve spent my whole life staying in certain places and doing certain things because I was raising my own kids. I’m not going to let someone else’s kids keep me from doing what I really want to do in life.” Van Horn has seen some couples decide that they will be apart for months of the year while visiting back and forth. “But I don’t think it’s worked,” she says. “They’re breaking up, but they’re not admitting it. It’s too painful. So they just … let it go by the wayside.”

Early in his career, John Gottman, a founder of the Gottman Institute, a center devoted to the study of successful marriages, believed that the best predictor of happiness in retirement would be a robust “second identity” for one or both members of the couple outside of work. “So if you were a mechanic but you also sang in the choir, in church on weekends, or you flew hang gliders or something like that, and it was important to you,” Gottman thought, then the pain of the loss of one identity would be dulled by the full emergence of the second.

But research over the years has found only a limited effect of a second identity on happiness in that phase of life. The much more important factor, Gottman told me, is the quality of the marriage before retirement. [*The Health and Retirement Study*](https://hrs.isr.umich.edu/about), a sweeping national research project now in its 32nd year, found that an unhappy marriage predicts unhappiness in retirement more than declines in wealth or even health, says Mo Wang, a professor at the University of Florida who studies the retirement adjustment.

Whether couples are able to help each other stretch, a concept that social scientists call “self-expansion,” also matters. Strong self-expansion skills — the ability to make new friends or pick up new interests that require dedicated learning — are correlated with everything from general well-being to even weight loss and cognitive health. Not surprising, researchers in 2020 found that couples who reported high levels of that kind of reinforcement — encouraging each other to try something new, for example — were happier and were weathering the transition much better.

Barbara told me that she had been encouraging Joe to try new things. At the same time, she clearly didn’t see it as her job to figure out for him what those things might be. She frustrated easily. She snapped often, by her own admission. Her irritation was a function of how perilously close she was to losing touch with what she admired in this tremendously industrious and competent partner. “My friends tell me I’m going to lose him,” Barbara said. “They tell me, You have to be nicer. But … I just can’t. I am who I am. After all these years, I can’t change.”

At lunch, Joe said that there were, in fact, things he would like to be doing with his time, if he could only get motivated to focus on them. “I always wanted to play guitar,” he said. “I’m like a music banana.”

“He is,” Barbara confirmed. (She seemed to know that this meant he was a music enthusiast.)

“I’ve tried a few times,” he said, “and I never could make it stick.” He had looked at a few guitar classes online, to no avail, even though he said that once he commits to a project, he really commits. “Usually, I’m pretty good once I get going,” he said. (“He is,” Barbara confirmed.) “It’s just, now I don’t.” And that was where they had left it: Joe paralyzed. Barbara annoyed, for months now.

Couldn’t a guitar instructor visit the house one day a week? Provide some focus, some company, some structure?

Barbara and Joe seemed to brighten at the thought. That was something he could do. Maybe there were other things they could do too, like rethink how they used space if they were always in each other’s way. Barbara had complained that when she was online in their living room, trying to post garments on eBay, she could feel Joe’s presence in a way that was unnerving, even when he was ignoring her.

Wasn’t his office upstairs empty? What if she worked there for a few discrete hours a day, so that expectations all around were clear?

“If I go up there,” Barbara said, “it’s almost like saying, OK, you want me to be away.” She thought this over. Maybe she wasn’t the only one who needed the space. Maybe Joe wanted some, too. “I do,” he said.

“OK,” Barbara said, “well, we never really discussed this.” She suddenly saw not just her perception of Joe but his perception of her. She was overcome with remorse about how she had been talking to him. “I tell people stories about what’s going on between us, expecting sympathy, and they’re like, What’s wrong with you?” she admitted.

As they spoke, it became clear that they were each struggling with the reality that Joe was feeling something close to depression. He had taken it very hard when he had lunch with some former colleagues, people still working long hours at the business, and had the sense that once they said their farewells after the meal, they would rarely give him another thought. Seeing that vulnerability moved Barbara. For Joe, retirement meant looking back on the totality of his life and trying to weigh what all that effort had added up to. What did it mean?

In the weeks after our conversation, Joe and Barbara seemed to pull themselves back from the brink. It took him some time, but Joe had, on his own, found a guitar instructor. He spent hours on the phone with Barbara’s ex-husband, an avid musician, talking about how to tune and clamp the instrument. After the instructor came and gave Joe his first lesson, he was even more enthusiastic. Since then, he had been working for hours on the song he was learning, Pearl Jam’s cover of “Last Kiss.”

Barbara loved hearing it. She was reflecting on how she had always prided herself on being strong, on being independent, her response to a hardscrabble childhood in which she was overlooked. “You know, I just want to do what I want to do,” she said. “I’m not someone who’s going to feel tremendous guilt about not doing something I don’t want to do.” But she was moving away from her insistence that she couldn’t change, that she wouldn’t change, to a recognition that maybe she could and should, even if it took effort. “The thought of him not being around, of being with someone else, makes me think: What are these big sacrifices I’m making? The big sacrifice would be if we weren’t together.”

David Hilliard is an artist and educator from Boston. He creates narrative multipaneled photographs, often based on his life or the lives of people around him.

PHOTOS: Left and opening pages: Yvonne and Richard McCracken, who have had to figure out how to share their space since retiring. (MM23; MM24-MM25); Tito and Frances Sisnett, who discovered after retirement that they had different philosophies about spending money. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID HILLIARD) (MM26-MM27) This article appeared in print on page MM22, MM23, MM24, MM25, MM26, MM27.

**Load-Date:** January 14, 2025

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[***The Future of the Democrats***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66T2-YGY1-JBG3-62J2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 6, 2022 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 26; THE SHORTLIST

**Length:** 1190 words

**Byline:** By James Goodman

**Body**

''I am a child of the New Deal,'' Robert Kuttner writes in GOING BIG: FDR's Legacy, Biden's New Deal, and the Struggle to Save Democracy (240 pp., The New Press, $23.99), a lively mélange of history, politics and progressive playbook. He doesn't have to say it. His reverence for Franklin Roosevelt's response to the Great Depression and his hope that President Biden learns the right lesson from it is evident on every page.

For Kuttner, a founder of The American Prospect, that lesson is clear: America has prospered when the federal government has gone ''big,'' acting to tame the market and temper ''the economic and political power of capital.'' Roosevelt regulated banks, created jobs through infrastructure projects, provided unemployment relief, established the minimum wage and Social Security, backed organized labor, guaranteed home and farm loans, and taxed the rich.

The gains were fragile, Kuttner writes, ''built on circumstances and luck more than enduring structural change.'' They came only with compromise, most consequentially with segregationists and other enemies of racial inequality, North and South. Many gains were reversed when presidents, including Democrats, beginning with Jimmy Carter, advocated a smaller government and a less regulated market.

In the 2020 presidential primaries, the New Deal Democrats were Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders. Kuttner assumed Biden would continue Barack Obama's combination of social liberalism and economic conservatism, which during the Great Recession included the no-fault bailout of the big banks and the preference for deficit reduction over additional economic stimulus. That combination, Kuttner believes, slowed the recovery and contributed to Donald Trump's appeal among white ***working-class*** voters.

Yet as president, Biden surprised him, first with the Rescue Act, then infrastructure, $550 billion in new funding for roads, rails, bridges and broadband. Build Back Better was boldest of all, but by the time ''Going Big'' went to press in late 2021, the plan was dead. Its opponents blamed government largess for inflation. Well into 2022, it appeared that the only ''big'' new spending ahead was aid to Ukraine. Then in August, Democrats in Congress surprised everyone by passing legislation intended to reduce prescription drug prices, expand access to health care, increase corporate taxes and fight climate change.

Kuttner considers the bill ''a huge step in the right direction.'' The coming years, he writes, will be either a ''pivot back to New Deal economics and forward to energized democracy, or a heartbreaking interregnum between two bouts of deepening American fascism.''

The Democratic Party coalition that put Roosevelt and his heirs in office included ***working-class*** Americans, Black and white. That coalition broke down during the upheavals of the 1950s and 1960s, beginning with the civil rights movement, as white ***working-class*** voters began to drift away. Progressives dream of rebuilding it, appealing to shared economic interests across racial lines. WHY WHITE LIBERALS FAIL: Race and Southern Politics from FDR to Trump (256 pp., Harvard University Press, $27.95), Anthony J. Badger's analysis of liberal white Southerners since the 1930s, suggests how difficult it is going to be to bring the white ***working class*** back into the fold.

Badger, a British historian, writes about several dozen educators, journalists and elected officials who saw economic development as the way out of the hole the South was in. Men like Frank Graham, William Winter, Albert Gore Sr., Fritz Hollings and Terry Sanford embraced the New Deal, the Fair Deal, the War on Poverty and every iteration of the ''New South.'' Badger identifies promising moments in several decades, including (after the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965) successful biracial electoral coalitions. Yet today there are fewer white Democrats in the South than ever.

Why? The historical literature is rich, and the answer is usually race. White liberals failed because they championed, or were associated with, civil rights. But in this volume, based on the Huggins lectures he delivered at Harvard in 2018, Badger finds that explanation unsatisfying. His subjects downplayed race. They championed infrastructure, education and social services they believed would benefit all.

They failed nonetheless, for many different reasons. One is that before the 1960s any Southerner who was not a rabid segregationist was considered a racial radical. Another is that in the half-century since, significant numbers of white Southerners have opposed government programs that would have improved their lives -- universal health care, for example -- if they thought liberals designed those programs with Black people in mind.

Badger runs from race, and racism, as explanations, but as he himself concedes, he never gets far.

The scariest part of the former Attorney General Eric Holder's OUR UNFINISHED MARCH: The Violent Past and Imperiled Future of the Vote -- A History, A Crisis, A Plan (304 pp., One World, $28) is not his description of the Supreme Court's evisceration of the Voting Rights Act in Shelby County v. Holder (2013). Nor is it his description of the machinations of numerous state legislatures since Shelby to make it harder for people, especially Black and Latino people, to vote. Nor is it his recounting of the unsuccessful efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election. All of that has been continually reported, leaving many of us numb.

The scariest part of Holder's book is the ''note'' inserted between the introduction and Chapter 1, a five-page ''case for democracy.'' If Americans need to be convinced, it may well be too late.

Holder (writing with Sam Koppelman) begins his history in 2015, with the 50th anniversary of the Selma march. He then takes us back to colonial America, surveying the successive stages of the struggle for the ballot: white men, Black men (for a while), women and finally, after 1965, almost everyone. This history will be familiar to readers of Alexander Keyssar, Ari Berman, Carol Anderson and Martha Jones, just some of the scholars and journalists who in recent years have written about voting rights, past and present.

What distinguishes ''Our Unfinished March'' is Holder's ambitious plan for ''a more perfect future,'' reforms intended not just to make it easier to vote (and harder to suppress the vote) but also to make Congress, the presidency and the Supreme Court better expressions of majority will. Holder proposes to end the filibuster, prohibit partisan redistricting, eliminate the Electoral College, allow every president to appoint two Supreme Court justices and limit each Supreme Court justice's tenure to 18 years.

To enact even one of Holder's proposals, the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, Democrats will have to win big in November. Wise historians say only one thing about the future: We'll see.

James Goodman, a professor of history and creative writing at Rutgers University, Newark, is the author of ''Stories of Scottsboro,'' ''Blackout'' and ''But Where Is the Lamb?''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/04/books/democracy-robert-kuttner-eric-holder-anthony-badger.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/04/books/democracy-robert-kuttner-eric-holder-anthony-badger.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS This article appeared in print on page BR26.

**Load-Date:** November 6, 2022

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[***Why a 123-Year-Old Jewish Nonprofit Won’t Choose Sides in Gaza; Big CITY***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69TP-HH91-DXY4-X4GJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 8, 2023 Friday 16:54 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 993 words

**Highlight:** The war has created an existential reckoning for the Workers Circle, a community organization that traces its roots to Yiddish activists in the early 1900s.

**Body**

The war has created an existential reckoning for the Workers Circle, a community organization that traces its roots to Yiddish activists in the early 1900s.

In an example of the political flexibility now absent from public life, President Dwight D. Eisenhower stepped outside the boundaries of standard Republican sympathies in 1954 to honor a Jewish fraternal organization with deep historical ties to labor and the Socialist Party. The occasion was the annual convention of the Workmen’s Circle. In a written message, the president [*praised*](http://pdfs.jta.org/1954/1954-05-20_097.pdf?_ga=2.86552280.1143621817.1701880349-646661437.1701711061) the organization for spending the preceding half-century promoting and strengthening “our democratic ideals by helping immigrants adjust to their American environment.”

It was a succinct appraisal of an agenda that could be hard to explain because the group’s work straddled so many facets of the 20th-century urban experience. Founded on the Lower East Side in 1900, the Workmen’s Circle created branches around the country and fought all the various maladies of industrialization — the exploitation of children in factories, punishingly long workdays, unlivable tenement conditions.

It would be hard to exaggerate its imprint on the American story. Beyond its activism, the organization provided medical care, life insurance, elder housing, summer camps, schooling and burial assistance to tens of thousands of members. It managed to do all this while deftly balancing the need for assimilation with the preservation of Yiddish identity.

The war in Gaza has brought a kind of existential reckoning to a community whose work has had almost nothing to do with Israel. In more recent years the organization — now known as the Workers Circle — has fought for fairly mainstream causes like a $15 hourly minimum wage and an end to voter suppression. It has operated under the abiding principle that the immigrants it was created to serve were often fleeing authoritarian governments and that fighting threats to democracy in this country ought to remain central to its mission.

At its annual benefit held in Tribeca on Monday night, it honored the group [*Black Voters Matter*](https://blackvotersmatterfund.org/our-purpose/). The Workers Circle has never been driven by religious zeal (in its earliest days it kept its schools open on Yom Kippur) or tribalism or even more modest expressions of self-interest.

If anything, it recognized that its early successes grew from a commitment to defuse the ethnic rivalries that characterized poor and ***working-class*** life in turn-of-the-century New York and build strength through coalition. Today, 123 years later, it is left to operate in a world in which pluralism does not necessarily play well.

If neutrality has become unpopular within academic and corporate communities, it has seemed even less tenable for institutions affiliated with Jewish life — including secular institutions that operate at a distance from foreign policy interests.

“There is a lot of pressure to make statements,” Ann Toback, chief executive of the Workers Circle, said recently, “and I am not a huge fan of statements.” The organization issued a single declaration on the war, delivered on Oct. 9, two days after the terror attacks by Hamas, condemning them but urging “all parties to uphold international law and create a pathway forward for human rights and peace for Israelis and Palestinians alike.”

The Workmen’s Circle supported the founding of Israel after the Holocaust but has leaned away from Zionism since the beginning. It has long stood for a two-state solution as the best way forward, but remains a nonpartisan nonprofit focused on what is happening to people who live here. “We have always focused on a domestic agenda. It’s not anti anything,’’ Ms. Toback, whose great-grandfather was a Workmen’s Circle member, said. “This is our history.”

The current challenges have chiefly involved fund-raising. What was striking about the gala was not who was there — the actor Jesse Eisenberg was — but who was not, notably major figures in the city’s charity circles who so often generously contribute to Jewish causes. The event was underwritten in large part by the United Federation of Teachers and Tito’s vodka.

Like other Jewish groups focused on social welfare, Ms. Toback told me, the Workers Circle finds itself in a precarious place. “We’re all seeing donors pausing because they are focusing their philanthropy on Israel and the needs that have come out of Oct. 7, and we are struggling.’’ The numbers are expected to be significantly lower this year than they have been in the past, but what worries her is not just the money but the engagement. “We’re seeing a change,” she said.

“We say to people that we are living in a moment when U.S. democracy is in peril and that Oct. 7 is tragic and continues to draw so much of our attention, but even as that is going on there are ongoing attacks on democracy here,” Ms. Toback continued. “We never seem to have the luxury to focus on one thing.”

At a moment when labor is once again ascendant, the Workers Circle offers a long, instructive history in the value of focusing on many things. In the early 1900s, it joined Irish and Italian groups to fight for safer working conditions, campaigned to ensure women’s suffrage and opened treatment centers for sufferers of tuberculosis. In 1947, it raised more than $100,000 to acquire a French château to convert into an orphanage. During the 1960s, members threw themselves into the civil rights movement where they found an ally in Bayard Rustin.

They saw little value in siloing their own ambitions. What has inspired Ms. Toback is a Yiddish term, “doykayt,” that underlies some of these philosophies. Roughly, it translates to “hereness.”

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PHOTO: The Workers Circle, a fraternal organization with Jewish roots, honored the group Black Voters Matter at a benefit on Monday in TriBeCa. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BRITTAINY NEWMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page MB3.

**Load-Date:** December 9, 2023

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[***Explorers on the Frontier of Language***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B24-GTY1-DXY4-X02Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 7, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section ST; Column 0; Style Desk; Pg. 2

**Length:** 1143 words

**Byline:** By Alex Vadukul

**Body**

On the first day of the year, over a thousand devotees passed through the old church where the Poetry Project has held its annual 12-hour marathon for the last half-century.

On the morning of New Year's Day, along the sleepy streets of the East Village in Manhattan, scarf-bundled crowds trickled into St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery to attend a 12-hour poetry reading that has been a spiritually cleansing downtown tradition since the 1970s. To its devotees, the gathering's hypnotically lengthy programming of readings and avant-garde performances provides a dependably radical initiation into the new year.

Hosted by the Poetry Project, the nonprofit organization that has operated out of the historic church since the 1960s, the marathon serves as its biggest annual fund-raiser. About 150 writers, artists and dancers take their turns onstage until about midnight. Its performers have included William S. Burroughs, Gregory Corso, Yoko Ono, Amiri Baraka and Patti Smith. Years ago, the poet John Giorno might have provided participants with a bowl of LSD-spiked punch; these days, young attendees head to the church directly after partying at all-night raves.

Sunlight poured through stained-glass windows as guests settled in for the long haul ahead. Beneath the church's paint-peeling ceiling, many sat cross-legged in nooks and corners, unpacking the blankets and dog-eared paperbacks they had brought with them. A few parents wearing beanies sat in chairs with their babies in tow, and a woman walked her terrier down a crowded aisle.

Lee Ranaldo, a co-founder of Sonic Youth, eventually took the stage with a guitar to perform ''Forty Songs,'' a tune based on the lyrics of the Beat poet Michael McClure. After finishing his six-minute set, Mr. Ranaldo hung out in the parish hall, where visitors nursed hangovers with coffee and catered pierogies from Veselka, a nearby Ukrainian diner, as they perused chapbooks for sale.

''When I first came to New York, this reading was one of the first things I wanted to see,'' Mr. Ranaldo said. ''Oddly enough, lots of New Yorkers still don't know about it. It's always had a fringe and marginal aspect to it. You're getting Allen Ginsberg here, not Robert Frost.''

''I remember Jonas Mekas once brought a box to a reading,'' Mr. Ranaldo added. ''It contained Ginsberg's beard clippings. It still gets weird here like that today.''

Greeting old friends and fellow poets was Eileen Myles, who has lived in a nearby rent-stabilized apartment since the 1970s, and was once the Poetry Project's director.

''This is how I begin my New York life every year,'' they said. ''For me, the ball drops, and then there's the New Year's Day reading at the Poetry Project. This is also the place my education started as a young poet. You'd bring a beer and go to a workshop held by Ted Berrigan.''

They added: ''I'm going to be reading a love poem I wrote called 'Put My House.' And I'm giving it to Palestine tonight.''

More than a thousand people passed through the church over the course of the day. Some lingered for just a few sets, whereas others committed themselves for hours, bringing out balls of yarn and knitting needles to while away the time. The marathon gradually took on the semblance of one epic, collective avant-garde spectacle to its own, and its lineup blurred through categories of genre and experimentation.

Jaye Bartell, theater manager for the Anthology Film Archives, strummed a folksy and mournful guitar tune. Journey Streams, a young writer who was introduced as a ''nightlife historian based in Brooklyn,'' recited an untitled work off an iPhone. A choir, Sing in Solidarity, marched to the chant of ''Power to the workers. Power to the ***working class***.'' They wore red shirts, scarves and dresses and sang from sheet music in red folders.

''We are the choir of Democratic Socialists of America, New York City chapter,'' Annie Levin, one of the singers, announced. ''Please come to our concert Jan. 13 at the People's Forum where you'll be hearing some Appalachian labor songs.''

Luminaries of the poetry scene dominated the stage in the marathon's second half.

Anne Waldman, who founded the event in 1974 during her directorship of the Poetry Project, read a poem while accompanied by a jazzy saxophonist. Cecilia Vicuña, the Chilean artist, recited a minimalistic political poem, ''Ga Za.'' Pamela Sneed, wearing a necklace with a hunk of quartz, presented a new work, ''Barbie,'' inspired by her distaste for Greta Gerwig's summer movie.

''What if Barbie were taken to every skid row, homeless shelter in America and saw where unwanted people were dumped?'' Ms. Sneed said. ''What if her relatives were caught up in, and drowned by, a buoy on the Texas border trying to keep migrants out? What if she lost everything? To AIDS. Covid. What if her breasts were removed and she had to start a GoFundMe to cover medical costs?''

Chelsea Manning, the former intelligence analyst who conducted the largest intelligence leak in U.S. history, stood onstage in silence for several minutes. The church was now packed and sweltering, and people closed their eyes in meditation.

''I became very used to this experience that you just had, sitting there in silence,'' Ms. Manning finally said, referring to her stay in solitary confinement. ''Where I had nothing but myself and my thoughts. Just stone silence.''

''I think that there is a lot of power in silence,'' she added. ''I wanted to share a little piece of that.''

As midnight approached, the church emptied out, and about 60 people sat in darkness watching the marathon's last leg. The critic Sarah Nicole Prickett gave a reading, as did Ty Mitchell, a writer and former gay pornography star. The pianist Conrad Tao performed an improvisation of Art Tatum's 1950s recording, ''Over the Rainbow.''

David Velasco, who was fired in October as the editor of Artforum after publishing an open letter that called for Palestinian liberation and a cease-fire, recited a personal essay about the events leading to his termination.

''That morning, I wake up to find a bird on the floor of the apartment unmoving, after being brought inside by the cat,'' Mr. Velasco said. ''It's been tense all day as different people decide what to do me with me.'' He continued: ''A lawyer thinks I should write an email to buy myself time. A friend thinks I should prepare a statement. I'm crouched in the chimney trying to position my body between the bird and the cat when a voice inside me starts saying, 'Do nothing.'''

The night's final reading belonged to Kyle Dacuyan, the outgoing director of the Poetry Project, and his staff surprised him afterward offstage with champagne and a cinnamon-and-nut cake. Outside, in the old church's cemetery, a lingering group hung out smoking cigarettes in the cold, talking poetry above the graves of the dead.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/05/style/poetry-project-marathon.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/05/style/poetry-project-marathon.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Participants in the Poetry Project's annual marathon at St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery on New Year's Day included, from top: the musicians Ka Baird, left, and Shelley Hirsch

Malcolm-x Betts, a visual and dance artist

and the socialist movement choir Sing in Solidarity. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRITTAINY NEWMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page ST2.

**Load-Date:** January 7, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Fetterman’s Blue-Collar Allure Is Tested as Pennsylvania Race Tightens***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66JV-SNG1-JBG3-61W3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 8, 2022 Saturday 13:38 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1735 words

**Byline:** Trip Gabriel

**Highlight:** John Fetterman, the Democratic nominee for Senate, says he can win over ***working-class*** voters in deep-red counties. Some evidence suggests he can, but partisan loyalties may prove more powerful.

**Body**

John Fetterman, the Democratic nominee for Senate, says he can win over ***working-class*** voters in deep-red counties. Some evidence suggests he can, but partisan loyalties may prove more powerful.

MURRYSVILLE, Pa. — “I don’t have to tell you that it is hard to be a Democrat in Westmoreland County.”

So began the chairwoman of the Westmoreland Democratic Party, Michelle McFall, as she introduced Lt. Gov. John Fetterman of Pennsylvania to supporters this week in the deep-red exurbs of Pittsburgh.

About 100 people were gathered in a parking lot behind the Fetterman campaign bus, emblazoned with the slogan “Every County, Every Vote.” That is the strategy on which Mr. Fetterman has built his Senate candidacy — announced last year with a [*video*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6x6MkUfZEWE) reminiscent of a Springsteen song, showing small towns where people “feel left behind” and promising that “Fetterman can get a lot of those voters.”

Now, in the final weeks before Election Day, with polls showing a [*narrowing race*](https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2022/senate/pa/pennsylvania_senate_oz_vs_fetterman-7695.html) in a pivotal contest for control of the Senate, the premise that Mr. Fetterman can win over rural voters, including some who supported former President Donald J. Trump, is under strain.

Mr. Fetterman has limited his campaign schedule as he [*recovers from a stroke*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/15/us/politics/fetterman-stroke-health.html), unable to visit “every county.” He is facing fierce Republican attacks that appear to be hitting home with voters, particularly over his [*record on crime*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/27/us/politics/fetterman-oz-crime-justice.html). The share of voters [*who view Mr. Fetterman unfavorably*](https://www.getrevue.co/profile/fandmpoll/issues/franklin-marshall-poll-release-september-2022-1382877) has risen, while many Republicans have grudgingly rallied behind their nominee, Mehmet Oz. Because Mr. Fetterman had a double-digit lead in polling over the summer, the race’s tightening, while typical in a battleground state, has caused Democrats’ anxiety to rise.

In a speech lasting just five minutes, Mr. Fetterman told supporters in Westmoreland County, which Mr. Trump won by 28 percentage points in 2020, that “we must jam up red counties” by running up votes. Still recovering from his stroke in May, Mr. Fetterman spoke fluently but haltingly, with gaps between words. It typified how his campaign has been forced to pivot from relying on Mr. Fetterman’s charisma before crowds, [*in stump appearances during the spring*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/14/us/politics/fetterman-pennsylvania-democratic-primary.html), to a strategy focused heavily on social media and television ads. A single debate with Dr. Oz is scheduled for Oct. 25.

In Pennsylvania’s vast rural areas, the Fetterman campaign aims to improve upon the 2020 performance of President Biden, another candidate who banked on his Everyman appeal, and [*who narrowly carried the state*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/11/07/us/elections/pennsylvania-counties-battleground-state.html).

Exceeding Mr. Biden in red counties may be necessary if Mr. Fetterman does not match the blowout Biden victories in the Philadelphia suburbs, where the foil of Mr. Trump in 2020 repelled college-educated voters.

Much of Mr. Fetterman’s appeal to rural and ***working-class*** places goes beyond [*his policy ideas*](https://johnfetterman.com/plan/) to expand broadband or “make more stuff in America.” His power is his brand — encapsulated in the casual attire, the shaved head and tattoos, conveying that he is not a conventional politician.

Larry Maggi, a Democratic commissioner of Washington County, a blue-collar region of southwest Pennsylvania, said Mr. Fetterman was making inroads with ***working-class*** voters who had abandoned Democrats.

“What I see is people like the Democratic union guy or gal who voted for Donald Trump who is coming back because they like Fetterman, what he stands for, he looks like them — the tattoos and a little bit of pot smoking,” Mr. Maggi said. “He excites them.” (Though Mr. Fetterman favors legalizing recreational marijuana, [*he has said*](https://www.pennlive.com/news/2020/09/lt-gov-john-fetterman-talks-about-legalizing-recreational-marijuana-calling-it-the-right-side-of-history.html) that he does not use it himself.)

Polling broadly supports the idea that Mr. Fetterman has a common-touch image with voters. In a Monmouth University [*survey*](https://www.monmouth.edu/polling-institute/reports/monmouthpoll_pa_100522/) this week, 57 percent of Pennsylvania voters said that Mr. Fetterman understood the day-to-day concerns of people like them. Only 39 percent said the same of Dr. Oz, a former heart surgeon and celebrity TV host.

But Ms. McFall, the Democratic chairwoman in Westmoreland County, said a new attack ad against Mr. Fetterman on local radio sought to puncture his common-man image.

“What I’ve been hearing on the radio now is that John Fetterman lived off his parents and is a spoiled rich kid who pretends to be a man of the people,” Ms. McFall said, adding that the aim of the attacks is to elicit ***working-class*** resentment: “‘I don’t have what this person has, and it’s not fair.’”

Mr. Fetterman grew up affluent near York, Pa. For 13 years, he was the mayor of Braddock, a town outside Pittsburgh devastated by industrial collapse. The job paid $150 a year, and his family supported him until he became lieutenant governor at age 49.

Mr. Fetterman said in an interview that his family had backed his life choice to work “in a community that was abandoned.” He has not hidden his family’s help, although it is not widely known.

It is unclear if attacks on his privileged background, which Dr. Oz has said makes him “a pretend populist,” are turning off ***working-class*** voters.

In interviews this week with a dozen self-identified independent voters in Westmoreland and other red counties, none brought up Mr. Fetterman’s background, or Dr. Oz’s [*dubious medical advice*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/26/us/politics/dr-oz-medical-advice.html) on his TV show, or other fleeting issues that both campaigns have tried to seize on.

The issue most commonly raised by voters, including some Oz supporters, was that Dr. Oz was not a “real” Pennsylvanian because he [*moved to the state only in 2020*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/07/magazine/dr-oz-pennsylvania-senate-race.html). The most common objection to Mr. Fetterman was that he had [*pushed for clemency*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/27/us/politics/fetterman-oz-crime-justice.html) for some long-incarcerated men serving life sentences for murder, who prison authorities said posed no threat to public safety.

“What upsets me about Oz is I don’t feel he’s really a Pennsylvanian,” said Michael Lyter, who lives in Mifflin County, in the central part of the state. Nonetheless, he plans to vote for Dr. Oz.

A retired drug and alcohol counselor, Mr. Lyter, 66, said: “I definitely don’t want Fetterman in there. He’s too much pro-crime.”

He was unpersuaded by Mr. Fetterman’s dress code. “Do you know what he looks like to me?” Mr. Lyter said. “He looks like a heroin addict. They’re the only ones who wear hoodies in the summertime.”

It was rare to find anyone in the interviews who had voted for Republicans recently and now favored Mr. Fetterman. And it was equally rare to find recent Democratic voters swinging to Dr. Oz.

The interviews were anecdotal, though polling indicates that Mr. Fetterman has an edge among one large cohort of voters in red counties — white ***working-class*** women. A Fox News [*survey*](https://static.foxnews.com/foxnews.com/content/uploads/2022/09/PA-crosstabs_Sen-Gov-General_conducted-September-22-26_released-September-28-2022.pdf) last month showed him winning white women without a college degree by eight percentage points. There was also a yawning gender gap: White men without a college degree preferred Dr. Oz by 15 points.

One of the rare party switchers was Paul Amalong, a security guard who was leaving a farmer’s market in Latrobe with a bag of zucchinis.

“Tell you the truth, I was a Republican all my life until Jan. 6, and I switched to the Democratic Party after that,” Mr. Amalong said.

A former truck driver, Mr. Amalong, 74, said Mr. Fetterman had his vote, though mainly because he believes Republicans have become the party of insurrection. “When I was a Republican, I didn’t vote straight Republican,” he said. “But since Jan. 6 came, I don’t look. I just punch in straight Democrat.”

Latrobe, in central Westmoreland County, is a brewing and manufacturing city where the [*first banana split*](https://twitter.com/tripgabriel/status/1578376200900284416?s=20&amp;t=SgnCyMF0bvhPy1CvH2DOzA) was created in 1904. Its population has fallen steadily since 1970. It might have served as one of the communities in the Fetterman announcement video whose “best days were a generation ago.”

“Downtown Latrobe, it was wall-to-wall people,” recalled Carol Dziak, 69, who was also shopping at the farmer’s market. Ms. Dziak’s husband worked for 45 years at the brewery that formerly made Rolling Rock beer. For a while, the couple owned a Hallmark card shop, but customers abandoned it for mall stores.

“I’m a Democrat, but I don’t vote Democrat,” Ms. Dziak said. She didn’t like what she had seen about Mr. Fetterman in TV ads calling him soft on crime. “The convicts, letting them get out of jail and stuff — that, I think, is my top thing,” she said.

In 2016, a house outside Latrobe [*painted like an American flag with a towering cutout of Mr. Trump*](https://www.inquirer.com/photo/showing-big-support-president-trump-20200903.html) drew hundreds of people to pose for selfies. Now the owner of what became known as the “Trump House,” Leslie Rossi, is Latrobe’s Republican state representative. She said Mr. Fetterman had no chance of picking up lapsed Democratic supporters in the county.

“Voters who are now voting red do not have any plans of switching back to the party they feel has let them down,” Ms. Rossi said.

Brendan McPhillips, Mr. Fetterman’s campaign manager, said he expected that Mr. Fetterman would win a higher percentage of votes in red counties than Mr. Biden did two years ago.

“There’s real enthusiasm for John out in these red counties in a way I’ve never seen before,” said Mr. McPhillips, who also ran Mr. Biden’s 2020 campaign in Pennsylvania. “People see John at Costco, at Aldi. He’s real and one of them. Even if they might not agree with him on everything.”

Jayanna Shirey, a 28-year-old college student who lives with her parents in Frenchville, Pa., and is studying criminal justice, defended Mr. Fetterman’s [*approach*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/27/us/politics/fetterman-oz-crime-justice.html). The prison system locks up too many people “who won’t be reoffending,” she said. “Something got out of hand back in the ’80s. The American taxpayers had to fork out hard-earned cash to pay for men or women to sit their whole life in prison.”

A coal miner’s daughter, Ms. Shirey said she was proud of her rural roots in central Pennsylvania and her political independence. “Hell yes, I think I’m a redneck, but hell no, I’m not a Democrat or a Republican,” she said.

She was not overly enthusiastic about either Senate candidate, but said she planned to vote for Mr. Fetterman.

She wants to become a state game warden.

“Unless Fetterman says, ‘I’m going to come into your house and take your .30-06 so you can’t hunt your whitetail deer,’” she said, “I’m going to vote for him.”

PHOTOS: Lt. Gov. John Fetterman’s campaign is hoping to improve on President Biden’s 2020 performance in Pennsylvania’s rural areas. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JUSTIN MERRIMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Many Republicans have grudgingly rallied behind Mehmet Oz. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HANNAH BEIER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); The “Trump House” in the manufacturing city of Latrobe, Pa. (PHOTOGRAPH BY NATE SMALLWOOD FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** October 8, 2022

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[***'Sailor Moon'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69WN-3XR1-JBG3-62HM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 17, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section MM; Column 0; Magazine Desk; Pg. 16; LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

**Length:** 1017 words

**Byline:** By Venita Blackburn

**Body**

The show is about friendship, yes, and also liberation that does not match the world's expectations of femininity.

The first lesbian relationship I saw portrayed on-screen was in ''Sailor Moon.'' Uranus and Neptune were two characters who seemed undeniably in love. The show is Japanese anime, though, and I could only watch the English-dubbed version that called them ''cousins.'' The titular Sailor Moon and the other Sailor Scouts are celestial superheroes sent across time to protect Earth from nefarious forces. In the human world, they take on the appearance of ordinary girls, but can transform into their fighting selves via personal totems. Sailor Moon often has a compact mirror and shouts, ''Moon Prism Power, Makeup!'' before transforming during battle and declaring, ''In the name of the moon, I'll punish you!'' Swoon.

''Sailor Moon'' aired early on weekday mornings when I was in middle school, around 1995. I was a bookish tomboy in Compton, Calif., a ***working-class*** suburb full of Black and brown people, where superheroes looked more like gangsta rappers than anime characters. I went to Sunday school every week in stockings and Mary Janes and thought of femininity as a chore rather than a good time. I loved women but hated the imagined woman I was supposed to one day swell into, makeup and perfume and nail polish and gold jewelry signaling my arrival wherever I went like bells on a cat. In this vision, I worked and maintained a household and didn't expect much acknowledgment for the effort -- and certainly no fun.

I grew up watching horror movies with my mother in the '80s because she didn't care about ratings systems and liked what she liked and wanted someone to watch with her, which explains a lot about me. I also watched cartoons freely, without being minded. Animation was a safe place. I controlled the VHS tapes, and my family would scatter whenever the opening of ''The Little Mermaid'' boomed into the house. In the world of cartoons, I was alone and unobserved. I think queer artists recognize this medium as a place of solace and fantasy -- a secret world running parallel to the one in which L.G.B.T.Q. humans and people of color are targeted by book bans that want to annihilate both us and evidence of our existence.

Comics have always been a place for dreaming, for silliness, for the disregard of rules that apply to anything from physics to the patriarchy. Yes, the medium can also be used to perpetuate dangerous and demeaning ideas, but the nature of the form makes room for fantasies both malicious and divine. The queer experience thus finds a home in animated worlds. Queer art can be a propagandist of possibility in a universe not always in favor of queer existence, and that is lifesaving. The queerness of ''Sailor Moon'' isn't really about Sailor Moon, a.k.a. ''champion kicker of ass in a Japanese schoolgirl skirt and tiara,'' though. The world of ''Sailor Moon'' is interested in transformation, in upsetting expectations of presentation and value related to girlhood, masculinity, strength and gender roles. The show is about friendship, yes, and also liberation that does not match the world's expectations of femininity. The series includes actual trans characters and a lesbian couple with superpowers, in case there is any doubt.

[Video: Watch on YouTube.]

Anime in the '90s and 2000s had its hyperviolent giant-mechanical-suit boy culture down. Representation of my personal identity was not prioritized broadly speaking, but the iconic status of ''Sailor Moon'' within the queer community was no accident. Although the more direct Sapphic references were edited out of the English version, censorship couldn't erase the show's queer sensibility for me. I remember the scene with Uranus and Neptune. Neptune is stretched out on a chaise longue, asleep by their pool, and Uranus leans over and wakes her up, whining that she's not paying attention to her: ''It's not fair, you know. You just go into your own world and leave me behind.'' Cousins, my ass. The show does not let up on the attraction the girls have for Uranus, even though they aren't supposed to be attracted now that it's clear she's a woman. Years later, in a Best Buy circa 2005, I found DVDs of the show's uncut Japanese version with subtitles, which confirmed what I'd known all along: They were lovers! I also discovered the existence of the Sailor Star Lights -- who possessed the earthly bodies of boys but fought as girls and underlined the show's gender queerness in the fifth and final season. (That season didn't air with the others in the '90s.) I felt vindication followed immediately by the depression of a closeted queer holding onto fictional characters as a promise for something other than every predetermined choice of girlhood. But I also discovered I could be more than one thing in one body: I could be masculine and feminine, powerful and clumsy; I could have vices and gifts, and not one trait would have to be the defining quality. I could be liberated.

The secret message of ''Sailor Moon'' might be that queerness is not just sexual (fight me); queerness is also existing under duress, where one's instinct toward self-determination is a kind of spiritual expanse that grows from deep within the body and psyche then cascades out into an eventual shape unlike most others. Hulu has been streaming the show since 2014, broadening access to these inspirational figures. In ''Sailor Moon,'' the concept of transformation is about light, magic and power hidden in the ordinariness of living. There is nothing queerer than that (except maybe actual gay sex).

Venita Blackburn is the author of ''How to Wrestle a Girl,'' ''Black Jesus and Other Superheroes'' and the forthcoming novel ''Dead in Long Beach, California.'' She is an associate professor of fiction at California State University, Fresno.Venita Blackburn is the author of ''How to Wrestle a Girl,'' ''Black Jesus and Other Superheroes'' and the forthcoming novel ''Dead in Long Beach, California.'' She is an associate professor of fiction at California State University, Fresno.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/12/magazine/sailor-moon.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/12/magazine/sailor-moon.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page MM16, MM17.

**Load-Date:** December 17, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Bring on a Trump-Biden Rematch, Said No One***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BF0-4581-DXY4-X040-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 27, 2024 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 18; THE CONVERSATION

**Length:** 1607 words

**Byline:** By Gail Collins and Bret Stephens

**Body**

Bret Stephens: Hi, Gail. I know we'll get around to talking about Donald Trump's big South Carolina primary win, but first I want to pick your brain about Joe Biden's State of the Union address. It isn't happening till next week, but I'm guessing the White House speechwriters are working hard on it now.

Any advice on what the president should say and how he should say it?

Gail Collins: Let's presume he's going to tell the country how well things are going in the economy, the progress he's made on priorities like improving America's infrastructure and getting relief to folks who are drowning in student debt.

Bret: Will quarrel with you in a minute. Go on.

Gail: Then at some point he'll turn to foreign affairs. You know that's not my subject, but even a spectator like me could guess that the evils of Russia will be paired with Donald Trump's claim that the United States shouldn't protect any NATO country that doesn't spend a certain amount on defense.

Biden's already laced into that one once, but he was so ... vigorous that I'm hoping for a repeat.

OK, your turn.

Bret: A lot of Americans are looking at a Trump-Biden rematch as a case of the morally unfit versus the mentally unfit. So the most important thing Biden has to do with this speech is dispel the perception that he's tipping into senility. If he stumbles even a little, it's going to cost him a lot.

Next thing he needs to do is acknowledge the magnitude of the crisis at the border and blame Republicans for rejecting the bipartisan Senate bill to help address the crisis -- a cynical MAGA maneuver intended solely to keep the crisis alive for Trump's political benefit. Finally, declare that he's ordering many thousands of troops to the border, with authority to detain migrants. It would remind people who's president and take the issue straight out of the G.O.P.'s hands.

Gail: Lord, I forgot about the border. Just blocked it out, I guess. We can fight about that later. Go on with your topics for Biden.

Bret: On Ukraine, I was disappointed by the fairly ineffectual sanctions the administration announced last week as retaliation for Aleksei Navalny's cruel death in a Siberian prison. I'm hoping that Biden is waiting for the State of the Union to declare that he's going to seize frozen Russian assets held by the United States and give the money to Ukraine for the purpose of buying U.S. weapons. The alternative is to allow Ukraine to lose the war on account of House Republicans' craven deference to Trump. It's un-American, and Biden should challenge them directly. Republicans are to Russia today what the Western far left was to the Soviet Union a generation ago: fellow travelers, apologists and naifs.

And about those student loans ...

Gail: Ah yes, always a point of conflict for us. There obviously has to be a rational student loan program that encourages the generally very young borrowers to be smart about what kind of deal they buy into. Wasn't the case early on, and a lot of innocent people got trapped in huge debt while flooding the schools with money that was too often used for unnecessary expansion. They deserve some help to salvage their already half-ruined careers and lives.

Bret: Not to sound like Mother Superior at the orgy, but for a president to unilaterally forgive $138 billion debt is flat-out unconstitutional. Congressional control of the purse strings is basic to our system, and all but defying a Supreme Court ruling, as Biden boasted of doing last week, is a real road to hell: Just imagine how Trump might use the precedent if he gets back in the White House.

Also, while the president surely thinks he's currying favor with younger people whose votes he desperately needs, he's also alienating a lot of ***working-class***, non-college-educated voters who see this as another huge giveaway to imprudent borrowers. So: bad policy and bad politics. But now you'll tell me why I'm wrong.

Gail: The folks who are getting the greatest benefit from Biden's forgiveness plan are the ones who most deserve it -- low-to-middle-income former students who went to community colleges. They believed the national mantra that college would lead to a good job, but many emerged shackled in debt while qualified for careers that didn't pay all that well.

There are people out there who've spent decades saddled with these obligations, and barely able to meet the interest payments. After a certain number of years, they deserve an escape route.

Bret: And what about all of those people who took out loans and dutifully repaid them over many years? Or those who wisely decided against saddling themselves with debt in the first place by skipping college? In effect, they're being penalized for their diligence and foresight. And I don't even want to think about how this loan forgiveness creates a moral hazard when it comes to other types of debt.

But, hey, we said we'd talk about South Carolina. You probably don't lie awake thinking about Nikki Haley's best interests, but is she wise, politically speaking, to keep this contest going any further?

Gail: Well, when you lose your home state, it's probably a message to pack your bags and go for a nice long vacation. On the other hand, Haley was never going to win anyway, and running through primaries is a commendable way to focus voters' attention on Trump's terrible flaws. As well, of course, as a diverting way to spend the spring.

Bret: The smart advice or the honorable advice?

Gail: You know I'm going to demand both.

Bret: Well, the smart advice, politically speaking, is for her to end her campaign, endorse Trump, sedulously kiss up to him and his voters and hope to win his -- and their -- blessing for a 2028 bid.

The honorable advice is for her to come to terms with the fact that she may never be president, but she can become a leader of a principled conservative movement that rejects demagoguery, supports the rule of law, champions free people, free speech, free trade and free markets -- and bides its time until the Republican Party is de-zombified and wants to return to its former self. That means campaigning for a while longer, maybe even to the convention.

And speaking of zombies, did I mention I spent 40 minutes on Friday watching a Trump rally?

Gail: The one where he kept talking about the size of the audience?

Bret: Size is a theme with him.

I watched the rally with my mother, who found it reminiscent of the style of the Mussolini regime under which she was born in wartime Italy. She was referring to the incoherence, the bombast, the grandiosity, the extravagant lies, the demonization, the xenophobia, the bogus nods to religiosity and patriotism, the references to himself with the royal ''we,'' the condescending sops to his toadies, the ecstatic gaze of the people arranged behind him on the stage. But there's also an undeniably comic aspect, too, especially when he riffed about how he had taken the moniker ''crooked'' from Hillary Clinton (who is now ''Beautiful Hillary'') and given it to Biden, who used to be ''Sleepy'' (and probably still is). I admit I sorta giggled, against my better judgment. The whole thing was sorta like, ''Il Duce, Live at the Comedy Cellar.''

It's ... scarily effective. If his opponents are Biden and Kamala Harris, I fear he wins.

Gail: Funny, I watched his speech to the Conservative Political Action Conference on Saturday and found myself nodding off. I guess I've just seen his act too often. I usually try to keep alert by counting the number of times he quotes somebody calling him ''Sir,'' but this time it just didn't work.

Still, it's totally wrong to get sleepy when somebody's telling the audience, ''The only thing standing between you and obliteration is me.''

Bret: It's the sort of thing you'd expect a cult leader to say right before he passes out the Kool-Aid.

Gail: I can't argue with you about his talent for whipping up a crowd when he's in the mood. But it's way, way, way too early to give up hope. Lord knows what's going to happen between now and November.

Bret: Truer words never spoken. What do you think is likelier: Biden drops out of the race after some awful stumble? Or Trump gets convicted of a felony? Both, of course, are possible.

Gail: Wow, imagine an election without either of the Two Inevitables. If Trump gets convicted of a felony, he'd appeal and that could lead to a very interesting nominating convention. He'd never give up for the good of the party, even if he was being led away in shackles.

Hmm. Really liking that image.

Bret: Just remember James Michael Curley, the Boston mayor who ran for his fourth term while under federal indictment, went to prison for a few months, had his sentence commuted by President Harry Truman, returned to a hero's welcome and served out the rest of his mayoral term. That could be Trump, too.

Gail: They made a movie about Curley called ''The Last Hurrah,'' right? Great Spencer Tracy flick. Wish Trump was at the last ... something.

Biden is, of course, a much saner guy, although clearly one without the ability to acknowledge the limits of mortality. If the Democrats managed to rally against his nomination at the convention, he'd concede, I'm sure, but hard to imagine which one particular Democrat could organize such a rally.

Bret: Anyone, anyone, anyone who can stop Trump -- I'm for.

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**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK PETERSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A18.

**Load-Date:** February 27, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Religion, Social Class and Achievement in College***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652V-G4T1-DXY4-X0J1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 25, 2022 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 335 words

**Body**

To the Editor:

I write to highlight the importance of ''For ***Working-Class*** Boys, Religion May Be the Key to College Success,'' by Ilana M. Horwitz (Opinion guest essay, March 16).

Among my crowd of San Francisco progressives, religion is considered seriously down-market, with religious belief belittled. Perhaps this essay will help elites understand that for non-college-educated people of all races, churches often provide the kind of hopefulness, future orientation, impulse control and social safety net that college-educated elites get from their career potential, their therapists and their bank accounts.

Social class is expressed through cultural differences; elites' failure to understand this enables the far right to sculpt the resulting class anger into economic populism.

Joan C. WilliamsSan FranciscoThe writer, a professor at the University of California Hastings College of the Law, is the author of ''White ***Working Class***: Overcoming Class Cluelessness in America.''

To the Editor:

While Ilana M. Horwitz points to religion as a key factor contributing to higher rates of college completion for ***working-class*** males, the research she cites suggests a broader takeaway. It's that young people, especially those who lack access to the social ties and support systems available to their more affluent counterparts, need to feel a sense of belonging to thrive.

Indeed, my work with young people over the past 35 years has demonstrated just how vital it is to student success to create school environments where everyone feels supported, cared for and connected to one another.

Religion may well be a valuable source of fostering connection, but I've seen time and time again that there is much that schools can do to build and maintain the kind of supportive communities that help young people realize that earning a college degree, along with other life aspirations, is within their reach.

Richard StopolNew YorkThe writer is president emeritus and senior adviser, NYC Outward Bound Schools.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/24/opinion/letters/religion-social-class-and-achievement-in-college.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/24/opinion/letters/religion-social-class-and-achievement-in-college.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Arne Bellstorf FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 25, 2022

**End of Document**



[***Where Downtown Poets Go to Church to Greet the New Year***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B1P-1T71-DXY4-X00V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 5, 2024 Friday 10:36 EST

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**Section:** STYLE

**Length:** 1192 words

**Highlight:** On the first day of the year, over a thousand devotees passed through the old church where the Poetry Project has held its annual 12-hour marathon for the last half-century.

**Body**

On the first day of the year, over a thousand devotees passed through the old church where the Poetry Project has held its annual 12-hour marathon for the last half-century.

On the morning of New Year’s Day, along the sleepy streets of the East Village in Manhattan, scarf-bundled crowds trickled into St. Mark’s Church in-the-Bowery to attend a 12-hour poetry reading that has been a spiritually cleansing downtown tradition since the 1970s. To its devotees, the gathering’s hypnotically lengthy programming of readings and avant-garde performances provides a dependably radical initiation into the new year.

Hosted by the [*Poetry Project*](https://www.poetryproject.org/events/the-50th-annual-new-year-s-day-marathon), the nonprofit organization that has operated out of the historic church since the 1960s, the marathon serves as its biggest annual fund-raiser. About 150 writers, artists and dancers take their turns onstage [*until about midnight*](https://www.villagevoice.com/the-poetry-projects-half-century-of-dissent/). Its performers have [*included*](https://www.2009-2019.poetryproject.org/about/history/) William S. Burroughs, Gregory Corso, Yoko Ono, Amiri Baraka and Patti Smith. Years ago, the poet John Giorno might have provided participants with a bowl of LSD-spiked punch; these days, young attendees head to the church directly after partying at all-night raves.

Sunlight poured through stained-glass windows as guests settled in for the long haul ahead. Beneath the church’s paint-peeling ceiling, many sat cross-legged in nooks and corners, unpacking the blankets and dog-eared paperbacks they had brought with them. A few parents wearing beanies sat in chairs with their babies in tow, and a woman walked her terrier down a crowded aisle.

Lee Ranaldo, a co-founder of Sonic Youth, eventually took the stage with a guitar to perform “Forty Songs,” a tune based on the lyrics of the Beat poet Michael McClure. After finishing his six-minute set, Mr. Ranaldo hung out in the parish hall, where visitors nursed hangovers with coffee and catered pierogies from Veselka, a nearby Ukrainian diner, as they perused chapbooks for sale.

“When I first came to New York, this [*reading*](https://www.nytimes.com/2003/01/01/nyregion/public-lives-discussing-a-poetry-jam-while-pretty-close-to-deaf.html) was one of the first things I wanted to see,” Mr. Ranaldo said. “Oddly enough, lots of New Yorkers still don’t know about it. It’s always had a fringe and marginal aspect to it. You’re getting Allen Ginsberg here, not Robert Frost.”

“I remember [*Jonas Mekas*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/23/obituaries/jonas-mekas-dead.html) once brought a box to a reading,” Mr. Ranaldo added. “It contained Ginsberg’s beard clippings. It still gets weird here like that today.”

Greeting old friends and fellow poets was [*Eileen Myles*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/18/style/eileen-myles-watches-over-an-ever-changing-new-york.html), who has lived in a nearby rent-stabilized apartment since the 1970s, and was once the Poetry Project’s director.

“This is how I begin my New York life every year,” they said. “For me, the ball drops, and then there’s the New Year’s Day reading at the Poetry Project. This is also the place my education started as a young poet. You’d bring a beer and go to a workshop held by Ted Berrigan.”

They added: “I’m going to be reading a love poem I wrote called ‘[*Put My House*](https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2023/03/06/put-my-house).’ And I’m giving it to Palestine tonight.”

More than a thousand people passed through the [*church*](https://stmarksbowery.org/history) over the course of the day. Some lingered for just a few sets, whereas others committed themselves for hours, bringing out balls of yarn and knitting needles to while away the time. The marathon gradually took on the semblance of one epic, collective avant-garde spectacle to its own, and its lineup blurred through categories of genre and experimentation.

Jaye Bartell, theater manager for the Anthology Film Archives, strummed a folksy and mournful guitar tune. Journey Streams, a young writer who was introduced as a “nightlife historian based in Brooklyn,” recited an untitled work off an iPhone. A choir, Sing in Solidarity, marched to the chant of “Power to the workers. Power to the ***working class***.” They wore red shirts, scarves and dresses and sang from sheet music in red folders.

“We are the choir of Democratic Socialists of America, New York City chapter,” Annie Levin, one of the singers, announced. “Please come to our concert Jan. 13 at the People’s Forum where you’ll be hearing some Appalachian labor songs.”

Luminaries of the poetry scene dominated the stage in the marathon’s second half.

Anne Waldman, who founded the event in 1974 during her directorship of the Poetry Project, read a poem while accompanied by a jazzy saxophonist. [*Cecilia Vicuña*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/25/magazine/cecilia-vicuna-art.html), the Chilean artist, recited a minimalistic political poem, “Ga Za.” Pamela Sneed, wearing a necklace with a hunk of quartz, presented a new work, “Barbie,” inspired by her distaste for Greta Gerwig’s summer movie.

“What if Barbie were taken to every skid row, homeless shelter in America and saw where unwanted people were dumped?” Ms. Sneed said. “What if her relatives were caught up in, and drowned by, a buoy on the Texas border trying to keep migrants out? What if she lost everything? To AIDS. Covid. What if her breasts were removed and she had to start a GoFundMe to cover medical costs?”

[*Chelsea Manning*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/12/magazine/the-long-lonely-road-of-chelsea-manning.html), the former intelligence analyst who conducted the largest intelligence leak in U.S. history, stood onstage in silence for several minutes. The church was now packed and sweltering, and people closed their eyes in meditation.

“I became very used to this experience that you just had, sitting there in silence,” Ms. Manning finally said, referring to her stay in solitary confinement. “Where I had nothing but myself and my thoughts. Just stone silence.”

“I think that there is a lot of power in silence,” she added. “I wanted to share a little piece of that.”

As midnight approached, the church emptied out, and about 60 people sat in darkness watching the marathon’s last leg. The critic Sarah Nicole Prickett gave a reading, as did Ty Mitchell, a writer and former gay pornography star. The pianist [*Conrad Tao*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/15/arts/music/conrad-tao-carnegie-hall.html) performed an improvisation of Art Tatum’s 1950s recording, “Over the Rainbow.”

David Velasco, who was [*fired*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/26/arts/artforum-editor-fired-david-velasco-palestine-gaza.html) in October as the editor of Artforum after publishing an open [*letter*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/27/arts/design/artforum-boycott-goldin-eisenman.html) that called for Palestinian liberation and a cease-fire, recited a personal essay about the events leading to his termination.

“That morning, I wake up to find a bird on the floor of the apartment unmoving, after being brought inside by the cat,” Mr. Velasco said. “It’s been tense all day as different people decide what to do me with me.” He continued: “A lawyer thinks I should write an email to buy myself time. A friend thinks I should prepare a statement. I’m crouched in the chimney trying to position my body between the bird and the cat when a voice inside me starts saying, ‘Do nothing.’”

The night’s final reading belonged to Kyle Dacuyan, the outgoing director of the Poetry Project, and his staff surprised him afterward offstage with champagne and a cinnamon-and-nut cake. Outside, in the old church’s [*cemetery*](https://nycemetery.wordpress.com/2011/06/04/st-marks-in-the-bowery-churchyard-and-cemetery/), a lingering group hung out smoking cigarettes in the cold, talking poetry above the graves of the dead.

PHOTOS: Participants in the Poetry Project’s annual marathon at St. Mark’s Church in-the-Bowery on New Year’s Day included, from top: the musicians Ka Baird, left, and Shelley Hirsch; Malcolm-x Betts, a visual and dance artist; and the socialist movement choir Sing in Solidarity. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRITTAINY NEWMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page ST2.

**Load-Date:** January 7, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Apes Together Strong***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68DW-MYT1-DXY4-X253-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 9, 2023 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; Movies, Performing Arts/Weekend Desk; Pg. 5

**Length:** 400 words

**Byline:** By Glenn Kenny

**Body**

The 2021 ''short squeeze'' of GameStop was a rare victory for the little guy. This documentary explains why the house -- Wall Street wealth, that is -- almost always wins.

If we accept the proposition that having money is sexy, we should also be able to admit that the most aggressive ways of making lots of money -- the banking schemes and strategies that compound the wealth of the already rich -- are not. Are they unfair to the ***working class***? Certainly. Possibly criminal? Sure. But sexy, no. Among the more nefarious activities known to capitalism, big investing is particularly dry.

In ''The Big Short,'' a 2015 fictionalized account of the mid-aughts mortgage-market collapse, the director Adam McKay attempted to skirt this dynamic by having attractive performers including Margot Robbie and Selena Gomez explain the details of market manipulation. In the new documentary ''Apes Together Strong,'' the filmmakers (and twin brothers) Finley Mulligan and Quinn Mulligan, working with a microbudget and no access to movie stars, detail how to short-sell a stock with a rough-hewed sketch involving a bag of sugar that is borrowed, sold and re-bought at a profit -- or not.

[Video: Watch on YouTube.]

The title of the movie is the motto of the talking simians in the latter-day ''Planet of the Apes'' film franchise; it was adopted by the retail investors who led the GameStop ''short squeeze'' of 2021. At that time, small investors succeeded in significantly raising the price of stock in GameStop, a store chain targeted by hedge funds for market assassination.

In a fast-paced style derived from Michael Moore or Morgen Spurlock, the Mulligans interview retail-investor comrades and banking pros sympathetic to the small investors' cause. The villains, both past and present -- the Reagan White House with its push to deregulate banking; big finance honchos; hedge fund vultures -- are seen in archival footage, mostly.

The lessons here are old, and at one point, the filmmakers use the phrase ''the house always wins.'' But there's hope, because there's always hope in such tales. While Dennis M. Kelleher, the chief executive of the nonprofit investor's advocacy group Better Markets, says, ''Wall Street wins largely because they are unopposed,'' the movie closes on a rallying cry.

Apes Together StrongNot rated. Running time: 1 hour 29 minutes. Available to rent or buy on Amazon.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/05/movies/apes-together-strong-review.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/05/movies/apes-together-strong-review.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page C5.

**Load-Date:** June 9, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Biden Promotes Quality Careers Minus a Degree***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:687T-RCX1-JBG3-60SR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 16, 2023 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2023 The New York Times Company

**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1360 words

**Byline:** By Zolan Kanno-Youngs

**Body**

President Biden is trying to appeal to ***working-class*** voters by emphasizing his plans to create well-paid jobs that do not require a college degree.

When President Biden told a crowd of union workers this year that every American should have a path to a good career -- ''whether they go to college or not'' -- Tyler Wissman was listening.

A father of one with a high school education, Mr. Wissman said he rarely heard politicians say that people should be able to get ahead without a college degree.

''In my 31 years, it was always, 'You gotta go to college if you want a job,''' said Mr. Wissman, who is training as an apprentice at the Finishing Trades Institute in Philadelphia, where the president spoke in March.

As Mr. Biden campaigns for re-election, he is trying to bridge an educational divide that is reshaping the American political landscape. Even though both political parties portray education as crucial for advancement and opportunity, college-educated voters are now more likely to identify as Democrats, while those without college degrees are more likely to support Republicans.

That increasingly clear split has enormous implications for Mr. Biden as he tries to expand the coalition of voters that sent him to the White House in the first place. In 2020, Mr. Biden won 61 percent of college graduates, but only 45 percent of voters without a four-year college degree -- and just 33 percent of white voters without a four-year degree.

''The Democratic Party has become a cosmopolitan, college-educated party even though it's a party that considers itself a party of working people,'' said David Axelrod, a top adviser to former President Barack Obama.

Mr. Axelrod added that the perception that Wall Street had been bailed out during the 2008 recession while the middle class was left to struggle deepened the fissure between Democrats and blue-collar workers who did not attend college.

The election of Donald J. Trump, who harnessed many of those grievances for political gain, solidified the trend.

''There's a sense among ***working-class*** voters, and not just white ***working-class*** voters, that the party doesn't relate to them or looks down on people who work with their hands or work with their backs or do things that don't require college education,'' Mr. Axelrod said.

Now, in speeches around the country, Mr. Biden rarely speaks about his signature piece of legislation, a $1 trillion infrastructure bill, without also emphasizing that it will lead to trade apprenticeships and, ultimately, union jobs.

''Let's offer every American a path to a good career whether they go to college or not, like the path you started here,'' Mr. Biden said at the trades institute, referring to its apprenticeship program.

The White House says apprenticeship programs, which typically combine some classroom learning with paid on-the-job experience, are crucial to overcoming a tight labor market and ensuring that there is a sufficient work force to turn the president's sprawling spending plan into roads, bridges and electric vehicle chargers.

Mr. Biden has offered incentives for creating apprenticeships, with hundreds of millions of dollars in federal grants for states that expand such programs.

''Biden is the first president that's reducing the need to get a college degree since World War II,'' said Douglas Brinkley, a presidential historian.

Mr. Biden's approach is a shift from previous Democratic administrations, which were far more focused on college as a path to higher pay and advancement. Mr. Obama, during his first joint session of Congress, said that the United States should ''once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world.''

Mr. Obama's wife, Michelle Obama, started a campaign encouraging Americans to go to college, at one point suggesting in a satirical video that life without higher education was akin to watching painting dry.

Democrats have long walked a careful line on the issue. Mr. Biden has been a champion of higher education, particularly community colleges, and one of his most ambitious proposals as president was a $400 billion program to forgive up to $20,000 in student loan debt for individuals who earn under $125,000 a year. Republicans have portrayed that proposal as a giveaway for elites.

Mitch Landrieu, the president's infrastructure coordinator, said Mr. Biden had always believed college was important, but ''it is absolutely not the only way to build an economy.''

''He sees that men and women like that have been left behind for a long time,'' Mr. Landrieu said of people without college degrees. ''They've always been part of the Democratic Party. It's not until recently that's changed.''

The shift coincides with a stark political reality.

The battleground states that voted for the winning candidate in both 2016 and 2020 rank roughly in the middle on higher-education levels, which means that Mr. Biden's effort to appeal to those without a degree could make a real difference in 2024, according to Doug Sosnik, a former senior adviser to President Bill Clinton.

''You need to both try to mitigate losses with noncollege voters and at the same time try to exploit the advantage in those states with educated voters,'' Mr. Sosnik said. ''You can't rely on the diploma divide solely to win. But it's part of the formula.''

A similar dynamic is playing out nationwide.

Gov. Josh Shapiro, Democrat of Pennsylvania, released campaign ads focused on expanding apprenticeships and removing requirements for college degrees for thousands of state government jobs -- a pledge he made good on when he entered office. His fellow Democratic governor in New Jersey has also removed similar degree requirements, as have Republicans in Maryland, Alaska and Utah.

Gov. Spencer Cox, Republican of Utah, said he was not only hoping to address a stigma attached to those who do not attend college but also appease employers increasingly anxious about persistent worker shortages.

''We can't do any of this stuff if we don't have a labor force,'' Mr. Cox said.

Christopher Montague, 29, an Air Force veteran from the Philadelphia suburbs, who trained as an apprentice in drywall instead of going to college, said he had noticed an ''awakening'' by politicians on the upside of pursuing training in trades.

''There is money in working with your hands,'' he said.

At the Finishing Trades Institute in Philadelphia, instructors say they have noticed an increase in demand. Drew Heverly, an industrial painting instructor, said he typically had 10 apprentices working on construction projects in ''a good year.''

This year, he has already sent nearly 40 apprentices to work on projects in Philadelphia that are partially funded by Mr. Biden's infrastructure package.

''We've definitely seen the ramp-up and the need for manpower,'' Mr. Heverly said.

The prospect of pursuing an education in trade while earning money on projects has also gained momentum among high school students, according to the Finishing Trades Institute's recruitment coordinator, Tureka Dixon. Community colleges in the area are even reaching out to see if they can form joint partnerships to train students on trade.

''Whether it's cranes, high-rise buildings, bridges, that is trade work,'' Ms. Dixon said as the apprentices in hard hats listened to a lesson on lead removals. ''That is physical labor. That is the country, so I think people need to consider it more.''

Mark Smith, 30, who is training as an apprentice at the institute, said learning a trade was not a fallback position for him -- it was his preferred career.

''School wasn't for me,'' Mr. Smith said. ''I did the Marine Corps and then I started right in this. For me it was a waste of money.''

Mr. Wissman, who has never voted in a presidential election and identifies as an independent, said he was not sure yet if the recognition from the White House would move him to finally vote in the 2024 election.

''I want in office whoever is going to help me put food on my table,'' said Mr. Wissman, whose girlfriend is pregnant with their second child. ''At the end of the day, that's all it's going to come down to.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/15/us/politics/biden-****working-class****-voters.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/15/us/politics/biden-working-class-voters.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: The president has been advocating trade apprenticeships. (PHOTOGRAPH BY RACHEL WISNIEWSKI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A1)

In my 31 years, it was always, 'You gotta go to college if you want a job,''' said Tyler Wissman, above, third from left, in training at the Finishing Trades Institute in Philadelphia. Below right, safety training at the institute, where President Biden spoke in March. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY RACHEL WISNIEWSKI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A19) This article appeared in print on page A1, A19.

**Load-Date:** May 16, 2023

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[***J.D. Vance on Where He'd Take the Republican Party***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C8F-MT11-DXY4-X2XV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 16, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section SR; Column 0; Sunday Review Desk; Pg. 5; ROSS DOUTHAT

**Length:** 5755 words

**Byline:** By Ross Douthat

**Body**

In 2016, J.D. Vance's best-selling memoir, ''Hillbilly Elegy,'' made him one of America's leading interpreters of Trumpism, offering a personal narrative of populism's origins in ***working-class*** disarray.

In 2024, as a first-term United States senator from Ohio, Vance is arguably America's leading Trumpist: a staunch ally of Donald Trump, a leading critic of the establishment consensus (or what remains of it) in both foreign and domestic politics, a potential vice-presidential candidate and a likely populist agenda-setter for a second Trump term.

The Vance of eight years ago was read with appreciation and gratitude by Trump opponents looking for a window into populism. The Vance of today is despised and feared by many of the same kind of people. His transformation is one of the most striking political stories of the Trump era, and one that's likely to influence Republican politics even after Trump is gone.

I've known Vance since before he assumed either of these identities. For this conversation, I spoke to him about how he sees his own evolution, his relationship to the American elite and to Trump himself, his views on populist economics and America's support for Ukraine. He also offered a combative (and, to my mind, fundamentally unsupported and unpersuasive) defense of Trump's conduct after the 2020 election. Our conversation has been edited for length and clarity.

1. After 'Hillbilly Elegy'

J.D., the first time I realized that ''Hillbilly Elegy,'' was going to be a phenomenon was in August 2016. I was in Rockland, Maine, in a cozy little tourist bookstore. I tried to buy the book for my wife, and they said, ''Oh, we had four or five copies and they all sold out in the last week.''

Looking back, almost certainly most of the people who bought the book in that little bookstore were educated liberals baffled by the Donald Trump phenomenon, who liked your book not just for its literary merits but also because they felt like here was a guy who was sympathetic to people voting for Trump but who was also at that time vehemently opposed to him.

So I thought it would be interesting for you to imagine yourself talking to a big ''Hillbilly Elegy'' fan from 2016, and talk him through how your perspective has changed.

There was one really good thing about ''Hillbilly Elegy,'' meaning the response to it: People were actually genuinely trying to understand something about a part of the country they didn't understand. But there was something that wasn't so good, which is that people were looking for some interpretive lens for Trump's voters that never really asked them to challenge their priors or to rethink what they felt about those people. And I realized that I was being used as this whisperer of a phenomenon that some people really did want to understand but some people didn't. And the more that I felt like, not an explainer and a defender, but part of what I thought was wrong about the liberal establishment, the more that I felt this need to go very strongly away from it.

Let me give you one story: In 2018, I was invited to an event hosted by the Business Roundtable, an organization of C.E.O.s. Many people there I like and admire; many people there who hate my guts ----

Not back then.

Not back then; everybody loved me back then. But I was seated next to the C.E.O. of one of the largest hotel chains in the world at dinner. He was almost a caricature of a business executive, complaining about how he was forced to pay his workers higher wages.

He said: ''The labor market is super tight. What Trump has done at the border has completely forced me to change the way that I interact with my employees.'' And then he pivoted to me: ''Well, you understand this as well as anybody. These people just need to get off their asses, come to work and do their job. And now, because we can't hire immigrants, or as many immigrants, we've got to hire these people at higher wages.''

The fact that this guy saw me as sympathetic to his problem, and not the problem of the workers, made me realize that I'm on a train that has its own momentum and I have to get off this train, or I'm going to wake up in 10 years and really hate everything that I've become. And so I decided to get off that train, and I felt like the only way that I could do that was, in some ways, alienating and offending people who liked my book.

Did your perspective on, let's say, elite liberals change more in that time, or did your perspective on anti-Trump, business-class Republicans change more?

Oh, both. I think it's very hard to say which group of people I felt more strongly about. I literally grew up in a family where my grandmother was negotiating with the Meals on Wheels person to give her more food so that both of us could have something to eat. And I was going to the Sun Valley billionaires boot camp. My life had completely transformed.

The people on the left, I would say, whose politics I'm open to -- it's the Bernie Bros. But generally, center-left liberals who are doing very well, and center-right conservatives who are doing very well, have an incredible blind spot about how much their success is built on a system that is not serving people who they should be serving.

So you reach a point where you feel like you don't want to be on the same side as, let's say, the non-Sanders voting fans of your book. How do you go from there to being actively pro-Trump?

I was confronted with the reality that part of the reason the anti-Trump conservatives hated Donald Trump was that he represented a threat to a way of doing things in this country that has been very good for them.

Go back to the election in 2016. If you're so inclined, you can say, ''Well, Trump's not really making a criticism of the foreign policy consensus in Washington, D.C. Here's this thing that he said in 2003 that suggested that he supports invading Iraq -- he's just using this now that it's politically useful.'' I made that argument myself. But the more complete truth is that the country never really litigated the mistakes of the bipartisan consensus until Donald Trump came along, and on the right, nobody had litigated the failures of George W. Bush until Donald Trump came along.

Like a lot of other elite conservatives and elite liberals, I allowed myself to focus so much on the stylistic element of Trump that I completely ignored the way in which he substantively was offering something very different on foreign policy, on trade, on immigration.

You voted for Trump in 2020?

I did.

For a lot of Republicans I know, the process of becoming a Trump supporter was different. It was not about deciding that they could live with Trump's persona because they agreed with his populist critique. It was more that they decided that Trump's liberal opponents were so terrible in various ways that they needed to support Trump. So you had people who talk about the Kavanaugh hearings as a radicalizing point, or the rise of wokeness. I'm curious what you think about that.

This is why I say it's hard to reconstruct this stuff, it's so gradual. My wife worked for Kavanaugh, loved the guy -- kind of a dork. Never believed these stories. You start looking around and say, ''If they can do this to him, can they just do this to any of us?'' An incredible campaign of character assassination. I think that [pause; sigh] -- I'm trying to make this somewhat appealing to Times readers because probably a lot of them assume Kavanaugh is guilty.

If you hadn't known him, you think you would've been more open to that idea?

I don't know. Maybe. The thing that I kept thinking about liberalism in 2019 and 2020 is that these guys have all read Carl Schmitt -- there's no law, there's just power. And the goal here is to get back in power. Seemed true in the Kavanaugh thing, seemed true in the Black Lives Matter moment, where. ... I'm thinking about how to put this.

I think most of us who are generally socially aware have a voice in our head that says: ''You shouldn't say this; you should try to say that. Maybe you believe this, but you should try to put it a little bit more diplomatically.'' And in 2020 that voice had become absolutely tyrannical. There was nothing you were allowed to say. Offending someone was an act of violence. I think a lot of us just said: ''We're done with this. We're not playing this game, and we refuse to be policed in what we think and what we say.''

Then you recognized that a lot of the pushback to Trump was that kind of social pressure. ''You like Donald Trump? But he said these things, and he said that thing.'' I saw this in my book tour in 2016. If you even acknowledged that there were reasonable things that Donald Trump was saying, there was this complete overreaction. And I think that some of us, me included, started to ask ourselves -- there's a voice in your head that tells you what you're allowed to say and who you're allowed to vote for. It was clearly deranged in 2020. Well, maybe it was deranged in 2016, too?

Is there anything you've said that you regret, in the course of refusing to be policed?

There are a ton of things I can point to where I can say, ''I wish I struck this balance a little bit differently,'' but I think that the real danger in American society is not unfiltering yourself, it's filtering yourself.

Let me put the question differently. One interpretation of why conservatives trust Trump is that by saying things that are offensive to the conventions of elite liberalism, he's effectively burning his ships. He can never just go back to being host of ''The Apprentice.'' And one interpretation of your Senate campaign was that you were consciously doing the same thing, that you were trying to piss liberals off to make yourself seem more trustworthy to Republican voters. Did you think about it that way?

I didn't think about it quite that way, but before I ran, I had this conversation with myself and my wife that if my underlying critique is correct, there's no way to run the campaign without burning bridges. You have to self-consciously accept that previous friends of yours are going to think you're a bad person. Famously, my first TV ad ----

Why don't you describe that ad?

Most TV ads are written by consultants; this was written by me. I picked up on the campaign trail that there was a strong undercurrent of people who cared about immigration, who didn't like being called racist for it, and so I decided to do a direct-to-camera ad: ''Are you racist? Do you hate Mexicans?'' And then I go into: ''No, we're not. This is why we care about the border; this is why I care about the border.'' And that ad was very effective. Again, am I trying to trigger the libs by doing that? No. But am I consciously not allowing myself to be filtered by them? Absolutely.

When did you decide that you actually like Donald Trump?

I first met Trump in 2021. One of the stories he told me was about how some of our generals were changing the timings of troop redeployments in the Middle East so that they could tell him that the troop levels were coming down when in reality they were just changing the way in which troop levels jump up and down in the short term.

[Interviewer's note: In a follow-up, Vance cited remarks by Trump's departing Syria envoy, James Jeffrey, in 2020, that ''we were always playing shell games to not make clear to our leadership how many troops we had there,'' as partial confirmation of the story that the former president had relayed.]

The media has this view of Trump as motivated entirely by personal grievance, and the thing he talked the most about -- this was not long after Jan. 6 -- was ''I'm the president, and I told the generals to do something, and they didn't do it.'' And I was like, OK, this guy's deeper than I'd given him credit for. And also I was deeply offended by this. Talk about a threat to democracy -- the generals not listening to the president of the United States about matters like troop redeployment.

But just personally, I like him. At one point during my election, some negative story had come out, and I get a phone call out of the blue. ''Hey, just wanted to let you know you're doing a good job. You always hear from the most hateful voices, but there's a lot of love out there. Don't forget there's a lot of love out there. Just stay with it.'' He's much more complex than the media gives him credit for. People think that this guy is motivated entirely by personal grievance and by power, and that he just wants to become president so that he can destroy American democracy. That's not at all who he is.

2. Can Economic Populism Work?

I want to come back to the democracy question, but first let's talk about policy. Do you think, generally, that there is a comprehensive populist economic agenda?

Well, I have one. The main thrust of the postwar American order of globalization has involved relying more and more on cheaper labor. The trade issue and the immigration issue are two sides of the same coin: The trade issue is cheaper labor overseas; the immigration issue is cheaper labor at home, which applies upward pressure on a whole host of services, from hospital services to housing and so forth.

The populist vision, at least as it exists in my head, is an inversion of that: applying as much upward pressure on wages and as much downward pressure on the services that the people use as possible. We've had far too little innovation over the last 40 years, and far too much labor substitution. This is why I think the economics profession is fundamentally wrong about both immigration and about tariffs. Yes, tariffs can apply upward pricing pressure on various things -- though I think it's massively overstated -- but when you are forced to do more with your domestic labor force, you have all of these positive dynamic effects.

It's a classic formulation: You raise the minimum wage to $20 an hour, and you will sometimes hear libertarians say this is a bad thing. ''Well, isn't McDonald's just going to replace some of the workers with kiosks?'' That's a good thing, because then the workers who are still there are going to make higher wages; the kiosks will perform a useful function; and that's the kind of rising tide that actually lifts all boats. What is not good is you replace the McDonald's worker from Middletown, Ohio, who makes $17 an hour with an immigrant who makes $15 an hour. And that is, I think, the main thrust of elite liberalism, whether people acknowledge it or not.

Or the hotels example. If you cannot hire illegal migrants to staff your hotels, then you have to go to one of the seven million prime-age American men who are out of the labor force and find some way to re-engage them. It's amazing: To this day, I hear from Republican donors, ''Oh, I'll support you because you're Republican, but you're not pro-business.'' Well, what do you mean I'm not pro-business? I actually really agree with the classic libertarian critique of the regulatory regime. ''But we can't run our business unless we have some of these immigrants coming over, because we can't find people who are going to do the job.'' My response is that there are people who would do those jobs if the incentives were there.

The first Trump term did raise wages at the bottom. But Trump ran the economy hot -- low interest rates, low taxes -- and we're in a different landscape now, where policymakers seem like they're stuck choosing between high interest rates, spending cuts and tax increases. I'm curious how you think a populist agenda looks different now.

You can't just run the economy at massive structural deficits indefinitely. But I also think there's a lot you can do on the regulatory side -- make building nuclear facilities easier, make building natural gas pipelines easier, make building housing easier -- that doesn't cost money and in fact brings in money.

But a nonpopulist Republican would talk a lot more about fiscal discipline. And regardless of your long-term structural plan for the economy, Social Security is going to need some kind of adjustment. The populist move has been to rule out the idea of cutting entitlement spending. But can populists ever raise taxes?

Well, as the libertarians always say, a tariff is a tax. [laughs]

That's an answer.

I just think the financial problems here are downstream of much deeper problems. One way of understanding the Social Security problem is, old people can't work, young people can, babies can't. So people at a certain age support the babies and the old people. And typically in our society, that's people between the ages of 18 and 65. If the argument here is we have to cut Social Security, then what you're effectively saying is we just have to privatize what is currently a public problem of who pays for the older generation. And I don't know why people think that you solve many problems by taking a bunch of elderly people and saying, ''You're on your own.''

OK, but in lieu of privatizing the problem, Social Security's going to need more money. Is the Vance position that the money comes from tariffs?

OK, take those seven million prime-age men not in the labor force. Those people are supported, very often, by public resources. You shift millions of those men from not working to working; you increase wages across the board; you increase tariffs; and I think that you buy yourself a whole hell of a lot more than the nine or 10 years that the actuaries say that we have. You get more revenue, yes, from tariffs, but from more people being in the labor force, from higher productivity growth, from higher wages, from transitioning young people who are not working into the work force.

Could you get some money by raising taxes on the rich guy who complained to you about his workers?

Sure. I'm not philosophically against raising taxes on anybody. But you have to ask yourself, what are the taxes that we're raising, and where are they coming from? Let's just say you raise the marginal rate to 42 percent. How much revenue does that actually raise?

Raising middle-class taxes -- I don't like that idea for obvious reasons. You can get some revenue out of raising taxes on wealthy Americans, but there's no way that you can run an economy at a structural growth rate of around 1 percent with demographics that are getting worse and worse and worse and solve the problem by taxing rich people. You have to fix the underlying issue.

3. How to Deal With China and Russia

How would you describe your foreign policy perspective?

Not as ''Putin first,'' as maybe your readers would say ----

I asked how you would describe it.

I'm very self-aware, Ross. Many flaws, that's not one of them. The term ''realist'' gets thrown around a lot, and I'd say there are three pillars to realism in the 21st century: The first is that moralisms about ''This country is good,'' ''This country is bad'' are largely useless, and we should be dealing with other countries based on whether they're good or bad for America's interests. That doesn't mean you have a complete moral blind spot, but it means that you have to be honest about the countries that you're dealing with, and there's a complete failure to do that with most of our foreign policy establishment in this country.

No. 2 is the most important lesson of World War II, that we seem to have forgotten: that military power is downstream of industrial power. We are still, right now, the world's military superpower, largely because of our industrial might from the '80s and '90s. But China is a more powerful country industrially than we are, which means they will have a more powerful military in 20 years.

And No. 3 is acknowledging that we're in a multipolar world, and we need allies to step up in big ways so that we can focus on East Asia, which is where our most significant competitor is for the next 20 or 30 years.

Should we defend Taiwan if it's attacked?

Our policy effectively is one of strategic ambiguity. I think that we should make it as hard as possible for China to take Taiwan in the first place, and the honest answer is we'll figure out what we do if they attack. The thing that we can control now is making it costly for them to invade Taiwan, and we're not doing that because we're sending all the damn weapons to Ukraine and not Taiwan.

Ukraine.

Yeah.

In the opinion piece you wrote for us, you were very critical of the aid that we were giving to Ukraine. But at the end of the piece, you seemed open to the idea of supporting Ukraine in a defensive posture.

From a certain perspective, that is what the Biden administration has done. Yes, they supported two Ukrainian counteroffensives, one of which went well and one of which did not. But relative to more hawkish voices, including in your own party, they have tried to avoid direct confrontation with Russia. So I'm curious what you think has been so wrong with their strategy. I know you think we shouldn't have encouraged the recent counteroffensive ----

That's the most important divergence between me and the Biden administration. I thought the counteroffensive would be a disaster, that we were motivated by moralism and not enough by strategic thinking. The Russians had really adjusted in a lot of profound ways. It was extremely obvious, when you talked to our military leadership in classified settings, they were exceedingly skeptical that the Ukrainians would achieve any strategic breakthrough. OK, why are we doing this then?

Is there a more minimalist J.D. Vance plan that would involve limited defensive support for Ukraine as part of a path to armistice?

What I would like to do, and what I think fundamentally is achievable here with American leadership -- but you never know till you have the conversation -- is you freeze the territorial lines somewhere close to where they are right now. That's No. 1. No. 2 is you guarantee both Kyiv's independence but also its neutrality. It's the fundamental thing the Russians have asked from the beginning. I'm not naïve here. I think the Russians have asked for a lot of things dishonestly, but neutrality is clearly something that they see as existential for them. And then three, there's going to have to be some American security assistance over the long term. I think those three things are certainly achievable, yes.

The critique of you and everyone else who opposed the recent appropriation was that if you can't demonstrate a durable commitment to Ukraine, then Russia doesn't have any incentive to make peace. If the Russians think they're winning, how do you give Putin an incentive to make a deal if you're cutting funding?

The leverage that we have over the Russians is not, in my view, that we can indefinitely keep the Ukrainians in a successful defensive posture. Let me be clear about this: There is no way with our capacity and what Russia has been doing that we can hold off the Russians indefinitely.

There are two big points of leverage that we have. One, they could take over Ukraine, but they can't govern Ukraine. We're talking about multiple hundreds of thousands of troops to govern the country effectively as a Russian subsidiary. The second point of leverage that we have is a war economy has its own internal momentum. They're now at 7 percent of G.D.P. being spent on defense. They have re-engineered an economy around fighting a war instead of around improving the lives of your people. That has some real problems over the long term.

By the way, it's not in our interest, either, for the Russians to have a war economy for the next five years, because then they're going to be more militaristic and aggressive than they otherwise would be.

You agree it's not in our interest right now for the Russians to roll through the rest of Ukraine?

No, it is not in our interest.

4. The 2020 election and Jan. 6

Let's go back to Trump. You used the term ''stylistic'' to describe the things you didn't like about Trump in 2016. Obviously, people who oppose Trump think that style and substance are intertwined, and that Trumpism is a substantive threat to democratic norms. That argument got a really big boost on the 6th of January, 2021. So, first, what's your take on the legitimacy of the 2020 election?

First of all, grant that there is overlap between style and substance. I think this is actually, in the foreign policy arena especially, a strength of Trump, and not a weakness. Trump is, as his detractors and his supporters would say, unpredictable. He is extremely self-aware of that perception, and without revealing state secrets, I am 100 percent certain that unpredictability redounded to the benefit of the United States.

I have two basic critiques of the 2020 election, and then I have a critique of the reaction to what Trump did.

My actual critique starts with the Molly Ball article in 2021 -- that felt like bragging. I put that article in front of the average Trump-fan Republican voter in my hometown, and they say, ''That is an illegitimate election.''

[Interviewer's note: Vance is referencing Ball's post-election Time magazine feature detailing the attempts to ''fortify'' the 2020 election against Trumpian malfeasance and pandemic disruptions, efforts that Ball described as ''a well-funded cabal of powerful people, ranging across industries and ideologies, working together behind the scenes to influence perceptions, change rules and laws, steer media coverage and control the flow of information.'']

The argument is basically that there were a host of institutional actors, technology companies, various forms of censorship, that mobilized in 2020 in a way that they hadn't in 2016. There was tech censorship. People were primed to push back against any October surprises.

And look, October surprises are part of American democracy, and whether you think Hunter Biden is as major an issue as I do or disagree, in American democracy you let the voters decide.

That was a way in which the basic democratic will of America was obstructed. I don't see any reason to think that Dominion voting machines switched ballots, but there was a breakdown in democratic will.

Point No. 2 is that the rules of the game were changed in the middle. When does a ballot have to be mailed in Pennsylvania to count under the election rules? That was changed. That was changed for Covid reasons, in a way that partially is the fault of the Republican National Committee -- we weren't prepared for it, Democrats were, and they took advantage of it.

And this gets to my third point, the critique of people like me as violating some sacred norm of American democracy. I never could get fired up about this. I think the election in 1960 was stolen. The election of 2000 had some issues. I think that challenging elections and questioning the legitimacy of elections is actually part of the democratic process. When Trump says the election was stolen, and people say he was wrong, I say, ''Fine, we can argue about that.'' When they say, ''He's threatening the foundation of American society,'' I can't help but roll my eyes.

OK, but Donald Trump was president of the United States while those changes to voting rules were being made. And Rudy Giuliani was not standing up complaining about, say, Mark Zuckerberg's funding for get-out-the-vote efforts. They went for the straight-up voter fraud narratives, which yielded the idea that Mike Pence was going to somehow send this back to the states to be relitigated, which yielded Jan. 6. What was the point of all that? Fine, you can challenge the sacred norms of democracy, but the way they were challenged was, by your own argument, paranoid and probably wrong.

Well, if you want me to defend Sidney Powell and Jenna Ellis in the aftermath of the 2020 election, they made a lot of arguments I disagreed with. If the criticism is, when Tucker Carlson called me in July and said, ''Dude, I think they're going to steal the election over a lot of these changed balloting rules,'' the R.N.C. should've been mobilizing and responding to that, and they failed, and that was a huge indictment of the R.N.C. -- then yeah, absolutely, I agree with that.

But once that failed, did it make any sense to use the office of the vice presidency to shift the outcome of the election?

The vice-presidential thing -- look, here's what this would've looked like if you really wanted to do this. You would've actually tried to go to the states that had problems; you would try to marshal alternative slates of electors, like they did in the election of 1876. And then you have to actually prosecute that case; you have to make an argument to the American people.

Let's say you were a Republican legislator in Pennsylvania. Do you think it would have been a good idea to say, ''Under the rules of the election, Joe Biden won the most votes, but we're going to vote to send a slate of Trump electors because Twitter censored the Hunter Biden story.''

Do I think that it would have been an ultimately effective argument?

No, do you think it would have been a good argument?

I think the entire post-2020 thing would have gone a lot better if there had actually been an effort to provide alternative slates of electors and to force us to have that debate. I think it would've been a much better thing for the country. Do I think Joe Biden would still be president right now? Yeah, probably. But at least we would have had a debate. And instead what we had was the Jenna Ellis legal clown show and no real debate about the election. And now every time we bring it up, it's like, ''Well, yeah, they litigated all these things.'' No, you can't litigate these things judicially; you have to litigate them politically. And we never had a real political debate about the 2020 election.

You mentioned the 1876 election. The 1876 election was effectively a constitutional crisis, right?

Sure. It was absolutely a constitutional crisis.

For those of us who don't think that Donald Trump is about to become a dictator, it still seems like he has an appetite for constitutional crisis. Pursuing the Pence strategy might not have ended with Trump back in the White House. But it would have pushed America into a crisis whose only point would be to satisfy either the voters whose concerns you describe, or Trump himself.

Even under a circumstance where the alternative-electors thing works, and he's president again, he would have served four years and retired and enjoyed his life and played golf. The idea that this sets off a sequence where Donald Trump becomes the dictator of America is completely preposterous. He was using the constitutional procedures. Now, your argument is that he was using them ineffectively, or maybe even illegitimately, but he was trying to take a constitutional process to its natural conclusion.

My argument is that he was using them recklessly, without concern for the effect on the body politic of him becoming president because he got state legislatures to vote in alternate slates of electors.

My counterargument to that is that what was reckless was the effort to try to take this very legitimate grievance over our most fundamental democratic act as a people, and completely suppress concerns about it.

This is maybe where you think I've just jumped the shark, but if there's a constitutional crisis I'm worried about, it's not Donald Trump using a process that exists in our Constitution. It's that he was the commander in chief and ordered the military to do something and the military didn't.

Why can't it be both? Why can't you say, ''It was wrong the way the military and the administrative state behaved under Trump, and it also would've been a really, really bad idea for Mike Pence to intervene on Jan. 6''?

If the conservative response to this is to say ''both sides are bad,'' and the liberal response to this is to say ''it's fine when my side does it, and it's bad when the other side does it,'' the liberals will always win the argument in this country. I really don't believe this is about some deep principle; this is about power.

Don't you think that doing the right thing sometimes enhances your power? If Trump had walked away, if he hadn't spent so much time pressuring Pence, don't you think he might be ahead in the polls by more right now?

I want to be clear: I'm not conceding the premise that Trump was engaged in something fundamentally bad here. But maybe you're right that if Trump had just gotten into the helicopter and ridden off, that he would be in a better position today. Maybe. But an entire section of our democratic republic would've had their concerns ignored.

There are meaningful improvements that have been made on election integrity, like the Georgia voter ID law, which would never have happened without this massive public debate. And I think it would've been extraordinarily disappointing to a whole host of people that I care a lot about if Trump had just taken it. In his very unique way, he gave voice to a series of concerns.

But there was also a riot in the midst of the peaceful transfer of power. The argument that you're making, I could've imagined myself making up till ----

On Jan. 5.

Exactly. But it just seems like this is a case where, with Trump, you turn the dial and -- even if you think dial-turning is a good way to intimidate Putin or Kim Jong-un -- sometimes you turn it too far.

I think people really, really underrate the sense to which there is palpable and actionable frustration, and I'm always surprised that their assumption appears to be that Trump is the worst, rather than the best, expression of that frustration. Or at least, one of the better in the whole host of possibilities. We're in this moment where people are really pissed off, and I think for legitimate reasons. And I don't understand, looking at the country that we have right now, and saying, ''The riot on January the 6th was the worst expression of this.''

If Donald Trump asked you to be his running mate, would you accept?

I'll give you the stock answer: I've never talked about it with him, which is genuine. I don't get the sense that he's focused on it. If he asked me, certainly I would be interested, but I'm trying not to think too much about it until he actually asks.

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**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFF DEAN/ASSOCIATED PRESS) This article appeared in print on page SR5.

**Load-Date:** June 16, 2024

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[***U.A.W. Threatens Strikes at More Plants***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:696P-X6J1-JBG3-60BG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 19, 2023 Tuesday 16:41 EST

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**Section:** BUSINESS; economy

**Length:** 599 words

**Byline:** Neal E. Boudette

**Highlight:** The United Auto Workers union said workers would walk out of more plants on Friday if it didn’t make progress in talks with General Motors, Ford and Stellantis.

**Body**

The United Auto Workers union said workers would walk out of more plants on Friday if it didn’t make progress in talks with General Motors, Ford and Stellantis.

The United Auto Workers said on Tuesday that the union would expand its strike against three U.S. automakers on Friday if it was unable to make substantial progress in contract talks with them.

Nearly 13,000 U.A.W. members walked off the assembly lines at three plants last Friday, one each at the three companies — General Motors, Ford Motor and Stellantis, the parent of Chrysler. The union has demanded a 40 percent wage increase over four years, better benefits and other changes. The automakers, which are based in or have a big presence in Michigan, have offered raises of about half as much.

In a video posted on Facebook on Tuesday, the union’s new president, Shawn Fain, said workers could walk out of more plants at the end of this week.

“If we don’t see serious progress to noon Friday, Sept. 22, more locals will be called on to stand up and go on strike,” he said. “We’re going to keep hitting the companies where we need to.”

Separately on Tuesday, Mr. Fain responded to criticism by former President Donald J. Trump, who is [*expected to visit the Detroit area next week*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/18/us/politics/trump-detroit-debate.html).

“Every fiber of our union is being poured into fighting the billionaire class and an economy that enriched people like Donald Trump at the expense of workers,” Mr. Fain said. “We can’t keep electing billionaires and millionaires that don’t have any understanding of what it is like to live paycheck to paycheck and struggle to get by and expecting them to solve the problems of the ***working class***.”

In an interview on NBC’s “Meet the Press” last weekend, Mr. Trump said Mr. Fain and the union were “failing” workers in the shift to electric vehicles that has been championed by President Biden.

“The autoworkers are being sold down the river by their leadership,” he said, adding: “All of these cars are going to be made in China. The electric cars, automatically, are going to be made in China.”

Mr. Biden has expressed support for the striking workers, although the U.A.W. has not endorsed his re-election thus far. The union has long backed Democratic presidential candidates, but some of its members supported Mr. Trump in the last two elections.

The union and the companies, which are engaged in three separate negotiations, remain far apart. The companies have offered raises of about 20 percent, but Mr. Fain has said that doesn’t go far enough to make up for the impact of inflation and concessions the union made over the last 15 years.

The union also wants pensions to cover more workers, company-paid health care for retirees, shorter working hours and measures that make it harder for the companies to close plants in the United States. The automakers have rejected most of those other demands.

In statements and interviews, auto executives have said meeting all of the union’s demands would put them at a severe competitive disadvantage to nonunion plants operated by Tesla and foreign automakers such as Toyota and Volkswagen. G.M., Ford and Stellantis already have higher labor costs than most nonunion car companies.

The three automakers have said they cannot afford substantial raises and new benefits because they are investing tens of billions of dollars to develop electric vehicles and build battery plants.

PHOTO: The United Auto Workers union said it would expand its strike to more plants on Friday if negotiations with automakers did not yield sufficient progress. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Cydni Elledge for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** September 19, 2023

**End of Document**



[***From Poor in Nigeria To the Global Stage***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68DG-0KF1-DXY4-X4WH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 7, 2023 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. 3

**Length:** 934 words

**Byline:** By Elizabeth A. Harris

**Body**

With a first novel that chronicles a love affair between two young men, 23-year-old Ani Kayode Somtochukwu asserts a commitment to ''queer resistance.''

Ani Kayode Somtochukwu wrote his first novel without the benefit of the internet or even a computer. He scratched it out by hand on large white notepads, then transferred it, tap by tap, onto his cellphone.

Then he sold it to a major publisher.

That novel, ''And Then He Sang a Lullaby,'' a love story about two young men in Nigeria, will be published June 6 by a new imprint at Grove Atlantic, launched by the writer and social commentator Roxane Gay. Gay has said she plans to elevate writers from outside the usual publishing pipelines, and Ani (in Nigeria, the family name often comes first) is the imprint's first author: a queer Nigerian man from a ***working-class*** background, whose manuscript, submitted without an agent, came from the slush pile.

Ani is also 23, quick to smile, quick to laugh, and he apologizes for making the rest of us feel bad about ourselves.

''He is both wise beyond his years and also charmingly 23,'' Gay said. ''You can tell that even though he is living in Nigeria, where it is challenging to be gay, he is living a vibrant life.''

Ani grew up in Enugu, the second of five children born to a schoolteacher and a storekeeper who sold stationery and gift cards at a market stall. He has always been a writer, scribbling stories and poems that he shared with his siblings and friends, but he never considered it a possible career, instead studying applied biology and biotechnology in school. Today, he lives in Lagos, where he moved for a job at the Nigerian Institute of Medical Research.

''There are certain class backgrounds you grow up in where, when you think of your career, you have to stick with what's very practical,'' he said. ''Being a musician, for instance, or being a dancer, being a writer -- those are things you are allowed to enjoy, but you don't really think of them as a career.''

As it's turned out, however, ''writing has taken me out of poverty,'' he said. Today it's his full-time job.

''And Then He Sang a Lullaby'' centers on two very different young men who meet and fall in love in college. August is wealthy, athletic and passes for straight, while Segun is flamboyant, political, ***working-class*** and frequently targeted -- same-sex relationships are illegal in Nigeria. The novel explores how people respond differently to homophobia, and how love is possible even under such difficult circumstances.

''It is a novel about queer love and about queer pain,'' Ani said. ''But maybe most importantly, it's about queer resistance.''

Ani considers himself an activist first, and says his writing is in service of that work. He describes organizing campaigns in support of L.G.B.T.Q. rights and helping to raise money to buy the freedom of friends and strangers who have been kidnapped and held for ransom because they are gay or trans.

He has also been targeted: assaulted twice, he said, detained by the police and threatened many times. After a protest in Nigeria's capital against legislation that would have sent people to jail for wearing clothing that didn't traditionally align with the gender assigned to them at birth, Ani said he had to leave the city suddenly when commenters on social media said he and others involved should be killed.

''He came out so early in a very dangerous country, and I must say, it's really a miracle that he got to this point,'' said one of his sisters, Ani Uzoamaka Chinedu. ''Kayode is one lucky child.''

While studying biology in college, he also joined a writers' club. Later he learned on its group chat that Gay's imprint was accepting submissions, and sent in a few chapters.

Gay said she was drawn not only by the book's message but by the strength of Ani's voice. By the time he reached out to Emma Shercliff, the woman who would become his agent, Ani already had an offer.

Most traditional publishing houses require that submissions come from agents, rather than directly from authors to editors, and it's rare for a book deal to get done any other way. It is a practical consideration, because submissions from agents have already been vetted. But getting an agent is itself a steep hill to climb, so this setup means that many authors, even if their work is excellent, may not be able to get a manuscript in front of an editor.

When Gay first opened her imprint, with an announcement that she would accept unagented submissions, she was receiving 200 or 300 of those manuscripts each month.

''Does it require a lot of effort? Yes it does, and I've had to hire people to help me get through the queue,'' she said. ''But I'm happy to do it if it means providing that opportunity.''

The advance from selling the book allowed Ani to move into an apartment by himself for the first time, with a quiet place to write. His sister said he also gave some money to his father to support the family. Ani kept the African rights so the book could be published in Nigeria by a local publisher, making it less expensive for readers.

This month Ani will visit the United States for book-related events, his first trip outside of Africa. With his profile elevated, he said he doesn't fear becoming more of a target in Nigeria, maintaining that his visibility offers him some protection, which he plans to use to push harder on what he believes.

''What I want people to know about me,'' he said, ''is that I am an African queer liberation activist who believes that Africa is my home, that it is a home for queer people. I truly believe that.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/05/books/ani-kayode-somtochukwu-and-then-he-sang-a-lullaby.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/05/books/ani-kayode-somtochukwu-and-then-he-sang-a-lullaby.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY STEPHEN TAYO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page C3.

**Load-Date:** June 7, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Death by a Thousand Paper Cuts***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B4N-8171-DXY4-X0P7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 19, 2024 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 18; DAVID BROOKS

**Length:** 1345 words

**Byline:** By David Brooks

**Body**

Sometimes in this job I have a kernel of a column idea that doesn't pan out. But other times I begin looking into a topic and find a problem so massive that I can't believe I've ever written about anything else. This latter experience happened as I looked into the growing bureaucratization of American life. It's not only that growing bureaucracies cost a lot of money; they also enervate American society. They redistribute power from workers to rule makers, and in so doing sap initiative, discretion, creativity and drive.

Once you start poking around, the statistics are staggering. Over a third of all health care costs go to administration. As the health care expert David Himmelstein put it in 2020, ''The average American is paying more than $2,000 a year for useless bureaucracy.'' All of us who have been entangled in the medical system know why administrators are there: to wrangle over coverage for the treatments doctors think patients need.

The growth of bureaucracy costs America over $3 trillion in lost economic output every year, Gary Hamel and Michele Zanini estimated in 2016 in The Harvard Business Review. That was about 17 percent of G.D.P. According to their analysis, there is now one administrator or manager for every 4.7 employees, doing things like designing anti-harassment trainings, writing corporate mission statements, collecting data and managing ''systems.''

This situation is especially grave in higher education. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology now has almost eight times as many nonfaculty employees as faculty employees. In the University of California system, the number of managers and senior professionals swelled by 60 percent between 2004 and 2014. The number of tenure-track faculty members grew by just 8 percent.

Conservatives complain that diversity, equity and inclusion administrators are injecting a dangerous ideology into American campuses. That's true. But the bigger problem is that these workers are among the swelling ranks of administrators.

The general job of administrators, who are invariably good and well-meaning people, is to supervise and control, and they gain power and job security by hiring more people to work for them to create more supervision and control. In every organization I've interacted with, the administrators genuinely want to serve the mission of the organization, but the nature of their jobs is to enforce compliance with this or that rule.

Their power is similar to what Annie Lowrey of The Atlantic has called the ''time tax.'' If you've ever fought a health care, corporate or university bureaucracy, you quickly realize you don't have the time for it, so you give up. I don't know about you, but my health insurer sometimes denies my family coverage for things that seem like obvious necessities, but I let it go unless it's a major expense. I calculate that my time is more valuable.

As Philip K. Howard has been arguing for years, good organizations give people discretion to do what is right. But the trend in public and private sector organizations has been to write rules that rob people of the power of discretion. These are two different mentalities. As Howard writes, ''Studies of cognitive overload suggest that the real problem is that people who are thinking about rules actually have diminished capacity to think about solving problems.''

Not long ago, an airline accidentally canceled one of my flight reservations. I called the 800 number and the guy on the other end of the line seemed truly unable to wrap his mind around the idea of getting me on another flight, because the rule said that my reservation was nonrefundable. I had that by now familiar feeling of talking to a brick wall.

This state of affairs pervades American life. Childhood is now thoroughly administered. I'm lucky enough to have grown up at a time when parents let children roam free to invent their own games and solve their own problems. Now kids' activities, from travel sports to recess, are supervised, and rules dominate. Parents are afraid their kids might be harmed, but as Jonathan Haidt and Greg Lukianoff have argued, by being overprotective, parents make their kids more fragile and more vulnerable to harm.

High school students design their lives to fit the metrics that college admissions officers require. And what traits are selective schools looking for? They're looking for students who are willing to conform to the formulas the gatekeepers devise.

I've found the administrators' code of safety first is now prevalent at the colleges where I've taught and visited. Aside from being a great school, Stanford used to be a weird school, where students set up idiosyncratic arrangements like an anarchist house or built their own islands in the middle of the lake. This was great preparation for life as a creative entrepreneur. But Stanford is apparently now tamed. I invite you to read Ginevra Davis's essay ''Stanford's War on Social Life'' in Palladium, which won a vaunted Sidney Award in 2022 and details how university administrators cracked down on student initiatives to make everything boring, supervised and safe.

Professors used to be among the most unsupervised people in America, but even they are feeling the pinch. For example, Mark Edmundson teaches literature at the University of Virginia. The annual self-evaluations he had to submit used to be one page. Now he has to fill out about 15 electronic pages of bureaucratese that include demonstrating how his work advances D.E.I., to make sure his every waking moment conforms to the reigning ideology.

In a recent essay in Liberties Journal, he illustrates how administrators control campus life by citing the rules they have devised to govern how members of the campus community should practice sadomasochistic sex: ''When parties consent to BDSM 3, or other forms of kink, nonconsent may be shown by the use of a safe word, whereas actions and words that may signal nonconsent in non-kink situations, such as force or violence, may be deemed signals of consent.'' Do institutions really need to govern private life this minutely?

Organizations are trying to protect themselves from lawsuits, but the whole administrative apparatus comes with an implied view of human nature. People are weak, fragile, vulnerable and kind of stupid. They need administrators to run their lives. They have to be trained never to take initiative, lest they wander off into activities that are deemed by the authorities to be out of bounds.

The result is the soft despotism that Tocqueville warned us about centuries ago, a power that ''is absolute, minute, regular, provident and mild.'' In his Liberties essay, Edmundson writes that this kind of power is now centerless. Presidents and executives don't run companies, universities or nations. Power is now held by everyone who issues work surveys and annual reports, the people who create H.R. trainings and collect data. He concludes: ''They are using the terms of liberation to bring more and more free people closer to mental serfdom. Some day they will awaken in a cage of their own devising, so harshly confining that even they, drunk on their own virtue, will have to notice how their lives are the lives of snails tucked in their shells.''

Trumpian populism is about many things, but one of them is this: ***working-class*** people rebelling against administrators. It is about people who want to lead lives of freedom, creativity and vitality, who find themselves working at jobs, sending their kids to schools and visiting hospitals, where they confront ''an immense and tutelary power'' (Tocqueville's words) that is out to diminish them.

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**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A18.

**Load-Date:** January 19, 2024

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[***The Crisis in Issue Polling, and What We’re Doing About It***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69NW-C9M1-DXY4-X00W-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 20, 2023 Monday 05:03 EST

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**Section:** UPSHOT

**Length:** 869 words

**Byline:** Nate Cohn

**Highlight:** A poll can be very close to the actual result but miss the key story line. We’ll try new question forms; we might even try an experiment or two.

**Body**

A poll can be very close to the actual result but miss the key story line. We’ll try new question forms; we might even try an experiment or two.

By the usual measures, last year’s midterm polls [*were among*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/28/upshot/polling-2022-review.html) the most accurate on record.

But in harder-to-measure ways, there’s a case those same polls were extraordinarily bad.

Poll after poll seemed to tell a clear story before the election: Voters were driven more by the economy, immigration and crime than abortion and democracy, helping to raise the specter of a “red wave.”

In the end, the final results looked just about like the final polls, but they told [*a completely different story*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/13/upshot/2022-republicans-midterms-analysis.html) about the election: When abortion and democracy were at stake, Democrats excelled. And while the polls had sometimes or even often showed Democrats excelling, they almost always failed to convincingly explain why they were ahead — making it seem that Democratic polling leads were fragile and tenuous.

Take our own Times/Siena polls. Our results in states like Pennsylvania and Arizona were very close to the final results and showed Democrats with the lead. By all accounts, abortion and democracy were major factors helping to explain Democratic strength in these states, especially against election deniers like Doug Mastriano or Kari Lake.

But although these polls performed well, they simply didn’t explain what happened. If anything, the polls were showing the conditions for a Republican win. They showed that voters wanted Republican control of the Senate. They showed that a majority of voters didn’t really care whether a candidate thought Joe Biden won the 2020 election, even though election deniers wound up being clearly punished at the ballot box. Voters said they cared more about the economy than issues like abortion or democracy, and so on.

The Times/Siena polling wasn’t alone in this regard. Virtually all of the major public pollsters told the same basic story, and it’s the opposite of the story that we told after the election. If we judge these poll questions about the issues by the same standard that we judge the main election results — a comparison between the pre-election polls and what we believe to be true after the election, with the benefit of the results — I think we’d have to say this was a complete misfire.

If you do this exercise for previous elections, issue polling failures look more like the norm than the exception. There just aren’t many elections when you can read a pre-election poll story, line it up with the post-election story, and say that the pre-election poll captured the most important dynamics of the election. The final CBS/NYT, Pew Research and ABC/Washington Post polls from the 2016 election, for instance, barely shed any light at all on Donald J. Trump’s strength. They contributed essentially nothing to the decade-long debate about whether the economy, racial resentment, immigration or anything else helped explain Mr. Trump’s success among white ***working-class*** voters in that election.

With such a poor track record, there’s a case that “issue” polling faces a far graver crisis than “horse race” polling. I can imagine many public pollsters recoiling at that assertion, but they can’t prove it wrong, either. The crisis facing issue polling is almost entirely non-falsifiable — just like the issue polling itself. Indeed, the fact that the problems with issue polling are so hard to quantify is probably why problems have been allowed to fester. Most pollsters probably assume they’re good at issue polling; after all, unlike with horse race polls, they’re almost never demonstrably wrong.

In fairness to pollsters, the problem isn’t only that the usual questions probably don’t fully portray the attitudes of the electorate. It’s also that pollsters are trying to figure out what’s driving the behavior of voters, and that’s a different and more challenging question than simply measuring whom they’ll vote for or what they believe. These causal questions are beyond what a single poll with “issue” questions can realistically be expected to answer. The worlds of political campaigning and social science research, with everything from experimental designs to messaging testing, probably have more of the relevant tools than public pollsters.

Over the next year, we’re going to try to bring some of those tools into our polling. We’ll focus more on analyzing what factors predict whether voters have “flipped” since 2020, rather than look at what attitudes prevail over a majority of the electorate. We’ll try new question forms. We might even try an experiment or two.

We already tried one such experiment in our latest Times/Siena battleground state poll. We split the sample into two halves: One half was asked whether they’d vote for a typical Democrat against a Republican expressing a moderate view on abortion or democracy; the other half was given the same Democrat against a Republican expressing more conservative or MAGA views on abortion or democracy.

In the next newsletter, I’ll tell you about the results of that experiment. I think it was promising.

PHOTO: Protecting democracy has been a potent message in recent elections. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Maddie McGarvey for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** November 20, 2023

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[***Museum Director Has a Second Act As a Barkeep***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B4F-8SC1-JBG3-613V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 18, 2024 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2024 The New York Times Company

**Section:** Section C; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1257 words

**Byline:** By Zachary Small

**Body**

There is something bigger than beer brewing at the Francis Kite Club, a new haunt in the East Village whose artists hold performances, shape its programming and debate politics from their barstools.

Above the patrons, including art stars like Marina Abramovic, is a mural by the painter Nina Nichols that imagines New York City repopulated with native plants and animals. A central panel features Annie Sprinkle, the artist and sexologist, and Naked Bear, a figure of Iroquois mythology, setting fire to the Merchant's House, a local historic landmark. Cocktails are named after the picture, with the building's destruction memorialized by vodka, Earl Grey tea, lemon and honey.

''I wanted to build somewhere warm and convivial, with cheap drinks and good people. Somewhere that definitely does not feel exclusive,'' said Laura Raicovich, a former museum executive who is entering her second act as a bar impresario. Her business partners include the musician Kyp Malone, the stunt coordinator John McEnerney, the designer Alice McGillicuddy and the artist-activist Laura Hanna.

In a recent interview, Raicovich said she was done with the rarefied side of the art world after nearly 20 years nudging it toward political action and social work. During that time she clashed with trustees at the Queens Museum and ultimately resigned in 2018, after disagreements about an event featuring former Vice President Mike Pence that was sponsored by the Israeli government and pushback on her idea that her museum could serve as a sanctuary space for migrants.

Looking back today, she said, ''Museums have a tough time at making social spaces because they come out of a model of broadcasting information rather than exchanging it.'' She added, ''The narrowing of imagination and culture is something that I want to reverse, and investing in culture through the bar is a material way of making that change.''

She is not the only museum professional to spurn a traditional path. Many employees have changed jobs in recent years because of frustrations with low pay and high stress.

A recent survey of nearly 2,000 museum workers found that 60 percent of employees are thinking about leaving their jobs because of reasons including income and stress. More than a quarter of executives surveyed also said that their salaries could not always cover basic living expenses.

''People are burned out,'' said Mia Locks, the director of Museums Moving Forward, the nonprofit organization behind the survey. She resigned from a senior curatorial role at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles in 2021, among a wave of other leaders during the pandemic.

''The report shows that people are burned out but don't want to give up on the creative energy of museums,'' Locks added. Projects like Raicovich's, she said, ''are evidence that these exchanges can happen outside of museums.''

The owners of Francis Kite Club said they are self-financing the project until the bar turns a profit, and attendance has steadily increased since the business opened in September.

''We are definitely not trying to build a Soho House or Zero Bond,'' Hanna said, referring to the exclusive social clubs that count many wealthy artists and musicians in their ranks. ''If you come here, then you will help shape the programming. We are thinking about it like a ***working-class*** cocktail lounge.''

Raicovich sometimes falls into old routines, applying curatorial terms like ''modality'' and ''sociality'' to the daily operations of a bar. But the reality is much easier to understand.

Between Monday and Wednesday, when the bar is closed, a small publishing company named OR Books rents out the back room as an office to focus on works of literature and political activism. And many evenings, the Francis Kite Club hosts artists who program the evenings, through short residencies provided by the bar.

The costume designer Larry Krone spent November in rhinestones at the bar's microphone, singing songs and reading excerpts from a forthcoming book, including a chapter called ''Ruin Your Life (and Look Great Doing it!).''

On New Year's Eve, Chelsea Manning, the former intelligence analyst, was the D.J., playing house beats and electronic music into the early morning, mixing records as a disco ball shined above the audience.

And the artist Kameelah Janan Rasheed used time there to develop her own poetic projects, including an upcoming exhibition at the California Institute of the Arts. On a recent Friday evening, she skipped the small talk and led about 20 patrons in a discussion about ghosts and spirits with Raicovich, who made homemade onion dip for the crowd.

''It was delicious,'' Rasheed said. ''And I walked away recognizing that I had some very clear understandings about life and death that I had never fully articulated.'' She said she is considering becoming a death doula to ''help support people engaging with the afterlife.''

Residencies are currently unpaid, though some performers charge an entrance fee in order to subsidize themselves. Rasheed said the residency also fills a gap in the resources available to artists.

''If you get a research grant, it is because you have already decided a line of thinking,'' she explained. ''The actual discovery phase is missing.''

The talent who appear at the bar often have personal connections with the Francis Kite Club owners. Rasheed is a friend of Raicovich, and many of the musicians come through the doors because of Malone, best known as the guitarist and vocalist of the band TV on the Radio. Recently, he programmed a benefit concert for a charity aiding Palestinians. ''It's about figuring out how to get people together,'' Malone said. ''And there was an inkling of potentially marrying nightlife with more pressing matters in the world.''

Opening a bar wasn't exactly pinned on his vision board, nor was it something that Raicovich ever imagined for herself. For years, she had worked on grander designs to transform the Breuer Building on Madison Avenue into a cultural experiment.

She attempted to raise money through donors to lease the Brutalist building -- which has previously housed the Whitney Museum of American Art; the Metropolitan Museum of Art's modern and contemporary exhibitions, and, currently, the Frick Collection -- as a collective space where employees were stakeholders in leadership decisions typically reserved for trustees and executives. She hoped to enlist artists like Amar Kanwar, Jeanne van Heeswijk and Mel Chin to create projects that would begin to fill the space.

But when Sotheby's auction house purchased the space for $100 million last year, Raicovich knew it was time to move on. ''In hindsight, this was all related to my desire to be involved in running a collective space,'' she explained. ''I think the imprint of a single director at museums is not sustainable.''

But that spirit survives on a smaller scale at the Francis Kite Club, which aspires to become this generation's Cedar Tavern, a hangout spot for postwar painters like Willem de Kooning, Jackson Pollock and Robert Motherwell, Raicovich said. Though hopefully with cooler heads prevailing; artists were known for brawling at the bar and Pollock was barred briefly for ripping a bathroom door off its hinges and throwing it at the artist Franz Kline during a fight.

''I wanted something that was a little more about bringing people together,'' Raicovich said. ''For me, being an adventurous person, experimenting in a bar setting feels like the right thing to do right now.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/15/arts/design/francis-kite-club-laura-raicovich.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/15/arts/design/francis-kite-club-laura-raicovich.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: From left, the musician Shahzad Ismaily, the artist Marina Abramovic and the producer Todd Eckert at the Francis Kite Club. Part social club and part collective art space, the club was co-founded by the former Queens Museum director Laura Raicovich. (C1)

From top, the band Slowspin with Zeerak Ahmed performing at the Francis Kite Club

the club's business partners, from left, John McEnerney, Laura Raicovich, Kyp Malone and Alice McGillicuddy

a mural by Nina Nichols shows Annie Sprinkle, a sexologist, and Naked Bear, a creature inspired by Native American mythology, setting fire to the Merchant's House. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY REBECCA SMEYNE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (C7) This article appeared in print on page C1, C7.

**Load-Date:** January 18, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Tax Bill Advances, but Faces Election-Year Test***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B7D-WFR1-DXY4-X0NT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 1, 2024 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1362 words

**Byline:** By Kayla Guo

**Body**

The House approved a $78 billion tax package Wednesday with a large bipartisan margin. The effort is a test of whether a dysfunctional Congress can pass major legislation in an election year.

The House gave broad bipartisan approval on Wednesday to a $78 billion bill that would expand the child tax credit and restore a set of corporate tax breaks, a rare feat in an election year by a Congress that has labored to legislate.

The bill passed 357 to 70, with mainstream lawmakers in both parties driving the House's first major bipartisan bill of the year to passage. Forty-seven Republicans and 23 Democrats voted against the bill.

But despite the lopsided show of support, the measure faces a fraught path to enactment amid political divides over who should benefit the most. The effort, which faces resistance from Senate Republicans, is a test of whether a divided Congress with painfully thin margins can buck the dysfunction of the Republican-led House, set aside electoral politics and deliver legislation that would contain victories for both parties.

Representative Jason Smith, Republican of Missouri and chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, championed the legislation as ''pro-growth, pro-jobs and pro-America.''

''It's a strong, common sense, bipartisan step forward in providing urgent tax relief for working families and small businesses,'' Mr. Smith added.

The package would expand the child tax credit -- though a version substantially scaled back from its pandemic-era level -- and restore a set of business tax breaks related to research and development and capital expenses. Both would last through 2025. It would also bolster the low-income housing tax credit and extend tax benefits to disaster victims and Taiwanese companies and individuals.

The plan would be financed by curbing the employee retention tax credit, a pandemic-era measure meant to encourage employers to keep workers on the payroll that has become a magnet for fraud.

Lawmakers in both parties regard it as a policy victory and a way to show voters they can actually accomplish something despite the chaos and turmoil that have come to define the Republican-led House.

''The majority of the country is really thirsty for us to do things in a bipartisan manner,'' Representative Greg Murphy, Republican of North Carolina, said in an interview. ''We've seen a lot of gridlock because some people really want to, basically, say no to everything. And I think we do need to move forward and actually show people that we can govern.''

In a sign of the political hurdles that are complicating the bill's path, Mr. Johnson brought it to the floor on Wednesday under special expedited procedures that required a two-thirds majority for passage. The maneuver allowed him to steer around Republicans who could otherwise have blocked the bill over their policy and political objections.

Senate Republicans have also sought to pump the brakes, in another indication of the political challenges the package still faces. The bill would be a win for President Biden and Democrats, who have made expanding the child tax credit a signature issue, including Senator Sherrod Brown of Ohio, who is up for re-election this year and is a key target for Republicans in November.

Senator Michael D. Crapo of Idaho, the top Republican on the Finance Committee, said on Wednesday that he still had concerns with the bill -- including a provision that would allow parents to use their previous year's earnings to claim a bigger credit, which he argued would discourage work -- and wanted to see it amended in the Senate. Mr. Crapo, and many other Senate Republicans, previously voted in favor of the same provision in previous bills.

''I'm sure there are going to be a number of issues, like raised yesterday in the House, that didn't get resolved,'' Mr. Crapo said. ''I'm guessing that a lot of those kinds of issues will come up, and we'll have to work through them.''

A group of lawmakers from New York and other blue states with high tax rates was angry that the measure omitted an increase it had sought to the cap on state and local tax deductions, known as SALT, which would benefit high earners. New York Republicans signaled their ire on Tuesday by briefly blocking a procedural measure in protest.

''The point, as has been made multiple times in this Congress, is obviously that there are strength in numbers,'' said Representative Mike Lawler, who joined Representatives Anthony D'Esposito, Nick LaLota and Andrew Garbarino in defecting on the unrelated measure on Tuesday, only to switch their votes once their point had been made. ''But for us that delivered the majority, this is the issue that matters.''

Mr. Johnson assuaged their concerns after a long night of meetings on Tuesday by committing to working with them to find a way to address SALT separately, said Athina Lawson, a spokeswoman for the speaker's office.

The package that the House passed on Wednesday was brokered by the top two tax writers in Congress: Mr. Smith, and Senator Ron Wyden, Democrat of Oregon and the chairman of the Finance Committee. It has the support of the White House, key leaders in both parties on Capitol Hill and a variety of rank-and-file members. It gained momentum after the Ways and Means Committee approved it on an overwhelmingly bipartisan basis in January.

Proponents point to that vote, and to how unlikely it had seemed for a tax deal to come together, as a good sign for its prospects.

''Most prognosticators would have told you as recently as a month ago that this bill was destined to die in negotiations or collect dust on a shelf if it ever got introduced,'' Mr. Wyden said in a statement Wednesday. ''Given the sorry state of our political climate, it's a real victory to have such strong momentum behind this bill that will help 16 million American kids from low-income families get ahead.''

Republican proponents have argued that the business tax breaks are worth embracing, and have framed the child tax credit as a conservative win as well.

''The child tax credit reforms in this bill are pro-family policies that maintain the child tax credit structure of the Trump-era G.O.P. tax reform,'' Mr. Smith said in a statement. ''The child tax credit provisions in this bill help families crushed by inflation, remove the penalty for families with multiple children and maintains work requirements.''

The legislation would make the $2,000-per-child credit more accessible to families with multiple children and gradually raise the cap on how much lower-income families can claim to match the amount for higher-income families. It would also automatically adjust the credit for inflation and allow parents to use their previous year's earnings if it meant they could receive a larger credit.

Right-wing Republicans denounced the expansion, arguing that it would discourage work. They also objected to allowing undocumented immigrants who have U.S.-born children to receive the credit, for which they are eligible under current law.

''I'm not going to support something that expands the child tax credit, which is expanding the welfare state massively,'' said Representative Bob Good, Republican of Virginia and chairman of the House Freedom Caucus. ''And I'm not going to support child tax credit going to illegals. I think that's incentivizing this illegal invasion, and we ought to stand united against it as the Republican Party.''

Progressive Democrats, on the other hand, argued that the bill did not expand the tax credit enough and disproportionately benefited corporations. It falls far short of the pandemic-era version of the child tax credit, which deposited up to $3,600 per child in families' bank accounts and helped to pull millions of children out of poverty.

''I cannot vote for a deal that so lopsidedly benefits big corporations while failing to ensure a substantial tax cut to middle and ***working class*** families,'' Representative Rosa DeLauro of Connecticut, the top Democrat on the Appropriations Committee, said on the floor before the vote. ''This bill provides billions of dollars in tax relief for the wealthy and pennies for the poor.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/31/us/politics/congress-tax-bill.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/31/us/politics/congress-tax-bill.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Representative Mike Lawler joined representatives to briefly block a procedural measure. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KENNY HOLSTON/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Senator Ron Wyden, Democrat of Oregon and Finance Committee chair, brokered the package. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL A. MCCOY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A14.

**Load-Date:** February 1, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Death by a Thousand Paper Cuts; David Brooks***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B4M-0D01-DXY4-X093-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 18, 2024 Thursday 20:21 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1343 words

**Highlight:** The swelling ranks of administrators in American life are stealing our time, our freedom and our vitality.

**Body**

Sometimes in this job I have a kernel of a column idea that doesn’t pan out. But other times I begin looking into a topic and find a problem so massive that I can’t believe I’ve ever written about anything else. This latter experience happened as I looked into the growing bureaucratization of American life. It’s not only that growing bureaucracies cost a lot of money; they also enervate American society. They redistribute power from workers to rule makers, and in so doing sap initiative, discretion, creativity and drive.

Once you start poking around, the statistics are staggering. Over a third of all health care costs go to administration. As the health care expert David Himmelstein [*put it*](https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN1Z5260/) in 2020, “The average American is paying more than $2,000 a year for useless bureaucracy.” All of us who have been entangled in the medical system know why administrators are there: to wrangle over coverage for the treatments doctors think patients need.

The growth of bureaucracy costs America over $3 trillion in lost economic output every year, Gary Hamel and Michele Zanini [*estimated*](https://hbr.org/2016/09/excess-management-is-costing-the-us-3-trillion-per-year) in 2016 in The Harvard Business Review. That was about 17 percent of G.D.P. According to their analysis, there is now one administrator or manager for every 4.7 employees, doing things like designing anti-harassment trainings, writing corporate mission statements, collecting data and managing “systems.”

This situation is especially grave in higher education. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology now has [*almost eight times*](https://www.forbes.com/sites/paulweinstein/2023/08/28/administrative-bloat-at-us-colleges-is-skyrocketing/) as many nonfaculty employees as faculty employees. In the University of California system, the number of managers and senior professionals [*swelled*](https://www.latimes.com/local/education/la-me-uc-spending-20151011-story.html) by 60 percent between 2004 and 2014. The number of tenure-track faculty members grew by just 8 percent.

Conservatives complain that diversity, equity and inclusion administrators are injecting a dangerous ideology into American campuses. That’s true. But the bigger problem is that these workers are among the swelling ranks of administrators.

The general job of administrators, who are invariably good and well-meaning people, is to supervise and control, and they gain power and job security by hiring more people to work for them to create more supervision and control. In every organization I’ve interacted with, the administrators genuinely want to serve the mission of the organization, but the nature of their jobs is to enforce compliance with this or that rule.

Their power is similar to what Annie Lowrey of The Atlantic has called the “[*time tax*](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2021/07/how-government-learned-waste-your-time-tax/619568/).” If you’ve ever fought a health care, corporate or university bureaucracy, you quickly realize you don’t have the time for it, so you give up. I don’t know about you, but my health insurer sometimes denies my family coverage for things that seem like obvious necessities, but I let it go unless it’s a major expense. I calculate that my time is more valuable.

As Philip K. Howard has been arguing for years, good organizations give people discretion to do what is right. But the trend in public and private sector organizations has been to write rules that rob people of the power of discretion. These are two different mentalities. As Howard [*writes*](https://www.the-american-interest.com/2019/01/31/bureaucracy-vs-democracy/), “Studies of cognitive overload suggest that the real problem is that people who are thinking about rules actually have diminished capacity to think about solving problems.”

Not long ago, an airline accidentally canceled one of my flight reservations. I called the 800 number and the guy on the other end of the line seemed truly unable to wrap his mind around the idea of getting me on another flight, because the rule said that my reservation was nonrefundable. I had that by now familiar feeling of talking to a brick wall.

This state of affairs pervades American life. Childhood is now thoroughly administered. I’m lucky enough to have grown up at a time when parents let children roam free to invent their own games and solve their own problems. Now kids’ activities, from travel sports to recess, are supervised, and rules dominate. Parents are afraid their kids might be harmed, but as Jonathan Haidt and Greg Lukianoff have argued, by being overprotective, parents make their kids more fragile and more vulnerable to harm.

High school students design their lives to fit the metrics that college admissions officers require. And what traits are selective schools looking for? They’re looking for students who are willing to conform to the formulas the gatekeepers devise.

I’ve found the administrators’ code of safety first is now prevalent at the colleges where I’ve taught and visited. Aside from being a great school, Stanford used to be a weird school, where students set up idiosyncratic arrangements like an anarchist house or built their own islands in the middle of the lake. This was great preparation for life as a creative entrepreneur. But Stanford is apparently now tamed. I invite you to read Ginevra Davis’s essay “[*Stanford’s War on Social Life*](https://www.palladiummag.com/2022/06/13/stanfords-war-on-social-life/)” in Palladium, which won a vaunted Sidney Award in 2022 and details how university administrators cracked down on student initiatives to make everything boring, supervised and safe.

Professors used to be among the most unsupervised people in America, but even they are feeling the pinch. For example, Mark Edmundson teaches literature at the University of Virginia. The annual self-evaluations he had to submit used to be one page. Now he has to fill out about 15 electronic pages of bureaucratese that include demonstrating how his work advances D.E.I., to make sure his every waking moment conforms to the reigning ideology.

In a recent [*essay*](https://libertiesjournal.com/articles/good-people-the-new-discipline/) in Liberties Journal, he illustrates how administrators control campus life by citing the rules they have devised to govern how members of the campus community should practice sadomasochistic sex: “When parties consent to BDSM 3, or other forms of kink, nonconsent may be shown by the use of a safe word, whereas actions and words that may signal nonconsent in non-kink situations, such as force or violence, may be deemed signals of consent.” Do institutions really need to govern private life this minutely?

Organizations are trying to protect themselves from lawsuits, but the whole administrative apparatus comes with an implied view of human nature. People are weak, fragile, vulnerable and kind of stupid. They need administrators to run their lives. They have to be trained never to take initiative, lest they wander off into activities that are deemed by the authorities to be out of bounds.

The result is the soft despotism that Tocqueville warned us about centuries ago, a power that “is absolute, minute, regular, provident and mild.” In his Liberties essay, Edmundson writes that this kind of power is now centerless. Presidents and executives don’t run companies, universities or nations. Power is now held by everyone who issues work surveys and annual reports, the people who create H.R. trainings and collect data. He concludes: “They are using the terms of liberation to bring more and more free people closer to mental serfdom. Some day they will awaken in a cage of their own devising, so harshly confining that even they, drunk on their own virtue, will have to notice how their lives are the lives of snails tucked in their shells.”

Trumpian populism is about many things, but one of them is this: ***working-class*** people rebelling against administrators. It is about people who want to lead lives of freedom, creativity and vitality, who find themselves working at jobs, sending their kids to schools and visiting hospitals, where they confront “an immense and tutelary power” (Tocqueville’s words) that is out to diminish them.

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This article appeared in print on page A18.

**Load-Date:** January 18, 2024

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[***Time Challenges a Harlem Fixture***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6908-DHG1-DXY4-X1VY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 20, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section RE; Column 0; Real Estate Desk; Pg. 1; STREETSCAPES

**Length:** 2041 words

**Byline:** By Mia Jackson

**Body**

Mother A.M.E. Zion Church recently received a $200,000 grant for preservation, but attendance has declined in recent years.

In the 227 years since its birth, Mother African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church -- the oldest Black church in New York State -- has served as a stop on the Underground Railroad, a haven for Black artists and intellectuals during the Harlem Renaissance and an amphitheater for civil rights activism during the 1950s and '60s.

Tucked among a row of tenements on West 137th Street between Malcolm X and Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevards, the imposing yet understated church is on a block unscathed by the insatiable tide of Harlem-hungry real estate developers. The building, designed by one of the first licensed Black architects in the nation, George Washington Foster, stands as one of few examples of Gothic Revival architecture nestled in the heart of Harlem.

But an aging congregation base, deferred maintenance, insufficient funding and a rapidly gentrifying Harlem threaten to capsize the church in the face of mounting financial distress. ''Mother Zion lives week to week like the people on the block,'' said the Rev. Malcolm J. Byrd, the senior pastor of the church.

Churches nationwide are experiencing dwindling turnouts at Sunday service, now that religious institutions regularly compete with brunch reservations, farmers markets, sports games and sleeping in for the Sunday morning slot. Mother A.M.E. Zion, which closed its doors for two years during the pandemic, also lost many of its congregants to Covid-19. Not to mention, much of its congregation base, New York's ***working-class*** African American community, can no longer afford the neighborhood.

''The history of Harlem churches is bound up with the history of cities and the changes that happen within the cities,'' said Prof. Wallace Best, who teaches African American studies and religion at Princeton University and is writing a book on Black churches in Harlem. ''A lot of these churches are emptying out and that has to do with demographic patterns.''

The church received landmark status in 1993, and in January, it received a $200,000 grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, an infusion of support intended to establish an endowment fund that the church will draw on the interest from for routine maintenance and preservation. But the church will be unable to financially sustain itself and uphold its legacy of tending to the spiritual, political, and social needs of its community, without a dramatic uptick in its membership and donation flow.

On any given Sunday, a few dozen or so churchgoers, primarily a mixture of older congregants and curious tourists, fill the pews. In 1971, about 8,000 paraders marched up Seventh Avenue, now known as Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard, during the sesquicentennial celebration of the church whose conference at the time boasted a citywide membership of 20,000 people, according to The New York Times.

The First Sunday After Second-class Treatment

The very first Sunday service of the church was held in 1796 in a cabinetmaker's shop in Lower Manhattan on Cross Street, flanked by Orange and Mulberry Streets. A group of former slaves, dissatisfied with their second-class treatment in the predominantly white John Street Methodist Church, left to start Zion church under the leadership of its first bishop, James Varick. A 19th-century historian wrote of John Street Methodist that ''the colored members were not permitted to come to the sacrament (hold Communion) until all the white members, even children, had communed.'' In 1820, the church's members formally voted to withdraw themselves from the white Methodist Church denomination to form an entirely separate conference known as African Methodist Episcopal Zion.

Numerous leaders of the early 19th-century Zion Church were outspoken advocates of the abolitionist movement. Sojourner Truth, a former slave, evangelist, and abolitionist, upon escaping her bondage and reaching New York City in 1829, joined Mother A.M.E. Zion. The A.M.E. Zion Church Conference membership boasts a distinguished roster of abolitionist luminaries, including Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass. Colloquially referred to as the ''Freedom Church,'' A.M.E. Zion was a sanctuary of liberation during the 19th century, an era of rampant oppression and inequality.

The flourishing of Mother A.M.E. Zion is intricately tied to Black migratory patterns in the city. The 137th Street location is the church's sixth home. After outgrowing its humble beginnings in the cabinetmaker's shop, the church constructed its first edifice in 1800 on a 35-by-45-foot plot of land on the corner of Church and Leonard Streets in Lower Manhattan. In 1825, Mother A.M.E. Zion purchased six plots of land near 86th Street. to use as a cemetery in a budding Seneca Village, a predominantly Black, middle-class community established the same year.

''A.M.E. Zion was one of the first landowners and the first two individuals to buy land in the village were connected to the church,'' said Meredith B. Linn, an assistant professor of historical archaeology at Bard College. In 1853, Mother A.M.E. Zion established a satellite church in the village to serve the community's growing Black population. In 1857, the community was uprooted and forced to move farther north and west under state-authorized eminent domain for the construction of Central Park.

Much of the city's ***working-class*** Black community migrated to ''Little Africa,'' present-day Greenwich Village, after the violence of the 1863 draft riots in Lower Manhattan. In the footsteps of its congregation base, the church relocated to its third location in a former Dutch Reformed Church on the northeast corner of West 10th and Bleecker streets in 1864.

The construction of Pennsylvania Station in 1910 and the widening of Sixth Avenue in 1926, coupled with fierce competition for housing with recently arrived Italian immigrants in Little Africa, forced many of the neighborhood's Black families to uproot once again and head farther uptown. Mother A.M.E. Zion moved to the Upper West Side in 1904, then to its fifth home in a former Episcopal Church on West 136th Street in Harlem and to its final location on West 137th Street in 1925.

Mother A.M.E. Zion arrived in Harlem when numerous Black families were moving from the South to capitalize on the expanding economic and creative prospects in the neighborhood; that period is now known as the Harlem Renaissance. Coupled with increased racial tension and discrimination, the Renaissance engendered a new collective consciousness, sense of unity and political culture among residents, which was formalized through the Black church.

The Rev. James W. Brown and his successor, the Rev. Benjamin C. Robeson, established Mother A.M.E. Zion as an institution of spiritual worship and political activism.

Mr. Robeson, who led the church from 1936 to 1963, preached the doctrine of civil rights activism, which drew notable Harlem residents of the likes of W.E.B. DuBois and Langston Hughes to Mother A.M.E. Zion. Under the leadership of the Rev. George McMurray who succeeded Mr. Robeson, the church created numerous programs devoted to economic and social rehabilitation.

In the 1970s, the church opened the James L. Varick Community Center, and established a community board to operate the center, which provided day care, mental health care, after-school programs and education for women experiencing homelessness. In 2015, the board could no longer afford the community center and sold the building.

The church's interior still reflects its illustrious history. In the basement, a small museum houses its rare documents and old photographs. The remains of Mr. Varick rest below the sanctuary. The 1000-seat sanctuary was constructed like an auditorium, and that's purposeful, said Professor Best. ''The building was built in recognition that it would have to meet the full needs of the community.''

'I Pray for Him'

But another evolution has come and this time, the church won't just move, it will die.

Much of the housing units, even the so-called affordable ones, that have sprung up in the neighborhood are financially out of reach for Harlem's ***working-class*** residents.

Although North Harlem's overall population climbed by 15 percent from 2010 to 2020, its Black population fell by more than 10 percentage points, to 56.7 percent, from 67.2 percent.

''If you wake up in the morning and look out your window, you'd think you're living downtown,'' said Amelia Montgomery, 81, a longtime Harlem resident and member of Mother A.M.E. Zion. She and her late husband, Dabney Montgomery, a Tuskegee airman and civil rights activist, bought a brownstone a few blocks from the church in 1978. She also contributed to the efforts to establish the nearby Dorrance Brooks Square Historic District, a rowhouse-rich area between Lenox Avenue and Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard.

Ms. Montgomery, intimately tied to the church since the moment of her birth, after her mother went into labor during a Friday night prayer meeting at Mother A.M.E. Zion, hopes Mr. Byrd will be the catalyst the church needs to steer it toward a sustainable future amid a crossroad of tradition and change. ''I pray for him every day, and whatever I can do to restore the spirit of Mother Zion, I'm doing that,'' Ms. Montgomery said.

Mr. Byrd, a licensed A.M.E. Zion minister since he was 14, said the congregation's sustenance cannot rest solely on the pious routine of Sunday worship. ''Black people need more than a Sunday morning to sustain themselves. The church has to be a multifaceted place for them,'' said Mr. Byrd. Since joining the church in 2019, Mr. Byrd has instituted several social programs, including health workshops. He's developing a G.E.D. program and is exploring more creative ideas, like adding a coffee shop in the church.

Mr. Byrd has participated in protests against the destruction of the neighborhood's historic properties, arguing that many of Harlem's relics are demolished because they do not have protected status. ''If you tear down the people's landmarks, if you tear down the people's memorials, there will come a time when there will be generations that will never know how great the people were,'' Mr. Byrd said.

'Unmarked'

''Harlem is remarkably unmarked,'' Professor Best argued. For example, Harlem's Lafayette Theater was ''rated by the Landmarks Preservation Commission's staff as of 'outstanding significance,' but it was never designated,'' the former Streetscapes columnist Christopher Gray wrote. Lafayette Theater, a 1,500-seat Renaissance-style theater built in 1912, became the first major theater in New York to desegregate in 1913. A century later, the building was demolished and replaced by an eight-story luxury apartment building called the Lafayette.

In recent years, grass roots organizing by groups like ''Save Harlem Now'' have rallied residents to demand that the Landmark Preservation Commission do more to preserve keepsakes from Harlem's celebrated early 20th century history. Since its founding in 2015, the group has successfully obtained protected status for some Harlem landmarks including the Harlem branch of the New York Public Library.

Nonetheless, some Black churches have downsized -- viewing selling their brick-and-mortar houses of worship to luxury-apartment developers with deep pockets as the only viable path forward. The Victorian Gothic architecture and stained glass windows that once made up Metropolitan Community United Methodist Church, which dates back to 1871, was demolished in 2020, despite objections from parishioners and preservationists alike.

In 2017, Second Canaan Baptist Church sold its property to Level One Holdings to redevelop it into an eight-story condominium with a sanctuary on the lower level. First Ebenezer Baptist Church also sold its building in 2017, creating a new sanctuary on the first floor of the condominium constructed in its place.

''Churches in Harlem are confronting a changed neighborhood,'' Professor Best said. ''To ask what is the future of Black churches in Harlem is to ask what is the future of Black people in Harlem.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/18/realestate/mother-ame-zion-church-harlem-nyc.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/18/realestate/mother-ame-zion-church-harlem-nyc.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Above, the construction of the present-day Mother A.M.E. Zion Church, left, whose attendance has dwindled to a few dozen each Sunday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MOTHER A.M.E. ZION CHURCH) (RE1)

Top, the sanctuary of the Mother African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church building on 137th Street. Second row, from left: a church gathering in 1924

an earlier look at the sanctuary

the former Episcopal church. which Mother A.M.E. Zion bought in 1914 and used for worship until 1925, when it moved to its current edifice. Above, the Rev. Malcolm J. Byrd. Right, a collection of church artifacts. Below, the exterior of Mother A.M.E. Zion Church, which is next to a tenement-style building. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY FLO NGALA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

MOTHER A.M.E. ZION CHURCH) (RE6) This article appeared in print on page RE1, RE6.

**Load-Date:** August 20, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Not-So-Free Speech***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6967-KJD1-DXY4-X023-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 17, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 21; FICTION

**Length:** 640 words

**Byline:** By Rafael Frumkin

**Body**

In her debut novel, ''The Centre,'' Ayesha Manazir Siddiqi explores class anxiety, identity, appropriation and more through a sinister language school.

THE CENTRE, by Ayesha Manazir Siddiqi

In her ingenious debut novel, ''The Centre,'' Ayesha Manazir Siddiqi introduces us to a world where language learning doesn't stop with a textbook. The would-be polyglots in this thriller aren't just striving to memorize verb conjugations and recite poetry; they're up to something far more sinister.

When we meet Anisa, she's a wannabe literary translator eking out a meager living by captioning Bollywood films. She is Pakistani and has a white boyfriend, Adam, whose unassuming nature belies the impressive fact that he speaks almost a dozen languages with a native speaker's fluency. Stalled out and frustrated, Anisa demands to know Adam's secret. Reluctantly, he reveals it: the Centre, a language-learning facility in the English countryside that promises total mastery of any language in 10 days for a price of 20 grand. Anisa, who is the daughter of a successful surgeon, doesn't balk at the fee. She enrolls.

What Anisa finds feels like something out of a Yorgos Lanthimos film: a highly curated environment containing a rather large and disturbing secret. But it's not just the skeletons lurking behind the ivy-covered walls of the institute that make the novel so propulsive -- it's also what ''The Centre'' has to say about class and the interplay of language and identity.

Anisa grew up in Karachi's upper middle class and now lives a Western life in London, where she barely has a chance to speak Urdu. When Adam, who grew up a member of London's ***working class***, learns to speak Urdu fluently at the Centre and travels with Anisa to Pakistan to visit her parents, he's hailed as a hero for learning a nonwhite language. Anisa is incensed, feeling as if her mother tongue has been stolen out from under her. Later, when arguing about their relationship, Adam explodes about Anisa's middle-class trappings. Manazir Siddiqi is juggling many themes at this point -- cultural appropriation, class anxiety, the immigrant experience -- but she does so with aplomb, and without detracting from the story's addictive momentum.

At the Centre, Anisa first studies German, then Russian. The method? Listen to a recording of a ''Storyteller'' rambling aimlessly in the target language for hours at a time. On the fifth or sixth day of listening, Anisa suddenly understands every word perfectly, a revelation just as confusing as it is thrilling.

Acquiring these European languages affords her the translation career of her dreams, and she also develops a huge crush on the nymph-like Shiba, the institution's current director and the daughter of its founder. Anisa's thirst to know Shiba is bound up with her eagerness to understand the Centre's method. The process is ''almost like osmosis,'' Shiba explains cagily. ''Almost like a miracle. It just ... works.'' In following Anisa's quest to unpack this too-good-to-be-true phenomenon, Manazir Siddiqi weaves a narrative web connecting the vagaries of language with national identity and the perils of class conformity.

Wittgenstein wrote that ''the meaning of a word is its use in the language,'' which is to say: It's not about what you say, but how you say it. Manazir Siddiqi seems to have taken this to heart with ''The Centre,'' a novel that knows that whether you're trying to place an errant foreign word or unlock a dark secret behind a pedagogical miracle, context is key. This is a book whose many delights and horrors are unlikely to be lost in translation.

Rafael Frumkin is a professor of creative writing at Southern Illinois University and the author of ''The Comedown'' and ''Confidence.''

THE CENTRE | By Ayesha Manazir Siddiqi | 275 pp. | Zando/Gillian Flynn Books | $28

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/10/books/review/the-centre-ayesha-manazir-siddiqi.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/10/books/review/the-centre-ayesha-manazir-siddiqi.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY MANISH SWARUP/ASSOCIATED PRESS) This article appeared in print on page BR21.

**Load-Date:** September 17, 2023

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[***House Passes Bipartisan Tax Bill, but Election-Year Politics Complicate Its Path***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B78-J4S1-DXY4-X04G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 31, 2024 Wednesday 11:05 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1404 words

**Highlight:** The House approved a $78 billion tax package Wednesday with a large bipartisan margin. The effort is a test of whether a dysfunctional Congress can pass major legislation in an election year.

**Body**

The House approved a $78 billion tax package Wednesday with a large bipartisan margin. The effort is a test of whether a dysfunctional Congress can pass major legislation in an election year.

The House gave broad bipartisan approval on Wednesday to a $78 billion bill that would expand the child tax credit and restore a set of corporate tax breaks, a rare feat in an election year by a Congress that has labored to legislate.

The bill passed 357 to 70, with mainstream lawmakers in both parties driving the House’s first major bipartisan bill of the year to passage. Forty-seven Republicans and 23 Democrats voted against the bill.

But despite the lopsided show of support, the measure faces a fraught path to enactment amid political divides over who should benefit the most. [*The effort*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/us/politics/tax-deal-congress.html), which faces resistance from Senate Republicans, is a test of whether a divided Congress with painfully thin margins can buck the dysfunction of the Republican-led House, set aside electoral politics and deliver legislation that would contain victories for both parties.

Representative Jason Smith, Republican of Missouri and chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, championed the legislation as “pro-growth, pro-jobs and pro-America.”

“It’s a strong, common sense, bipartisan step forward in providing urgent tax relief for working families and small businesses,” Mr. Smith added.

[*The package*](https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/7024) would [*expand the child tax credit*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/30/upshot/child-tax-credit-poverty.html) — though a version substantially scaled back from its pandemic-era level — and restore a set of business tax breaks related to research and development and capital expenses. Both would last through 2025. It [*would also bolster*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/19/us/politics/congress-election-year-tax-deal.html) the low-income housing tax credit and extend tax benefits to disaster victims and Taiwanese companies and individuals.

The plan would be financed by curbing the employee retention tax credit, a pandemic-era measure meant to encourage employers to keep workers on the payroll that has become [*a magnet for fraud*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/26/us/politics/employee-retention-credit-tax-fraud.html).

Lawmakers in both parties regard it as a policy victory and a way to show voters they can actually accomplish something despite the chaos and turmoil that have come to define the Republican-led House.

“The majority of the country is really thirsty for us to do things in a bipartisan manner,” Representative Greg Murphy, Republican of North Carolina, said in an interview. “We’ve seen a lot of gridlock because some people really want to, basically, say no to everything. And I think we do need to move forward and actually show people that we can govern.”

In a sign of the political hurdles that are complicating the bill’s path, Mr. Johnson brought it to the floor on Wednesday under special expedited procedures that required a two-thirds majority for passage. The maneuver allowed him to steer around Republicans who could otherwise have blocked the bill over their policy and political objections.

Senate Republicans have also sought to pump the brakes, in another indication of the political challenges the package still faces. The bill would be a win for President Biden and Democrats, who have made expanding the child tax credit a signature issue, including Senator Sherrod Brown of Ohio, who is up for re-election this year and is a key target for Republicans in November.

Senator Michael D. Crapo of Idaho, the top Republican on the Finance Committee, said on Wednesday that he still had concerns with the bill — including a provision that would allow parents to use their previous year’s earnings to claim a bigger credit, which he argued would discourage work — and wanted to see it amended in the Senate. Mr. Crapo, and many other Senate Republicans, previously voted in favor of the same provision in previous bills.

“I’m sure there are going to be a number of issues, like raised yesterday in the House, that didn’t get resolved,” Mr. Crapo said. “I’m guessing that a lot of those kinds of issues will come up, and we’ll have to work through them.”

A group of lawmakers from New York and other blue states with high tax rates was angry that the measure omitted an increase it had sought to the cap on state and local tax deductions, known as SALT, which would benefit high earners. New York Republicans signaled their ire on Tuesday by briefly blocking a procedural measure in protest.

“The point, as has been made multiple times in this Congress, is obviously that there are strength in numbers,” said Representative Mike Lawler, who joined Representatives Anthony D’Esposito, Nick LaLota and Andrew Garbarino in defecting on the unrelated measure on Tuesday, only to switch their votes once their point had been made. “But for us that delivered the majority, this is the issue that matters.”

Mr. Johnson assuaged their concerns after a long night of meetings on Tuesday by committing to working with them to find a way to address SALT separately, said Athina Lawson, a spokeswoman for the speaker’s office.

The package that the House passed on Wednesday was brokered by the top two tax writers in Congress: Mr. Smith, and Senator Ron Wyden, Democrat of Oregon and the chairman of the Finance Committee. It has the support of the White House, key leaders in both parties on Capitol Hill and a variety of rank-and-file members. It gained momentum after [*the Ways and Means Committee approved it*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/us/politics/tax-deal-congress.html) on an overwhelmingly bipartisan basis in January.

Proponents point to that vote, and to how unlikely it had seemed for a tax deal to come together, as a good sign for its prospects.

“Most prognosticators would have told you as recently as a month ago that this bill was destined to die in negotiations or collect dust on a shelf if it ever got introduced,” Mr. Wyden said in a statement Wednesday. “Given the sorry state of our political climate, it’s a real victory to have such strong momentum behind this bill that will help 16 million American kids from low-income families get ahead.”

Republican proponents have argued that the business tax breaks are worth embracing, and have framed the child tax credit as a conservative win as well.

“The child tax credit reforms in this bill are pro-family policies that maintain the child tax credit structure of the Trump-era G.O.P. tax reform,” Mr. Smith said in a statement. “The child tax credit provisions in this bill help families crushed by inflation, remove the penalty for families with multiple children and maintains work requirements.”

The legislation would make the $2,000-per-child credit more accessible to families with multiple children and gradually raise the cap on how much lower-income families can claim to match the amount for higher-income families. It would also automatically adjust the credit for inflation and allow parents to use their previous year’s earnings if it meant they could receive a larger credit.

Right-wing Republicans denounced the expansion, arguing that it would discourage work. They also objected to allowing undocumented immigrants who have U.S.-born children to receive the credit, for which they are eligible under current law.

“I’m not going to support something that expands the child tax credit, which is expanding the welfare state massively,” said Representative Bob Good, Republican of Virginia and chairman of the House Freedom Caucus. “And I’m not going to support child tax credit going to illegals. I think that’s incentivizing this illegal invasion, and we ought to stand united against it as the Republican Party.”

Progressive Democrats, on the other hand, argued that the bill did not expand the tax credit enough and disproportionately benefited corporations. It falls far short of the pandemic-era version of the child tax credit, which deposited up to $3,600 per child in families’ bank accounts and [*helped to pull millions of children out of poverty*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/11/us/politics/child-poverty-analysis-safety-net.html).

“I cannot vote for a deal that so lopsidedly benefits big corporations while failing to ensure a substantial tax cut to middle and ***working class*** families,” Representative Rosa DeLauro of Connecticut, the top Democrat on the Appropriations Committee, said on the floor before the vote. “This bill provides billions of dollars in tax relief for the wealthy and pennies for the poor.”

PHOTOS: Representative Mike Lawler joined representatives to briefly block a procedural measure. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KENNY HOLSTON/THE NEW YORK TIMES); Senator Ron Wyden, Democrat of Oregon and Finance Committee chair, brokered the package. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL A. MCCOY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A14.

**Load-Date:** February 1, 2024

**End of Document**



[***I’ve Never Watched Anything as Transformative as ‘Sailor Moon’; Letter of Recommendation***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69VJ-RC81-JBG3-62HF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 12, 2023 Tuesday 16:07 EST

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**Section:** MAGAZINE

**Length:** 1016 words

**Byline:** Venita Blackburn

**Highlight:** The show is about friendship, yes, and also liberation that does not match the world’s expectations of femininity.

**Body**

The show is about friendship, yes, and also liberation that does not match the world’s expectations of femininity.

The first lesbian relationship I saw portrayed on-screen was in “Sailor Moon.” Uranus and Neptune were two characters who seemed undeniably in love. The show is Japanese anime, though, and I could only watch the English-dubbed version that called them “cousins.” The titular Sailor Moon and the other Sailor Scouts are celestial superheroes sent across time to protect Earth from nefarious forces. In the human world, they take on the appearance of ordinary girls, but can transform into their fighting selves via personal totems. Sailor Moon often has a compact mirror and shouts, “Moon Prism Power, Makeup!” before transforming during battle and declaring, “In the name of the moon, I’ll punish you!” Swoon.

“Sailor Moon” aired early on weekday mornings when I was in middle school, around 1995. I was a bookish tomboy in Compton, Calif., a ***working-class*** suburb full of Black and brown people, where superheroes looked more like gangsta rappers than anime characters. I went to Sunday school every week in stockings and Mary Janes and thought of femininity as a chore rather than a good time. I loved women but hated the imagined woman I was supposed to one day swell into, makeup and perfume and nail polish and gold jewelry signaling my arrival wherever I went like bells on a cat. In this vision, I worked and maintained a household and didn’t expect much acknowledgment for the effort — and certainly no fun.

I grew up watching horror movies with my mother in the ’80s because she didn’t care about ratings systems and liked what she liked and wanted someone to watch with her, which explains a lot about me. I also watched cartoons freely, without being minded. Animation was a safe place. I controlled the VHS tapes, and my family would scatter whenever the opening of “The Little Mermaid” boomed into the house. In the world of cartoons, I was alone and unobserved. I think queer artists recognize this medium as a place of solace and fantasy — a secret world running parallel to the one in which L.G.B.T.Q. humans and people of color are targeted by book bans that want to annihilate both us and evidence of our existence.

Comics have always been a place for dreaming, for silliness, for the disregard of rules that apply to anything from physics to the patriarchy. Yes, the medium can also be used to perpetuate dangerous and demeaning ideas, but the nature of the form makes room for fantasies both malicious and divine. The queer experience thus finds a home in animated worlds. Queer art can be a propagandist of possibility in a universe not always in favor of queer existence, and that is lifesaving. The queerness of “Sailor Moon” isn’t really about Sailor Moon, a.k.a. “champion kicker of ass in a Japanese schoolgirl skirt and tiara,” though. The world of “Sailor Moon” is interested in transformation, in upsetting expectations of presentation and value related to girlhood, masculinity, strength and gender roles. The show is about friendship, yes, and also liberation that does not match the world’s expectations of femininity. The series includes actual trans characters and a lesbian couple with superpowers, in case there is any doubt.

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](http://youtube.com/embed/UL_F6L1tSAM)]

Anime in the ’90s and 2000s had its hyperviolent giant-mechanical-suit boy culture down. Representation of my personal identity was not prioritized broadly speaking, but the iconic status of “Sailor Moon” within the queer community was no accident. Although the more direct Sapphic references were edited out of the English version, censorship couldn’t erase the show’s queer sensibility for me. I remember the scene with Uranus and Neptune. Neptune is stretched out on a chaise longue, asleep by their pool, and Uranus leans over and wakes her up, whining that she’s not paying attention to her: “It’s not fair, you know. You just go into your own world and leave me behind.” Cousins, my ass. The show does not let up on the attraction the girls have for Uranus, even though they aren’t supposed to be attracted now that it’s clear she’s a woman. Years later, in a Best Buy circa 2005, I found DVDs of the show’s uncut Japanese version with subtitles, which confirmed what I’d known all along: They were lovers! I also discovered the existence of the Sailor Star Lights — who possessed the earthly bodies of boys but fought as girls and underlined the show’s gender queerness in the fifth and final season. (That season didn’t air with the others in the ’90s.) I felt vindication followed immediately by the depression of a closeted queer holding onto fictional characters as a promise for something other than every predetermined choice of girlhood. But I also discovered I could be more than one thing in one body: I could be masculine and feminine, powerful and clumsy; I could have vices and gifts, and not one trait would have to be the defining quality. I could be liberated.

The secret message of “Sailor Moon” might be that queerness is not just sexual (fight me); queerness is also existing under duress, where one’s instinct toward self-determination is a kind of spiritual expanse that grows from deep within the body and psyche then cascades out into an eventual shape unlike most others. Hulu has been streaming the show since 2014, broadening access to these inspirational figures. In “Sailor Moon,” the concept of transformation is about light, magic and power hidden in the ordinariness of living. There is nothing queerer than that (except maybe actual gay sex).

Venita Blackburn is the author of “How to Wrestle a Girl,” “Black Jesus and Other Superheroes” and the forthcoming novel “Dead in Long Beach, California.” She is an associate professor of fiction at California State University, Fresno.

Venita Blackburn is the author of “How to Wrestle a Girl,” “Black Jesus and Other Superheroes” and the forthcoming novel “Dead in Long Beach, California.” She is an associate professor of fiction at California State University, Fresno.

This article appeared in print on page MM16, MM17.

**Load-Date:** December 17, 2023

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[***Once a Force in Harlem, the Oldest Black Church in New York Hangs On; streetscapes***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68YT-YHP1-DXY4-X0J2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 18, 2023 Friday 16:46 EST

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**Section:** REALESTATE

**Length:** 2160 words

**Byline:** Mia Jackson

**Highlight:** Mother A.M.E. Zion Church recently received a $200,000 grant for preservation, but attendance has declined in recent years.

**Body**

Mother A.M.E. Zion Church recently received a $200,000 grant for preservation, but attendance has declined in recent years.

In the 227 years since its birth, Mother African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church — the oldest Black church in New York State — has served as a stop on the Underground Railroad, a haven for Black artists and intellectuals during the Harlem Renaissance and an amphitheater for civil rights activism during the 1950s and ‘60s.

Tucked among a row of tenements on West 137th Street between Malcolm X and Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevards, the imposing yet understated church is on a block unscathed by the insatiable tide of Harlem-hungry real estate developers. The building, designed by one of the first licensed Black architects in the nation, George Washington Foster, stands as one of few examples of Gothic Revival architecture nestled in the heart of Harlem.

But an aging congregation base, deferred maintenance, insufficient funding and a rapidly gentrifying Harlem threaten to capsize the church in the face of mounting financial distress. “Mother Zion lives week to week like the people on the block,” said the Rev. Malcolm J. Byrd, the senior pastor of the church.

Churches nationwide are experiencing dwindling turnouts at Sunday service, now that religious institutions regularly compete with brunch reservations, farmers markets, sports games and sleeping in for the Sunday morning slot. Mother A.M.E. Zion, which closed its doors for two years during the pandemic, also lost many of its congregants to Covid-19. Not to mention, much of its congregation base, New York’s ***working-class*** African American community, can no longer afford the neighborhood.

“The history of Harlem churches is bound up with the history of cities and the changes that happen within the cities,” said Prof. Wallace Best, who teaches African American studies and religion at Princeton University and is writing a book on Black churches in Harlem. “A lot of these churches are emptying out and that has to do with demographic patterns.”

The church received landmark status in 1993, and in January, it received a $200,000 [*grant*](https://savingplaces.org/black-churches) from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, an infusion of support intended to establish an endowment fund that the church will draw on the interest from for routine maintenance and preservation. But the church will be unable to financially sustain itself and uphold its legacy of tending to the spiritual, political, and social needs of its community, without a dramatic uptick in its membership and donation flow.

On any given Sunday, a few dozen or so churchgoers, primarily a mixture of older congregants and curious tourists, fill the pews. In 1971, about 8,000 paraders marched up Seventh Avenue, now known as Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard, during the sesquicentennial celebration of the church whose conference at the time boasted a citywide membership of 20,000 people, [*according to The New York Times*](https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1971/04/25/81937458.html?pageNumber=68).

The First Sunday After Second-class Treatment

The very first Sunday service of the church was [*held*](https://docsouth.unc.edu/church/moorej/moore.html) in 1796 in a cabinetmaker’s shop in Lower Manhattan on Cross Street, flanked by Orange and Mulberry Streets. A group of former slaves, dissatisfied with their second-class treatment in the predominantly white John Street Methodist Church, left to start Zion church under the leadership of its first bishop, James Varick. A 19th-century historian [*wrote*](https://docsouth.unc.edu/church/hood100/hood.html) of John Street Methodist that “the colored members were not permitted to come to the sacrament (hold Communion) until all the white members, even children, had communed.” In 1820, the church’s members formally voted to withdraw themselves from the white Methodist Church denomination to form an entirely separate conference known as African Methodist Episcopal Zion.

Numerous leaders of the early 19th-century Zion Church were outspoken advocates of the abolitionist movement. Sojourner Truth, a former slave, evangelist, and abolitionist, upon escaping her bondage and reaching New York City in 1829, joined Mother A.M.E. Zion. The A.M.E. Zion Church Conference membership boasts a distinguished roster of abolitionist luminaries, including Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass. Colloquially referred to as the “Freedom Church,” A.M.E. Zion was a sanctuary of liberation during the 19th century, an era of rampant oppression and inequality.

The flourishing of Mother A.M.E. Zion is intricately tied to Black migratory patterns in the city. The 137th Street location is the church’s sixth home. After outgrowing its humble beginnings in the cabinetmaker’s shop, the church constructed its first edifice in 1800 on a 35-by-45-foot plot of land on the corner of Church and Leonard Streets in Lower Manhattan. In 1825, Mother A.M.E. Zion purchased six plots of land near 86th Street. to use as a cemetery in a budding Seneca Village, a predominantly Black, middle-class community established the same year.

“A.M.E. Zion was one of the first landowners and the first two individuals to buy land in the village were connected to the church,” said Meredith B. Linn, an assistant professor of historical archaeology at Bard College. In 1853, Mother A.M.E. Zion established a satellite church in the village to serve the community’s growing Black population. In 1857, the community was uprooted and forced to move farther north and west under state-authorized eminent domain for the [*construction*](https://www.centralparknyc.org/articles/seneca-village) of Central Park.

Much of the city’s ***working-class*** Black community migrated to “Little Africa,” present-day Greenwich Village, after the violence of the 1863 draft riots in Lower Manhattan. In the footsteps of its congregation base, the church relocated to its third location in a former Dutch Reformed Church on the northeast corner of West 10th and Bleecker streets in 1864.

The construction of Pennsylvania Station in 1910 and the widening of Sixth Avenue in 1926, coupled with fierce competition for housing with recently arrived Italian immigrants in Little Africa, forced many of the neighborhood’s Black families to uproot once again and head farther uptown. Mother A.M.E. Zion moved to the Upper West Side in 1904, then to its fifth home in a former Episcopal Church on West 136th Street in Harlem and to its final location on West 137th Street in 1925.

Mother A.M.E. Zion arrived in Harlem when numerous Black families were moving from the South to capitalize on the expanding economic and creative prospects in the neighborhood; that period is now known as the Harlem Renaissance. Coupled with increased racial tension and discrimination, the Renaissance engendered a new collective consciousness, sense of unity and political culture among residents, which was formalized through the Black church.

The Rev. James W. Brown and his successor, the Rev. Benjamin C. Robeson, established Mother A.M.E. Zion as an institution of spiritual worship and political activism.

Mr. Robeson, who led the church from 1936 to 1963, preached the doctrine of civil rights activism, which drew notable Harlem residents of the likes of W.E.B. DuBois and Langston Hughes to Mother A.M.E. Zion. Under the leadership of the Rev. George McMurray who succeeded Mr. Robeson, the church created numerous programs devoted to economic and social rehabilitation.

In the 1970s, the church opened the James L. Varick Community Center, and established a community board to operate the center, which provided day care, mental health care, after-school programs and education for women experiencing homelessness. In 2015, the board could no longer afford the community center and sold the building.

The church’s interior still reflects its illustrious history. In the basement, a small museum houses its rare documents and old photographs. The remains of Mr. Varick rest below the sanctuary. The 1000-seat sanctuary was constructed like an auditorium, and that’s purposeful, said Professor Best. “The building was built in recognition that it would have to meet the full needs of the community.”

‘I Pray for Him’

But another evolution has come and this time, the church won’t just move, it will die.

Much of the housing units, even the so-called affordable ones, that have sprung up in the neighborhood are financially out of reach for Harlem’s ***working-class*** residents.

Although North Harlem’s overall population climbed by 15 percent from 2010 to 2020, its Black population [*fell*](https://popfactfinder.planning.nyc.gov/explorer/cities/NYC?compareTo=MN1002&amp;source=decennial-previous) by more than 10 percentage points, to 56.7 percent, from 67.2 percent.

“If you wake up in the morning and look out your window, you’d think you’re living downtown,” said Amelia Montgomery, 81, a longtime Harlem resident and member of Mother A.M.E. Zion. She and her late husband, Dabney Montgomery, a Tuskegee airman and civil rights activist, bought a brownstone a few blocks from the church in 1978. She also contributed to the efforts to establish the nearby Dorrance Brooks Square Historic District, a rowhouse-rich area between Lenox Avenue and Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard.

Ms. Montgomery, intimately tied to the church since the moment of her birth, after her mother went into labor during a Friday night prayer meeting at Mother A.M.E. Zion, hopes Mr. Byrd will be the catalyst the church needs to steer it toward a sustainable future amid a crossroad of tradition and change. “I pray for him every day, and whatever I can do to restore the spirit of Mother Zion, I’m doing that,” Ms. Montgomery said.

Mr. Byrd, a licensed A.M.E. Zion minister since he was 14, said the congregation’s sustenance cannot rest solely on the pious routine of Sunday worship. “Black people need more than a Sunday morning to sustain themselves. The church has to be a multifaceted place for them,” said Mr. Byrd. Since joining the church in 2019, Mr. Byrd has instituted several social programs, including health workshops. He’s developing a G.E.D. program and is exploring more creative ideas, like adding a coffee shop in the church.

Mr. Byrd has participated in protests against the destruction of the neighborhood’s historic properties, arguing that many of Harlem’s relics are demolished because they do not have protected status. “If you tear down the people’s landmarks, if you tear down the people’s memorials, there will come a time when there will be generations that will never know how great the people were,” Mr. Byrd said.

‘Unmarked’

“Harlem is remarkably unmarked,” Professor Best argued. For example, Harlem’s Lafayette Theater was “rated by the Landmarks Preservation Commission’s staff as of ‘outstanding significance,’ but it was never designated,” the former Streetscapes columnist Christopher Gray [*wrote*](https://www.nytimes.com/1990/11/11/realestate/streetscapes-harlem-s-lafayette-theater-jackhammering-the-past.html). Lafayette Theater, a 1,500-seat Renaissance-style theater built in 1912, became the first major theater in New York to desegregate in 1913. A century later, the building was demolished and replaced by an eight-story luxury apartment building called the Lafayette.

In recent years, grass roots organizing by groups like “Save Harlem Now” have rallied residents to demand that the Landmark Preservation Commission do more to preserve keepsakes from Harlem’s celebrated early 20th century history. Since its founding in 2015, the group has successfully obtained protected status for some Harlem landmarks including the Harlem branch of the New York Public Library.

Nonetheless, some Black churches have downsized — viewing selling their brick-and-mortar houses of worship to luxury-apartment developers with deep pockets as the only viable path forward. The Victorian Gothic architecture and stained glass windows that once made up Metropolitan Community United Methodist Church, which dates back to 1871, was demolished in 2020, despite objections from parishioners and preservationists alike.

In 2017, Second Canaan Baptist Church sold its property to Level One Holdings to redevelop it into an eight-story condominium with a sanctuary on the lower level. First Ebenezer Baptist Church also sold its building in 2017, creating a new sanctuary on the first floor of the condominium constructed in its place.

“Churches in Harlem are confronting a changed neighborhood,” Professor Best said. “To ask what is the future of Black churches in Harlem is to ask what is the future of Black people in Harlem.”

PHOTOS: Above, the construction of the present-day Mother A.M.E. Zion Church, left, whose attendance has dwindled to a few dozen each Sunday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MOTHER A.M.E. ZION CHURCH) (RE1); Top, the sanctuary of the Mother African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church building on 137th Street. Second row, from left: a church gathering in 1924; an earlier look at the sanctuary; the former Episcopal church. which Mother A.M.E. Zion bought in 1914 and used for worship until 1925, when it moved to its current edifice. Above, the Rev. Malcolm J. Byrd. Right, a collection of church artifacts. Below, the exterior of Mother A.M.E. Zion Church, which is next to a tenement-style building. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY FLO NGALA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; MOTHER A.M.E. ZION CHURCH) (RE6) This article appeared in print on page RE1, RE6.

**Load-Date:** August 20, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Review: Robert Gober Conjures America; Critic’s Pick***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:699X-03H1-DXY4-X064-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 4, 2023 Wednesday 17:23 EST

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**Section:** ARTS; design

**Length:** 665 words

**Byline:** Roberta Smith

**Highlight:** The artist, displaying his own work along with his idiosyncratic holdings, invites rumination on the state of the nation at Demisch Danant gallery.

**Body**

The artist, displaying his own work along with his idiosyncratic holdings, invites rumination on the state of the nation at Demisch Danant gallery.

The artist Robert Gober must be a consummate shopper. “[*Cows at a Pond*](https://www.demischdanant.com/exhibitions/robert-gober),” his fragmentary but resonant portrait of the United States at Demisch Danant, has been curated entirely from his own possessions. That is, from his own art and work by other artists living and dead that he has collected, combined with selections from the ephemera and Americana he has accumulated over the years, including some of his household furniture.

Visiting this show can seem stepping inside a grand, laser-sharp obsession. You can picture Gober — whose best-known sculptures use familiar but distorted objects to conjure some of the perils of childhood — paging through obscure auction catalogs and haunting thrift shops. In addition he seems to regularly pore over all kinds of printed matter, tracking down or coming across the odd bit of ephemera that may have a use that only he can see.

The things he finds may become artworks, or parts of them, or may stand on their own, adjacent to his art, as clues to or parts of a larger narrative. Every detail is noteworthy. For example, a photograph of Charles Darwin suggests life as a struggle — psychically and physically — which is certainly a theme here. The checklist reveals that the photograph was taken by Darwin’s son Leonard, introducing the idea of family dynamics, which recurs in startling ways.

Also, some inclusions add weight to others. A red-and-black on yellow sign suspending parking in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 5 and 6, 2021, gives new relevance to a 1972 painting in the gallery’s front window by the maverick conceptualist Jonathan Borofsky. It shows a young boy climbing into the family car after school, announcing “Mom, I lost the election.” From the mouths of babes ….

Moments of comfort — art for sanity’s sake you could say — include a tender drawing of a dog’s head by the Abstract Expressionist Elaine de Kooning. It hangs slyly above a first edition of Allen Ginsberg’s “Howl” — that is actually a meticulous replica of the book made in 1990 by the artist Steve Wolfe. Also on hand: Stuart Davis’s “Clothes on a Line,” a 1910 painting of white garments levitating in the day’s last light, like ghosts. Next to this ***working-class*** vista is a more privileged one: a sketch of sailboats by John F. Kennedy.

There are also references to individuals of inspirational determination. Barbara Jordan, the first Southern Black woman elected to the House of Representatives, is present in a photograph. A portrait of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by an unknown painter faces a book inscription by Helen Keller: “I just read this book and like it so I am sending it to you.” Both the book it was torn from and its intended recipient are lost to history.

But don’t miss the threat implicit in the King portrait’s neighbor: a cartoon-creepy drawing of a hand with Morticia-like long fingers and pointed nails; it’s a Matisse study for the chapel in Vence, France, but in this context it evokes the white violence that plagued King’s life.

Gober’s early sculpture — a large, functioning dollhouse titled “Dollhouse 2,” from 1977 — occupies the center of the show. Childhood is also evoked in two nearby found objects, both handmade: a pair of child-size wood crutches and a decrepit wood-and-marble baptismal font. The combination may bring to mind the poignant title of D.W. Winnicott’s great book on childhood development, “Home is Where We Start From.”

Robert Gober: Cows at a Pond

Through Oct. 21 at Demisch Danant, 30 West 12th Street, Manhattan; 212- 989-5750, [*demischdanant.com*](https://www.demischdanant.com/exhibitions).

PHOTO: An installation view of Robert Gober’s “Cows at a Pond” at Demisch Danant. At center, his “Dollhouse 2” (1977); John Ahearn’s plaster, “Lazaro” (1991); and furnishings from Gober’s home. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBERT GOBER, VIA DEMISCH DANANT, NEW YORK; WILLIAM JESS LAIRD) This article appeared in print on page C12.

**Load-Date:** October 5, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Haley’s Missed Opportunity: Iowa Slows Her Roll Into New Hampshire***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B41-PWS1-JBG3-600P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 16, 2024 Tuesday 13:55 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1317 words

**Highlight:** A third-place finish didn’t deliver the boost Nikki Haley wanted as she tries to turn the race into a one-on-one with Donald Trump.

**Body**

A third-place finish didn’t deliver the boost Nikki Haley wanted as she tries to turn the race into a one-on-one with Donald Trump.

Nikki Haley had hoped to vault into New Hampshire ahead of next Tuesday’s first-in-the-nation primary with a head of steam from a second-place finish in Iowa and a powerful case to make that the 2024 nomination fight was a two-candidate race between her and Donald J. Trump.

Instead, as Ms. Haley hobbles into New Hampshire, the pressure is on to show she can compete with Mr. Trump.

Her disappointing third-place finish in the Iowa caucuses on Monday showed that for all the hype, her momentum ultimately stalled in the face of a Republican electorate still in the thrall of the former president. That included not only Mr. Trump’s ***working-class*** base but also the bastions of college-educated Republicans in and around Des Moines that she was supposed to dominate.

In her speech after the caucuses, Ms. Haley, the former governor of South Carolina, sharpened her attack on Mr. Trump, questioning his age and his ability to unite a fractured country. She lumped Mr. Trump with Mr. Biden as backward-looking barriers to an American revival.

“The question before Americans is now very clear: Do you want more of the same or do you want a new generation of conservative leadership?” she asked, drawing loud applause and chants of “Nikki, Nikki.” “Our campaign is the last best hope of stopping the Trump-Biden nightmare.”

Still, Ms. Haley’s final tally in Iowa most likely breathed some new life into the campaign of her rival, Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida, and indicated that, for all the excitement around her campaign in the closing weeks, her pitch may have limited appeal with Republicans.

With more than 95 percent of precincts reporting late Monday, Ms. Haley had 19 percent of the vote, Mr. Trump 51 percent and Mr. DeSantis 21 percent. Vivek Ramaswamy, a tech entrepreneur and political newcomer who has relentlessly traveled the state on a largely self-funded bid, came in fourth, with 7.7 percent, then dropped out and endorsed Mr. Trump.

Ms. Haley’s allies on Monday projected confidence that she was headed into more favorable territory in New Hampshire, where she hopes to turn the race into a head-to-head against Mr. Trump. The state’s Republicans are more moderate and less religious, and independents can vote in the primary, all factors that may work to Ms. Haley’s advantage.

“New Hampshire and Iowa are two very different states,” said Kimberly Rice, her campaign’s co-chairwoman in New Hampshire.

“It is a two-point difference,” said Representative Ralph Norman of South Carolina, referring to the gap separating Ms. Haley and Mr. DeSantis. And he argued it was Mr. DeSantis “who put his eggs in only one basket” — his campaign spent heavily in Iowa.

For Ms. Haley, who served as Mr. Trump’s first ambassador to the United Nations, a steady underdog campaign, aided by the struggles of Mr. DeSantis’s operation, was not enough to win over a very conservative Republican electorate driven by social issues like abortion and shaped by evangelical sensibilities.

She also may have faced the longstanding skepticism of Republican voters toward female candidates. After a Haley campaign stop in Waukee, Iowa, last week, Bruce Norquist, a 60-year-old cybersecurity consultant from Urbandale, Iowa, said that Ms. Haley was not strong, citing the threats posed to the country by disinformation campaigns from China and Russia and what he said were efforts to tamper with voting machines.

“I’m worried Nikki Haley isn’t skeptical enough,” he said. “Democracy is at stake.”

The final [*Iowa Poll*](https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/politics/iowa-poll/caucus/2024/01/13/iowa-poll-nikki-haley-leads-ron-desantis-ahead-of-republican-caucus-night-big-lead-for-donald-trump/72216523007/) conducted by The Des Moines Register, NBC News and Mediacom showed her finishing second, but, under those headline numbers, the survey attested to serious problems for Ms. Haley.

Only 9 percent of her supporters said they were extremely enthusiastic about voting for her. Most said they were mildly enthusiastic or not enthusiastic at all. On Caucus Day, enough of those voters either failed to show up or switched their votes.

That was not the case for Mr. Trump’s voters, who have shrugged off any worries about nominating a former president facing [*91 felony counts from four criminal prosecutions*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/us/trump-investigations-charges-indictments.html), a looming fraud judgment that could dismantle his New York real estate empire and a pending decision on the defamation of a woman he has [*already been held liable for sexually abusing*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/09/nyregion/trump-carroll-trial-sexual-abuse-defamation.html).

The site of her caucus watch party provided early signals of her finishing position. Just as Haley supporters were expected to gather in an elegant ballroom at one end of the hotel, caucusgoers were leaving a room down the hall, where Mr. Trump had clinched victory with 16 votes. Mr. DeSantis came in second with 14, and Ms. Haley came in third with eight.

The final days of the Iowa campaign were shaped by the fight for second place and the increasingly vitriolic charges and countercharges between Ms. Haley and Mr. DeSantis over the airwaves and in press interviews.

Until recent months, Ms. Haley appeared to be struggling to make up ground in Iowa, but a burst of momentum in the polls, both in Iowa and across the country, had created expectations she could not meet. Americans for Prosperity, the conservative network backed by the fortune of the billionaires Charles and David Koch, endorsed her and spent more than $150,000 in the final weeks on a door-knocking and get-out-the-vote drive.

Mr. DeSantis, who bet his candidacy on the state, built a formidable ground operation and won the endorsements of Gov. Kim Reynolds and Bob Vander Plaats, an influential leader of Iowa’s Christian right.

Ms. Haley took a penny-pinching approach, keeping her operation lean and her overhead costs low. She and her crew flew commercial and stayed at affordable hotels. She left most of the advertising spending to her allied super PAC until just before the holidays. Ms. Haley, a former accountant, obsessed over the campaign budget and often audited spreadsheets of expenses line by line, her senior campaign officials said. She received a daily email with how much money the campaign had raised the previous day, and on a weekly basis reviewed a more detailed campaign budget.

The approach was a stark contrast from that taken by Mr. DeSantis, who since the early days of the campaign has been flying on private planes and traveling across Iowa on campaign buses (including one paid for by his allied super PAC), and who would eventually be forced to make staffing cuts while [*facing a cash crunch*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/16/us/politics/desantis-staff-campaign-shakeup.html). But those investments ultimately paid dividends.

After the first national Republican debate in August in Milwaukee, Ms. Haley’s fund-raising soared, crowds started to pick up at campaign events and she began to climb in the polls, particularly in New Hampshire.

But those were not the voters who showed up to caucus. Ms. Haley’s argument that she was the best Republican to thwart Mr. Biden’s re-election may have been persuasive with [*college-educated Republican voters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/20/upshot/poll-trump-nikki-haley.html), 39 percent of whom backed her in a New York Times/Siena College poll released last month.

But in a wider Republican electorate that has been transformed by Mr. Trump into a bastion of voters without a college education, Ms. Haley, in the Times/Siena poll, had the support of just 3 percent of those voters.

The voters she had tepidly won over expressed their doubts. Sitting on a tall stool in Pella, Iowa, Bryan Healy, 70, a retired manufacturing business owner who voted for Mr. Trump in 2016 and Mr. Biden in 2020, said Ms. Haley needed to be more aggressive toward a “dangerous” and “autocratic” Mr. Trump.

“It’s time for Nikki to stop running for vice president — she’s got to swing for the fence,” he said.

PHOTO: Nikki Haley finished in the third place in the Iowa caucuses, a disappointing result after a rise in her polling numbers in the last weeks of the race. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Ruth Fremson/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** January 16, 2024

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[***The Most Durable Force in American Politics: Trump's Ties to His Voters***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B41-BCF1-JBG3-613J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 16, 2024 Tuesday

The New York Times on the Web

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**Section:** Section ; Column 0; Politics; NEWS ANALYSIS

**Length:** 1318 words

**Byline:** By Michael C. Bender and Katie Glueck

**Body**

If Donald Trump's rivals want to stop his rise, they'll need to break his bond with his supporters. They didn't come close in Iowa.

Bill Clinton once explained the nation's two political parties by saying that Democrats want to fall in love while Republicans want to fall in line.

That adage has not withstood the Trump era. Today, it is Republicans who are besotted.

Donald J. Trump's decisive victory in Iowa revealed a new depth to the reservoir of devotion inside his party. For eight years, he has nurtured a relationship with his supporters with little precedent in politics. He validates them, he entertains them, he speaks for them and he uses them for his political and legal advantage.

This connection -- a hard-earned bond for some, a cult of personality to others -- has unleashed one the most durable forces in American politics.

Iowa Republicans, following the lead of party officials across the country, rallied behind the former president despite a list of reasons to reject him. Republicans lost control of the presidency, the Senate and the House during his four years in office. He failed to deliver the red wave of victories he promised in the 2022 midterms. He has been charged with 91 felonies in four criminal cases this past year.

And they stayed with him even as they were offered viable alternatives: Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida, a popular, young governor who embraced Mr. Trump's policies, and Nikki Haley, one of the Deep South's first female governors, who credibly promised she could win back voters Mr. Trump drove away.

Yet in the first chance Americans had to cast judgment on Mr. Trump since he tried to overthrow an election, many Iowa Republicans made clear they don't judge him. They adore him.

''Trump is not a candidate, he's the leader of a national movement,'' said Newt Gingrich, a former House speaker who has advised Mr. Trump. ''No one has come to grips with what's it like to take on the champion of a movement. That's why even as all these legal issues pile up, it just infuriates his movement and increases their anger unbelievably.''

The risks associated with the kind of unusually strong hold Mr. Trump maintains on the party have already emerged.

He has encouraged supporters to view him as above fault or defeat, a mindset that can lead to the kind of political violence that shocked the nation during the Capitol riot on Jan. 6, 2021. Elevating charisma over character can open the door to the kind of authoritarianism that Mr. Trump has promised on the campaign trail this past year.

''A lot of the people that support Donald Trump really are fed up with democracy, representative democracy, they think that an authoritarian-style government would probably be preferable at this point, in order to save the nation or whatever,'' said former Representative Charles Bass, a New Hampshire Republican who previously voted for Mr. Trump, but said he would not do so again. ''I don't think they feel threatened by having somebody who at least has the trappings of being more authoritarian than past presidents.''

Although Mr. Trump's win was resounding, the Iowa results suggest the party remains deeply divided over his return to power. Roughly half of Iowa Republicans voted for one of Mr. Trump's rivals, including about 20 percent who backed Mr. DeSantis, who finished in second, with Ms. Haley close behind.

Republicans who resisted Mr. Trump in Iowa included the party's youngest voters and anti-abortion-rights conservatives who backed Mr. DeSantis, according to entrance polls.

Similarly, Ms. Haley won moderate voters, Republicans who believed Mr. Trump lost the 2020 election, those who support a muscular foreign policy and the segment of the party that prioritized temperament in their choice for a presidential nominee.

Party strategists and officials in other states caution against drawing sweeping conclusions from the votes of a narrow slice of Republicans in a small state. As the Republican nominating contest moves to New Hampshire next week, one poll this month showed Ms. Haley within striking distance of Mr. Trump. The state's voters tend to be more moderate and less religious, suggesting an opening for her.

Mr. DeSantis's ability to threaten Mr. Trump is less clear. He marketed himself to voters as a Trumpian wunderkind, able to deliver America First policies without the drama and chaos that often trail the former president.

But MAGA Nation rivals the Queen's Guard when it comes to standing at the ready to defend their sovereign, and Mr. DeSantis was turned back as Republicans showed they are less interested in policies than they are the man.

''I know that he is picked by God for this hour,'' said Patricia Lage, an Iowa caucusgoer who spoke in support of Mr. Trump on Monday night in Carlisle, outside Des Moines. ''There are things that he has done in the past, but we all have pasts.''

Mr. Trump has spent years tending to his voters -- taking aim at their shared enemies and anticipating their grievances. He has compulsively tried to ensure that he was never out of step.

That preoccupation repeatedly drove his decisions in the White House, from refusing to wear a mask during the initial outbreak of Covid-19 in 2020 to his opposition to striking the names of Confederate generals from U.S. military bases.

More recently, Mr. Trump has attacked Mr. DeSantis for signing a six-week abortion ban and avoided committing to a federal ban on the procedure, betting that his voters will either agree or forgive him for deviating from a core conservative priority.

Perhaps most significantly, he has rallied their support amid unprecedented legal troubles in part by describing the prosecution of him as an attempt to silence them.

''You and I have been in this battle side-by-side, together -- and we have been taking on the entire corrupt system in Washington like no one has ever done before,'' Mr. Trump told Iowa supporters at a rally on Sunday, adding that the political establishment and global elites ''are at war with us -- we have to fight.''

Voter anger at political institutions remains sky-high -- a dynamic that explains what appears, at first glance, to be nothing short of a political magic act: The billionaire son of a multimillionaire has become the voice for ***working-class*** Americans.

''His gift is that the average voter in Iowa, New Hampshire and state after state feels like he connects with them,'' said David Bossie, Mr. Trump's deputy campaign manager in 2016. ''He's a blue-collar billionaire.''

Both Mr. DeSantis and Ms. Haley have tried to weaken Mr. Trump's ties to his supporters without issuing many direct attacks on Mr. Trump. But the race to emerge as the Trump alternative is becoming increasingly urgent, with limited time for the candidates to cement that standing.

Former Senator Judd Gregg of New Hampshire, a Haley supporter, lamented that much of his party had become ''sort of a cult'' around Mr. Trump. He still considers himself a Republican, though, and views Mr. Trump as the interloper.

''I don't think Trump's a Republican,'' Mr. Gregg said. ''He's a demagogue.''

David Kochel, a longtime Iowa Republican operative opposed to Mr. Trump, said the former president's bond with his voters was unlikely to be replicated by other candidates. The party has become more populist and anti-establishment, but Mr. Trump's ability to capitalize on his celebrity status while harnessing the swirling mix of anger at elites, racial grievances and mounting distrust of political, judicial and international institutions was, for now, unique.

''He's a unicorn in our party,'' Mr. Kochel said. ''Republicans have become more populist and anti-establishment, but that doesn't mean the party will nominate Majorie Taylor Greene or Jim Jordan next. There's no going back to the old party.''

Alyce McFadden contributed reporting.Alyce McFadden contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/us/politics/trump-iowa-win-voters.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/us/politics/trump-iowa-win-voters.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Former President Donald Trump at a rally in Indianola, Iowa, the day before the state caucuses. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Haiyun Jiang for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** January 16, 2024

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[***This Whisky Is From Wales? Certifiably So.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B41-BCF1-JBG3-6126-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 16, 2024 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 4; ABERGWYNGREGYN DISPATCH

**Length:** 1196 words

**Byline:** By Stephen Castle

**Body**

It is no simple task to get an official seal of approval for a bottle of Welsh spirits. Persuading purists to give it a try may also be a challenge.

It is famed for a love of singing and a passion for rugby. It has a distinctive Celtic language and is the birthplace of the poet Dylan Thomas. But few would claim that Wales, a nation of three million people outnumbered by sheep, is well known for whiskey, or whisky, as it is known in Wales.

Yet the country has played its part in distilling history -- a Welshman is considered one of the founding fathers of bourbon -- and a recent revival of whisky production has prompted new rules governing which liquor can call itself Welsh.

That was how the problems began in Abergwyngregyn (pronounced ABER-gwin-gregin), in the shadow of the ice-capped Snowdonia mountain range, where Aber Falls single-malt whisky is produced in a distillery filled with the strong malty aroma of barley.

Made with exclusively Welsh grain and water from a picturesque nearby waterfall, the light, slightly fruity, single-malt whisky distilled by Aber Falls was the first in more than a century to be produced in North Wales.

The packaging is red -- one of the national colors of Wales -- and bears an image of a dragon, the country's symbol. When the distillery opened in 2017, its mission was to create ''a Welsh brand, supporting Wales and collaborating with other Welsh businesses,'' said Carole Jones, its general manager.

But it still was not Welsh enough.

Last year, Aber Falls whisky failed a test for certification as a protected Welsh product because the bottling was taking place not at the distillery, but 50 miles across the border, in England. The company had a choice: move the bottling back to Wales, or banish any mention of Welshness from the label -- even the red dragon.

That, said Ms. Jones, would have been a ''catastrophe'' for Aber Falls, so by September, bottling was back on Welsh soil, allowing the company to join a list with four other certified Welsh whisky makers.

Awkward though it was, the wrangle over provenance highlights the growing interest in whisky in Wales, where a small number of commercial distilleries have followed in the footsteps of the best-known modern day producer, Penderyn. In total, Welsh whisky firms generate an estimated 23 million pounds, or about $29 million, in revenue a year.

Though for some, whisky is synonymous with Scotch, Wales enjoys an unusual place in liquor history because a Welshman, Evan Williams, is hailed as one of the first distillers of bourbon in the United States.

Historical details are sketchy and disputed, but, according to Heaven Hill Brands, the producers of a bourbon named for him, Mr. Williams was born in 1755, immigrated to North America in the late 1770s or early 1780s, and began distilling in 1783 in Louisville, Ky. He was probably raised in Dale, Pembrokeshire, where his family may have had a distillery.

The country he left behind never developed commercial production on the scale of Scotland or Ireland, but in 1889, one large producer, the Welsh Whisky Distillery Company, was founded in Frongoch, near Bala, around 50 miles from Aber Falls.

It did not survive long. In England, the whisky's reception was lukewarm. In Scotland, it was cooler, and in Wales, social forces were gathering against it, including the temperance movement.

''Conditions in many of the factories and mines were so bad, and poverty was so rife, that there was a movement to galvanize people into Christian communities,'' said Alexander Langlands, an associate professor of history at Swansea University. ''In hard-working ***working-class*** communities, you really didn't want young men, fathers and grandfathers, and women in the family, taking to the bottle. So there is a reason why it died -- a cultural reason -- here in Wales.''

It took a century, but the revival began in 2004, when Penderyn was opened in South Wales. It expanded a decade later and has won critical acclaim.

''It's a whisky I would keep in my collection,'' said Vic Cameron, a whisky lecturer at the University of the Highlands and Islands in Scotland, referring to a Penderyn single malt finished in a former Madeira cask.

While ''Scotch took over the world,'' Mr. Cameron said, whisky can be produced wherever cereals grow.

''If you ferment it and distill it, it's whisky,'' he said. ''And the Welsh have everything that we have: They have decent water, they have malted barley, and they have yeast, so they can make good whisky.''

Still, selling whisky, said Dr. Langlands, who advised Penderyn on branding, often requires creating ''a sort of mystique.'' He said, ''You really do need to pull on some sort of heritage.''

To that end, Penderyn uses an old copper works in Swansea, while Aber Falls, on the banks of the gushing river that flows from the waterfall to the Menai Strait, distills in a 19th-century slate works (previously used as a margarine factory).

Starting with a staff of only five, Aber Falls now employs 35 people, 29 of whom work at the distillery, with the remainder in Bangor, about 10 miles away, where bottling now takes place.

Spirits were first produced here in 2018, but whisky must be matured in casks for at least three years, so it was not until 2021 that a single malt was released.

Last year, still adapting to its exit from the European Union, Britain introduced a system of ''geographical indicators'' intended to replace a pan-European system meant to protect products like Champagne and Cognac from imitations.

Aber Falls supported the new rules that required that Welsh water be used and that the whisky be distilled, matured and bottled in Wales. But it fell foul of them when staff shortages made bottling in Bangor uneconomical and Aber Falls began turning to a site owned by its parent company in Chorley, England.

With the coveted ''Welsh'' designation at stake, the company moved swiftly to resume bottling in Wales, aided by the closure of a local factory that freed up more workers.

Business is good, and last January, the company moved to 24-hour distilling. Around 6,000 bottles of whisky are produced each week in Bangor, and exports go to 40 countries, including China and Kazakhstan, with plans to add the United States next year.

In the summer, there are as many as seven tours of the distillery a day, drawing many of the thousands of tourists who visit the spectacular Aber Falls waterfall. Some of them are whisky aficionados. Others come for other reasons.

''It's something to do, particularly if it's raining,'' said Steve Bell, 65, a part-time tour guide.

Ms. Jones, the general manager, is 52 and was born and raised in Wales. She said there was now a big push by the government ''to build Wales's brand'' -- including gaining global recognition for its whisky.

That may pose a bit of a challenge.

Ms. Jones said she believed her single malt competes with those from Scotland, but she acknowledged that, after missing out on a century of distilling, Welsh whisky lacked renown.

''I think we still have a lot of work to do,'' she said. ''There are still people in a lot of countries who don't know where Wales is.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/14/world/europe/wales-whiskey.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/14/world/europe/wales-whiskey.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Clockwise from top left: whisky flowing at the Aber Falls distillery

the Aber Falls waterfall in Snowdonia National Park in Wales

bottles of the whisky

and Carole Jones, the general manager of Aber Falls, at the distillery. The brand is available in 40 countries, including China and Kazakhstan, but not yet in the United States. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARY TURNER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A4.

**Load-Date:** January 16, 2024

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[***The Queue***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:687C-8HC1-DXY4-X4J2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 14, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section AR; Column 0; Arts and Leisure Desk; Pg. 2

**Length:** 349 words

**Byline:** By Isabella Kwai

**Body**

Isabella Kwai is a London-based reporter covering international breaking news for The New York Times. Though her job requires her to keep abreast of geopolitics and current affairs, in her free time she tries to escape into the inner lives of other human beings -- the more universal the experience, the better.

Here are five things she has been watching, reading and listening to.

All About Love

This classic by the feminist writer bell hooks was published over 20 years ago, but her reflections on love still feel fresh. Part self-exploration, part dissection, the book identifies a scarcity of love in society and offers a road map on how to love across familial, romantic and communal bonds.

Dar Disku

It was a spontaneous night out with a friend of a friend that turned into my first encounter with Dar Disku, a London-based collective founded by two friends from Bahrain. Their music mixes Middle Eastern and Asian influences with modern electronic beats. The effect, somehow both timeless and nostalgic, kept everyone cavorting into the early hours.

Aftersun

I don't usually love slow films, and not much happens in ''Aftersun,'' about a father and daughter vacationing in Turkey. As it progresses, though, you see the trip is a memory frozen in time before the momentum of life takes over. It hints at tragedy for the father and uncertainty for the daughter. You will probably cry.

Prima Facie

I still remember sitting in the audience on London's West End, absorbed in the rawness of ''Prima Facie.'' Alone onstage for 100 minutes, Jodie Comer (''Killing Eve'') plays a brilliant barrister from a ***working-class*** background who contends with the fallout of a sexual assault. It opened on Broadway in April.

@doseofsociety

What did you regret from your last heartbreak? What was the most painful thing you've ever been told? It is not your best friend answering these questions on @doseofsociety but the strangers who often slip by, unnoticed, on the streets. Here though, they stop. And are open about their struggles. The account feels like a collective of longings and wisdom.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/03/arts/whats-in-our-queue-bell-hooks-and-more.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/03/arts/whats-in-our-queue-bell-hooks-and-more.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Frankie Corio and Paul Mescal in ''Aftersun.'' (PHOTOGRAPH BY A24)

Jodie Comer in ''Prima Facie.'' (PHOTOGRAPH BY SARA KRULWICH/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page AR2.

**Load-Date:** May 14, 2023

**End of Document**



[***The Old New Way to Provide Cheap Housing***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69V5-9NP1-JBG3-6050-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 10, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2023 The New York Times Company

**Section:** Section SR; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 3; NICHOLAS KRISTOF

**Length:** 1022 words

**Byline:** By Nicholas Kristof

**Body**

Homelessness is an American tragedy, but it's not hopeless. In a recent column, I explored how Houston has become a national model by reducing homelessness by more than 60 percent.

One takeaway is that homelessness, above all, reflects a shortage of cheap housing. So I'm intrigued by an approach to providing such housing that's gaining ground around the country. It's an idea so old, it seems new: converting single-family houses to rooming houses.

Rooming houses, boardinghouses or single room occupancy (S.R.O.) hotels used to be ubiquitous. President Thomas Jefferson stayed in a boardinghouse for several months before moving into the White House. At the seedier end, S.R.O.s largely disappeared over the past half-century, partly because of zoning and economic development projects.

In Houston I dropped in on a home operated by PadSplit, a company that offers furnished bedrooms for ***working-class*** Americans. PadSplit, which is something like a long-term Airbnb for rooming houses, has housed 22,000 people so far and is growing fast.

The PadSplit model is to take a house that is near public transportation, convert the living room to a bedroom, put locks on each bedroom door and then rent out each room by the week. This typically means a shared bathroom and kitchen, and some tenants have complaints, but it's affordable for people who have few other options.

''It's reasonable!'' said Gregory Walker, 46, a warehouse employee who takes home $2,300 a month.

He pays $150 a week, or a bit more than $600 a month, for a furnished bedroom in the PadSplit I visited. He shares it with six others in a middle-class neighborhood. Utilities and Wi-Fi are included in the rent.

Previously, Walker was stuck in a ''sleazy hotel,'' as he put it, for $1,950 a month because he had a poor credit record that made it difficult to rent an apartment.

Rooming houses are quite different from the practice of young professionals having housemates in cities like New York and Boston. PadSplit rooms are often cheaper (partly because there aren't shared living areas), management is by a company rather than the residents, and payment is by the week to make it more workable for people living paycheck by paycheck. S.R.O.s were often squalid, but PadSplit is trying to elevate the experience.

PadSplit is the brainchild of an Atlanta real estate developer, Atticus LeBlanc, the company's chief executive. He studied architecture and urban studies at Yale but knew little of rooming houses. Then in 2009 he was renting out a home, and two men asked if they could rent individual rooms in it.

The men had only Social Security for income -- $685 per month for one man and $735 for the other -- and had been paying $100 a week for rooms in a decrepit house with no heating or air conditioning, but that home had been foreclosed on, and they needed to find somewhere else to live.

LeBlanc realized that if he rented rooms out at $100 a week, he could give people with low incomes comfortable accommodations and increase his income from the house.

''This was mind-blowing,'' LeBlanc told me.

He entered a competition for ideas to provide affordable housing and won foundation funding that allowed him to start PadSplit in 2017. It's a public benefit corporation, meaning that it is for profit but also aims to advance a social purpose.

Now operating in 18 cities, PadSplit provides an online platform for low-income workers to find furnished rooms offered by landlords. Sometimes the landlords rent out the entire house, room by room; others rent out just a room or two. PadSplit renters have an average age of 35 and earn a median of $30,000 per year.

The S.R.O. model addresses a mismatch between our housing stock and household size. Some 28 percent of American households consist of a single person living alone, yet fewer than 1 percent of housing units are studios. Many large houses can be used much more efficiently if they're converted to rooming houses.

PadSplit hasn't received direct public subsidies, and the model has room to scale up; census data suggests that there are tens of millions of bedrooms in America that no one sleeps in. This can provide low-cost housing more quickly and cheaply than public efforts to build housing: San Francisco has built some housing units for people who are homeless for more than $1 million each.

There's no one answer to America's housing crisis, but I'd like to see local governments experiment by rewarding landlords for creating basement flats, taking in boarders or creating rooming houses. A major impediment is local zoning regulations, which sometimes limit how many unrelated people can live together in a house.

I'm sure some readers will see this model as exploitative and think that people should have the right to their own home. Yes, that would be nice, but that sentiment doesn't actually get anyone housed. And while sharing a bathroom and kitchen isn't ideal, it's so much better than living in a car.

Millions of Americans working as teachers, firefighters or factory workers simply can't afford to rent apartments, or credit problems mean they can't get approved to rent. PadSplit takes people with eviction histories or weak credit but still makes it work with modern real estate management practices: It claims a 97.5 percent collection rate.

All this is a reminder that we used to have solutions to homelessness -- like S.R.O.s -- that we mostly eliminated half a century ago. This was a catastrophe of good intentions: We aimed to improve housing and neighborhoods and instead we got people sleeping in cars and on sidewalks.

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I'm delighted to announce my annual win-a-trip contest to choose a university student to travel with me on an expense-paid reporting trip. Information is at nytimes.com/winatrip, and please pass the word to students you know.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/09/opinion/homelessness-housing-shortage.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/09/opinion/homelessness-housing-shortage.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page SR3.

**Load-Date:** December 10, 2023

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[***What J.D. Vance Believes; Ross Douthat***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C7T-6PC1-DXY4-X0YY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 13, 2024 Thursday 17:22 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 5743 words

**Byline:** Ross Douthat Ross Douthat has been an Opinion columnist for The Times since 2009. He is the author, most recently, of &amp;#8220;The Deep Places: A Memoir of Illness and Discovery.&amp;#8221;

**Highlight:** In a long conversation, the first-term senator from Ohio talks about Trump, populism, the 2020 election, Ukraine and the Republican V.P. slot.

**Body**

News update: Donald Trump announced that he has [*selected*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/07/15/us/trump-rnc-news-biden) J.D. Vance as his running mate. In May, Vance sat down for a long conversation with Ross Douthat, an Opinion columnist.

In 2016, J.D. Vance’s best-selling memoir, “Hillbilly Elegy,” made him one of America’s leading interpreters of Trumpism, offering a personal narrative of populism’s origins in ***working-class*** disarray.

In 2024, as a first-term United States senator from Ohio, Vance is arguably America’s leading Trumpist: a staunch ally of Donald Trump, a leading critic of the establishment consensus (or what remains of it) in both foreign and domestic politics, a potential vice-presidential candidate and a likely populist agenda-setter for a second Trump term.

The Vance of eight years ago was read with appreciation and gratitude by Trump opponents looking for a window into populism. The Vance of today is despised and feared by many of the same kind of people. His transformation is one of the most striking political stories of the Trump era, and one that’s likely to influence Republican politics even after Trump is gone.

I&#39;ve known Vance since before he assumed either of these identities. For this conversation, I spoke to him about how he sees his own evolution, his relationship to the American elite and to Trump himself, his views on populist economics and America’s support for Ukraine. He also offered a combative (and, to my mind, fundamentally unsupported and unpersuasive) defense of Trump’s conduct after the 2020 election. Our conversation has been edited for length and clarity.

1. After ‘Hillbilly Elegy’

J.D., the first time I realized that “Hillbilly Elegy,” was going to be a phenomenon was in August 2016. I was in Rockland, Maine, in a cozy little tourist bookstore. I tried to buy the book for my wife, and they said, “Oh, we had four or five copies and they all sold out in the last week.”

Looking back, almost certainly most of the people who bought the book in that little bookstore were educated liberals baffled by the Donald Trump phenomenon, who liked your book not just for its literary merits but also because they felt like here was a guy who was sympathetic to people voting for Trump but who was also at that time vehemently opposed to him.

So I thought it would be interesting for you to imagine yourself talking to a big “Hillbilly Elegy” fan from 2016, and talk him through how your perspective has changed.

There was one really good thing about “Hillbilly Elegy,” meaning the response to it: People were actually genuinely trying to understand something about a part of the country they didn’t understand. But there was something that wasn’t so good, which is that people were looking for some interpretive lens for Trump’s voters that never really asked them to challenge their priors or to rethink what they felt about those people. And I realized that I was being used as this whisperer of a phenomenon that some people really did want to understand but some people didn’t. And the more that I felt like, not an explainer and a defender, but part of what I thought was wrong about the liberal establishment, the more that I felt this need to go very strongly away from it.

Let me give you one story: In 2018, I was invited to an event hosted by the Business Roundtable, an organization of C.E.O.s. Many people there I like and admire; many people there who hate my guts ——

Not back then.

Not back then; everybody loved me back then. But I was seated next to the C.E.O. of one of the largest hotel chains in the world at dinner. He was almost a caricature of a business executive, complaining about how he was forced to pay his workers higher wages.

He said: “The labor market is super tight. What Trump has done at the border has completely forced me to change the way that I interact with my employees.” And then he pivoted to me: “Well, you understand this as well as anybody. These people just need to get off their asses, come to work and do their job. And now, because we can’t hire immigrants, or as many immigrants, we’ve got to hire these people at higher wages.”

The fact that this guy saw me as sympathetic to his problem, and not the problem of the workers, made me realize that I’m on a train that has its own momentum and I have to get off this train, or I’m going to wake up in 10 years and really hate everything that I’ve become. And so I decided to get off that train, and I felt like the only way that I could do that was, in some ways, alienating and offending people who liked my book.

Did your perspective on, let’s say, elite liberals change more in that time, or did your perspective on anti-Trump, business-class Republicans change more?

Oh, both. I think it’s very hard to say which group of people I felt more strongly about. I literally grew up in a family where my grandmother was negotiating with the Meals on Wheels person to give her more food so that both of us could have something to eat. And I was going to the Sun Valley billionaires boot camp. My life had completely transformed.

The people on the left, I would say, whose politics I’m open to — it’s the Bernie Bros. But generally, center-left liberals who are doing very well, and center-right conservatives who are doing very well, have an incredible blind spot about how much their success is built on a system that is not serving people who they should be serving.

So you reach a point where you feel like you don’t want to be on the same side as, let’s say, the non-Sanders voting fans of your book. How do you go from there to being actively pro-Trump?

I was confronted with the reality that part of the reason the anti-Trump conservatives hated Donald Trump was that he represented a threat to a way of doing things in this country that has been very good for them.

Go back to the election in 2016. If you’re so inclined, you can say, “Well, Trump’s not really making a criticism of the foreign policy consensus in Washington, D.C. Here’s this thing that he said in 2003 that suggested that he supports invading Iraq — he’s just using this now that it’s politically useful.” I made that argument myself. But the more complete truth is that the country never really litigated the mistakes of the bipartisan consensus until Donald Trump came along, and on the right, nobody had litigated the failures of George W. Bush until Donald Trump came along.

Like a lot of other elite conservatives and elite liberals, I allowed myself to focus so much on the stylistic element of Trump that I completely ignored the way in which he substantively was offering something very different on foreign policy, on trade, on immigration.

You voted for Trump in 2020?

I did.

For a lot of Republicans I know, the process of becoming a Trump supporter was different. It was not about deciding that they could live with Trump’s persona because they agreed with his populist critique. It was more that they decided that Trump’s liberal opponents were so terrible in various ways that they needed to support Trump. So you had people who talk about the Kavanaugh hearings as a radicalizing point, or the rise of wokeness. I’m curious what you think about that.

This is why I say it’s hard to reconstruct this stuff, it’s so gradual. My wife worked for Kavanaugh, loved the guy — kind of a dork. Never believed these stories. You start looking around and say, “If they can do this to him, can they just do this to any of us?” An incredible campaign of character assassination. I think that [pause; sigh] — I’m trying to make this somewhat appealing to Times readers because probably a lot of them assume Kavanaugh is guilty.

If you hadn’t known him, you think you would’ve been more open to that idea?

I don’t know. Maybe. The thing that I kept thinking about liberalism in 2019 and 2020 is that these guys have all read [*Carl Schmitt*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/07/15/us/trump-rnc-news-biden) — there’s no law, there’s just power. And the goal here is to get back in power. Seemed true in the Kavanaugh thing, seemed true in the Black Lives Matter moment, where. … I’m thinking about how to put this.

I think most of us who are generally socially aware have a voice in our head that says: “You shouldn’t say this; you should try to say that. Maybe you believe this, but you should try to put it a little bit more diplomatically.” And in 2020 that voice had become absolutely tyrannical. There was nothing you were allowed to say. Offending someone was an act of violence. I think a lot of us just said: “We’re done with this. We’re not playing this game, and we refuse to be policed in what we think and what we say.”

Then you recognized that a lot of the pushback to Trump was that kind of social pressure. “You like Donald Trump? But he said these things, and he said that thing.” I saw this in my book tour in 2016. If you even acknowledged that there were reasonable things that Donald Trump was saying, there was this complete overreaction. And I think that some of us, me included, started to ask ourselves — there’s a voice in your head that tells you what you’re allowed to say and who you’re allowed to vote for. It was clearly deranged in 2020. Well, maybe it was deranged in 2016, too?

Is there anything you’ve said that you regret, in the course of refusing to be policed?

There are a ton of things I can point to where I can say, “I wish I struck this balance a little bit differently,” but I think that the real danger in American society is not unfiltering yourself, it’s filtering yourself.

Let me put the question differently. One interpretation of why conservatives trust Trump is that by saying things that are offensive to the conventions of elite liberalism, he’s effectively burning his ships. He can never just go back to being host of “The Apprentice.” And one interpretation of your Senate campaign was that you were consciously doing the same thing, that you were trying to piss liberals off to make yourself seem more trustworthy to Republican voters. Did you think about it that way?

I didn’t think about it quite that way, but before I ran, I had this conversation with myself and my wife that if my underlying critique is correct, there’s no way to run the campaign without burning bridges. You have to self-consciously accept that previous friends of yours are going to think you’re a bad person. Famously, my first TV ad ——

Why don’t you describe that ad?

Most TV ads are written by consultants; this was written by me. I picked up on the campaign trail that there was a strong undercurrent of people who cared about immigration, who didn’t like being called racist for it, and so I decided to do [*a direct-to-camera ad*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/07/15/us/trump-rnc-news-biden): “Are you racist? Do you hate Mexicans?” And then I go into: “No, we’re not. This is why we care about the border; this is why I care about the border.” And that ad was very effective. Again, am I trying to trigger the libs by doing that? No. But am I consciously not allowing myself to be filtered by them? Absolutely.

When did you decide that you actually like Donald Trump?

I first met Trump in 2021. One of the stories he told me was about how some of our generals were changing the timings of troop redeployments in the Middle East so that they could tell him that the troop levels were coming down when in reality they were just changing the way in which troop levels jump up and down in the short term.

[Interviewer’s note: In a follow-up, Vance cited [*remarks*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/07/15/us/trump-rnc-news-biden) by Trump’s departing Syria envoy, James Jeffrey, in 2020, that “we were always playing shell games to not make clear to our leadership how many troops we had there,” as partial confirmation of the story that the former president had relayed.]

The media has this view of Trump as motivated entirely by personal grievance, and the thing he talked the most about — this was not long after Jan. 6 — was “I’m the president, and I told the generals to do something, and they didn’t do it.” And I was like, OK, this guy’s deeper than I’d given him credit for. And also I was deeply offended by this. Talk about a threat to democracy — the generals not listening to the president of the United States about matters like troop redeployment.

But just personally, I like him. At one point during my election, some negative story had come out, and I get a phone call out of the blue. “Hey, just wanted to let you know you’re doing a good job. You always hear from the most hateful voices, but there’s a lot of love out there. Don’t forget there’s a lot of love out there. Just stay with it.” He’s much more complex than the media gives him credit for. People think that this guy is motivated entirely by personal grievance and by power, and that he just wants to become president so that he can destroy American democracy. That’s not at all who he is.

2. Can Economic Populism Work?

I want to come back to the democracy question, but first let’s talk about policy. Do you think, generally, that there is a comprehensive populist economic agenda?

Well, I have one. The main thrust of the postwar American order of globalization has involved relying more and more on cheaper labor. The trade issue and the immigration issue are two sides of the same coin: The trade issue is cheaper labor overseas; the immigration issue is cheaper labor at home, which applies upward pressure on a whole host of services, from hospital services to housing and so forth.

The populist vision, at least as it exists in my head, is an inversion of that: applying as much upward pressure on wages and as much downward pressure on the services that the people use as possible. We’ve had far too little innovation over the last 40 years, and far too much labor substitution. This is why I think the economics profession is fundamentally wrong about both immigration and about tariffs. Yes, tariffs can apply upward pricing pressure on various things — though I think it’s massively overstated — but when you are forced to do more with your domestic labor force, you have all of these positive dynamic effects.

It’s a classic formulation: You raise the minimum wage to $20 an hour, and you will sometimes hear libertarians say this is a bad thing. “Well, isn’t McDonald’s just going to replace some of the workers with kiosks?” That’s a good thing, because then the workers who are still there are going to make higher wages; the kiosks will perform a useful function; and that’s the kind of rising tide that actually lifts all boats. What is not good is you replace the McDonald’s worker from Middletown, Ohio, who makes $17 an hour with an immigrant who makes $15 an hour. And that is, I think, the main thrust of elite liberalism, whether people acknowledge it or not.

Or the hotels example. If you cannot hire illegal migrants to staff your hotels, then you have to go to one of the seven million prime-age American men who are out of the labor force and find some way to re-engage them. It’s amazing: To this day, I hear from Republican donors, “Oh, I’ll support you because you’re Republican, but you’re not pro-business.” Well, what do you mean I’m not pro-business? I actually really agree with the classic libertarian critique of the regulatory regime. “But we can’t run our business unless we have some of these immigrants coming over, because we can’t find people who are going to do the job.” My response is that there are people who would do those jobs if the incentives were there.

The first Trump term did raise wages at the bottom. But Trump ran the economy hot — low interest rates, low taxes — and we’re in a different landscape now, where policymakers seem like they’re stuck choosing between high interest rates, spending cuts and tax increases. I’m curious how you think a populist agenda looks different now.

You can’t just run the economy at massive structural deficits indefinitely. But I also think there’s a lot you can do on the regulatory side — make building nuclear facilities easier, make building natural gas pipelines easier, make building housing easier — that doesn’t cost money and in fact brings in money.

But a nonpopulist Republican would talk a lot more about fiscal discipline. And regardless of your long-term structural plan for the economy, Social Security is going to need some kind of adjustment. The populist move has been to rule out the idea of cutting entitlement spending. But can populists ever raise taxes?

Well, as the libertarians always say, a tariff is a tax. [laughs]

That’s an answer.

I just think the financial problems here are downstream of much deeper problems. One way of understanding the Social Security problem is, old people can’t work, young people can, babies can’t. So people at a certain age support the babies and the old people. And typically in our society, that’s people between the ages of 18 and 65. If the argument here is we have to cut Social Security, then what you’re effectively saying is we just have to privatize what is currently a public problem of who pays for the older generation. And I don’t know why people think that you solve many problems by taking a bunch of elderly people and saying, “You’re on your own.”

OK, but in lieu of privatizing the problem, Social Security’s going to need more money. Is the Vance position that the money comes from tariffs?

OK, take those seven million prime-age men not in the labor force. Those people are supported, very often, by public resources. You shift millions of those men from not working to working; you increase wages across the board; you increase tariffs; and I think that you buy yourself a whole hell of a lot more than the nine or 10 years that the actuaries say that we have. You get more revenue, yes, from tariffs, but from more people being in the labor force, from higher productivity growth, from higher wages, from transitioning young people who are not working into the work force.

Could you get some money by raising taxes on the rich guy who complained to you about his workers?

Sure. I’m not philosophically against raising taxes on anybody. But you have to ask yourself, what are the taxes that we’re raising, and where are they coming from? Let’s just say you raise the marginal rate to 42 percent. How much revenue does that actually raise?

Raising middle-class taxes — I don’t like that idea for obvious reasons. You can get some revenue out of raising taxes on wealthy Americans, but there’s no way that you can run an economy at a structural growth rate of around 1 percent with demographics that are getting worse and worse and worse and solve the problem by taxing rich people. You have to fix the underlying issue.

3. How to Deal With China and Russia

How would you describe your foreign policy perspective?

Not as “Putin first,” as maybe your readers would say ——

I asked how you would describe it.

I’m very self-aware, Ross. Many flaws, that’s not one of them. The term “realist” gets thrown around a lot, and I’d say there are three pillars to realism in the 21st century: The first is that moralisms about “This country is good,” “This country is bad” are largely useless, and we should be dealing with other countries based on whether they’re good or bad for America’s interests. That doesn’t mean you have a complete moral blind spot, but it means that you have to be honest about the countries that you’re dealing with, and there’s a complete failure to do that with most of our foreign policy establishment in this country.

No. 2 is the most important lesson of World War II, that we seem to have forgotten: that military power is downstream of industrial power. We are still, right now, the world’s military superpower, largely because of our industrial might from the ’80s and ’90s. But China is a more powerful country industrially than we are, which means they will have a more powerful military in 20 years.

And No. 3 is acknowledging that we’re in a multipolar world, and we need allies to step up in big ways so that we can focus on East Asia, which is where our most significant competitor is for the next 20 or 30 years.

Should we defend Taiwan if it’s attacked?

Our policy effectively is one of strategic ambiguity. I think that we should make it as hard as possible for China to take Taiwan in the first place, and the honest answer is we’ll figure out what we do if they attack. The thing that we can control now is making it costly for them to invade Taiwan, and we’re not doing that because we’re sending all the damn weapons to Ukraine and not Taiwan.

Ukraine.

Yeah.

In the [*opinion piece*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/07/15/us/trump-rnc-news-biden) you wrote for us, you were very critical of the aid that we were giving to Ukraine. But at the end of the piece, you seemed open to the idea of supporting Ukraine in a defensive posture.

From a certain perspective, that is what the Biden administration has done. Yes, they supported two Ukrainian counteroffensives, one of which went well and one of which did not. But relative to more hawkish voices, including in your own party, they have tried to avoid direct confrontation with Russia. So I’m curious what you think has been so wrong with their strategy. I know you think we shouldn’t have encouraged the recent counteroffensive ——

That’s the most important divergence between me and the Biden administration. I thought the counteroffensive would be a disaster, that we were motivated by moralism and not enough by strategic thinking. The Russians had really adjusted in a lot of profound ways. It was extremely obvious, when you talked to our military leadership in classified settings, they were exceedingly skeptical that the Ukrainians would achieve any strategic breakthrough. OK, why are we doing this then?

Is there a more minimalist J.D. Vance plan that would involve limited defensive support for Ukraine as part of a path to armistice?

What I would like to do, and what I think fundamentally is achievable here with American leadership — but you never know till you have the conversation — is you freeze the territorial lines somewhere close to where they are right now. That’s No. 1. No. 2 is you guarantee both Kyiv’s independence but also its neutrality. It’s the fundamental thing the Russians have asked from the beginning. I’m not naïve here. I think the Russians have asked for a lot of things dishonestly, but neutrality is clearly something that they see as existential for them. And then three, there’s going to have to be some American security assistance over the long term. I think those three things are certainly achievable, yes.

The critique of you and everyone else who opposed the recent appropriation was that if you can’t demonstrate a durable commitment to Ukraine, then Russia doesn’t have any incentive to make peace. If the Russians think they’re winning, how do you give Putin an incentive to make a deal if you’re cutting funding?

The leverage that we have over the Russians is not, in my view, that we can indefinitely keep the Ukrainians in a successful defensive posture. Let me be clear about this: There is no way with our capacity and what Russia has been doing that we can hold off the Russians indefinitely.

There are two big points of leverage that we have. One, they could take over Ukraine, but they can’t govern Ukraine. We’re talking about multiple hundreds of thousands of troops to govern the country effectively as a Russian subsidiary. The second point of leverage that we have is a war economy has its own internal momentum. They’re now at 7 percent of G.D.P. being spent on defense. They have re-engineered an economy around fighting a war instead of around improving the lives of your people. That has some real problems over the long term.

By the way, it’s not in our interest, either, for the Russians to have a war economy for the next five years, because then they’re going to be more militaristic and aggressive than they otherwise would be.

You agree it’s not in our interest right now for the Russians to roll through the rest of Ukraine?

No, it is not in our interest.

4. The 2020 election and Jan. 6

Let’s go back to Trump. You used the term “stylistic” to describe the things you didn’t like about Trump in 2016. Obviously, people who oppose Trump think that style and substance are intertwined, and that Trumpism is a substantive threat to democratic norms. That argument got a really big boost on the 6th of January, 2021. So, first, what’s your take on the legitimacy of the 2020 election?

First of all, grant that there is overlap between style and substance. I think this is actually, in the [*foreign policy arena especially*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/07/15/us/trump-rnc-news-biden), a strength of Trump, and not a weakness. Trump is, as his detractors and his supporters would say, unpredictable. He is extremely self-aware of that perception, and without revealing state secrets, I am 100 percent certain that unpredictability redounded to the benefit of the United States.

I have two basic critiques of the 2020 election, and then I have a critique of the reaction to what Trump did.

My actual critique starts with the Molly Ball article in 2021 — that felt like bragging. I put that article in front of the average Trump-fan Republican voter in my hometown, and they say, “That is an illegitimate election.”

[Interviewer’s note: Vance is referencing [*Ball’s post-election Time*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/07/15/us/trump-rnc-news-biden)  [*magazine*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/07/15/us/trump-rnc-news-biden) feature detailing the attempts to “fortify” the 2020 election against Trumpian malfeasance and pandemic disruptions, efforts that Ball described as “a well-funded cabal of powerful people, ranging across industries and ideologies, working together behind the scenes to influence perceptions, change rules and laws, steer media coverage and control the flow of information.”]

The argument is basically that there were a host of institutional actors, technology companies, various forms of censorship, that mobilized in 2020 in a way that they hadn’t in 2016. There was tech censorship. People were primed to push back against any October surprises.

And look, October surprises are part of American democracy, and whether you think Hunter Biden is as major an issue as I do or disagree, in American democracy you let the voters decide.

That was a way in which the basic democratic will of America was obstructed. I don’t see any reason to think that Dominion voting machines switched ballots, but there was a breakdown in democratic will.

Point No. 2 is that the rules of the game were changed in the middle. When does a ballot have to be mailed in Pennsylvania to count under the election rules? That was changed. That was changed for Covid reasons, in a way that partially is the fault of the Republican National Committee — we weren’t prepared for it, Democrats were, and they took advantage of it.

And this gets to my third point, the critique of people like me as violating some sacred norm of American democracy. I never could get fired up about this. I think the election in 1960 was stolen. The election of 2000 had some issues. I think that challenging elections and questioning the legitimacy of elections is actually part of the democratic process. When Trump says the election was stolen, and people say he was wrong, I say, “Fine, we can argue about that.” When they say, “He’s threatening the foundation of American society,” I can’t help but roll my eyes.

OK, but Donald Trump was president of the United States while those changes to voting rules were being made. And Rudy Giuliani was not standing up complaining about, say, [*Mark Zuckerberg’s funding*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/07/15/us/trump-rnc-news-biden) for get-out-the-vote efforts. They went for the straight-up voter fraud narratives, which yielded the idea that Mike Pence was going to somehow send this back to the states to be relitigated, which yielded Jan. 6. What was the point of all that? Fine, you can challenge the sacred norms of democracy, but the way they were challenged was, by your own argument, paranoid and probably wrong.

Well, if you want me to defend Sidney Powell and Jenna Ellis in the aftermath of the 2020 election, they made a lot of arguments I disagreed with. If the criticism is, when Tucker Carlson called me in July and said, “Dude, I think they’re going to steal the election over a lot of these changed balloting rules,” the R.N.C. should’ve been mobilizing and responding to that, and they failed, and that was a huge indictment of the R.N.C. — then yeah, absolutely, I agree with that.

But once that failed, did it make any sense to use the office of the vice presidency to shift the outcome of the election?

The vice-presidential thing — look, here’s what this would’ve looked like if you really wanted to do this. You would’ve actually tried to go to the states that had problems; you would try to marshal alternative slates of electors, like they did in the election of 1876. And then you have to actually prosecute that case; you have to make an argument to the American people.

Let’s say you were a Republican legislator in Pennsylvania. Do you think it would have been a good idea to say, “Under the rules of the election, Joe Biden won the most votes, but we’re going to vote to send a slate of Trump electors because Twitter censored the Hunter Biden story.”

Do I think that it would have been an ultimately effective argument?

No, do you think it would have been a good argument?

I think the entire post-2020 thing would have gone a lot better if there had actually been an effort to provide alternative slates of electors and to force us to have that debate. I think it would’ve been a much better thing for the country. Do I think Joe Biden would still be president right now? Yeah, probably. But at least we would have had a debate. And instead what we had was the Jenna Ellis legal clown show and no real debate about the election. And now every time we bring it up, it’s like, “Well, yeah, they litigated all these things.” No, you can’t litigate these things judicially; you have to litigate them politically. And we never had a real political debate about the 2020 election.

You mentioned the 1876 election. The 1876 election was effectively a constitutional crisis, right?

Sure. It was absolutely a constitutional crisis.

For those of us who don’t think that Donald Trump is about to become a dictator, it still seems like he has an appetite for constitutional crisis. Pursuing the Pence strategy might not have ended with Trump back in the White House. But it would have pushed America into a crisis whose only point would be to satisfy either the voters whose concerns you describe, or Trump himself.

Even under a circumstance where the alternative-electors thing works, and he’s president again, he would have served four years and retired and enjoyed his life and played golf. The idea that this sets off a sequence where Donald Trump becomes the dictator of America is completely preposterous. He was using the constitutional procedures. Now, your argument is that he was using them ineffectively, or maybe even illegitimately, but he was trying to take a constitutional process to its natural conclusion.

My argument is that he was using them recklessly, without concern for the effect on the body politic of him becoming president because he got state legislatures to vote in alternate slates of electors.

My counterargument to that is that what was reckless was the effort to try to take this very legitimate grievance over our most fundamental democratic act as a people, and completely suppress concerns about it.

This is maybe where you think I’ve just jumped the shark, but if there’s a constitutional crisis I’m worried about, it’s not Donald Trump using a process that exists in our Constitution. It’s that he was the commander in chief and ordered the military to do something and the military didn’t.

Why can’t it be both? Why can’t you say, “It was wrong the way the military and the administrative state behaved under Trump, and it also would’ve been a really, really bad idea for Mike Pence to intervene on Jan. 6”?

If the conservative response to this is to say “both sides are bad,” and the liberal response to this is to say “it’s fine when my side does it, and it’s bad when the other side does it,” the liberals will always win the argument in this country. I really don’t believe this is about some deep principle; this is about power.

Don’t you think that doing the right thing sometimes enhances your power? If Trump had walked away, if he hadn’t spent so much time pressuring Pence, don’t you think he might be ahead in the polls by more right now?

I want to be clear: I’m not conceding the premise that Trump was engaged in something fundamentally bad here. But maybe you’re right that if Trump had just gotten into the helicopter and ridden off, that he would be in a better position today. Maybe. But an entire section of our democratic republic would’ve had their concerns ignored.

There are meaningful improvements that have been made on election integrity, like the Georgia voter ID law, which would never have happened without this massive public debate. And I think it would’ve been extraordinarily disappointing to a whole host of people that I care a lot about if Trump had just taken it. In his very unique way, he gave voice to a series of concerns.

But there was also a riot in the midst of the peaceful transfer of power. The argument that you’re making, I could’ve imagined myself making up till ——

On Jan. 5.

Exactly. But it just seems like this is a case where, with Trump, you turn the dial and — even if you think dial-turning is a good way to intimidate Putin or Kim Jong-un — sometimes you turn it too far.

I think people really, really underrate the sense to which there is palpable and actionable frustration, and I’m always surprised that their assumption appears to be that Trump is the worst, rather than the best, expression of that frustration. Or at least, one of the better in the whole host of possibilities. We’re in this moment where people are really pissed off, and I think for legitimate reasons. And I don’t understand, looking at the country that we have right now, and saying, “The riot on January the 6th was the worst expression of this.”

If Donald Trump asked you to be his running mate, would you accept?

I’ll give you the stock answer: I’ve never talked about it with him, which is genuine. I don’t get the sense that he’s focused on it. If he asked me, certainly I would be interested, but I’m trying not to think too much about it until he actually asks.

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PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFF DEAN/ASSOCIATED PRESS) This article appeared in print on page SR5.

**Load-Date:** July 15, 2024

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[***Voters Doubt Biden’s Leadership and Favor Trump, Times/Siena Poll Finds***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BFV-C6X1-DXY4-X3XJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 2, 2024 Saturday 07:29 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1675 words

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**Highlight:** The share of voters who strongly disapprove of President Biden’s handling of his job has reached 47 percent, higher than in Times/Siena polls at any point in his presidency.

**Body**

The share of voters who strongly disapprove of President Biden’s handling of his job has reached 47 percent, higher than in Times/Siena polls at any point in his presidency.

President Biden is struggling to overcome doubts about his leadership inside his own party and broad dissatisfaction over the nation’s direction, leaving him trailing behind Donald J. Trump just as their general-election contest is about to begin, [*a new poll by The New York Times and Siena College*](mailto:shane.goldmacher@nytimes.com) has found.

With eight months left until the November election, Mr. Biden’s 43 percent support lags behind Mr. Trump’s 48 percent in the national survey of registered voters.

Only one in four voters thinks the country is moving in the right direction. More than twice as many voters believe Mr. Biden’s policies have personally hurt them as believe his policies have helped them. A majority of voters think the economy is in poor condition. And the share of voters who strongly disapprove of Mr. Biden’s handling of his job has reached 47 percent, higher than in Times/Siena polls at any point in his presidency.

The poll offers an array of warning signs for the president about weaknesses within the Democratic coalition, including among women, Black and Latino voters. So far, it is Mr. Trump who has better unified his party, even amid an ongoing primary contest.

Mr. Biden has marched through the early nominating states with only nominal opposition. But the poll showed that Democrats remain deeply divided about the prospect of Mr. Biden, the 81-year-old chief executive, leading the party again. About as many Democratic primary voters said Mr. Biden should not be the nominee in 2024 as said he should be — with opposition strongest among voters younger than 45 years old.

Mr. Trump’s ability to consolidate the Republican base better than Mr. Biden has unified the base of his own party shows up starkly in the current thinking of 2020 voters. Mr. Trump is winning 97 percent of those who say they voted for him four years ago, and virtually none of his past supporters said they are casting a ballot for Mr. Biden. In contrast, Mr. Biden is winning only 83 percent of his 2020 voters, with 10 percent saying they now back Mr. Trump.

“It’s going to be a very tough decision — I’m seriously thinking about not voting,” said Mamta Misra, 57, a Democrat and an economics professor in Lafayette, La., who voted for Mr. Biden in 2020. “Trump voters are going to come out no matter what. For Democrats, it’s going to be bad. I don’t know why they’re not thinking of someone else.”

Mr. Trump’s five-point lead in the survey, which was conducted in late February, is slightly larger than in the last Times/Siena national poll of registered voters in December. Among the likely electorate, Mr. Trump currently leads by four percentage points.

In last year’s survey, Mr. Trump led by [*two points*](mailto:shane.goldmacher@nytimes.com) among registered voters and Mr. Biden led by two points among the projected likely electorate.

One of the more ominous findings for Mr. Biden in the new poll is that the historical edge Democrats have held with ***working-class*** voters of color who did not attend college continues to erode.

Mr. Biden won 72 percent of those voters in 2020, according to exit polling, providing him with a nearly 50-point edge over Mr. Trump. Today, the Times/Siena poll showed Mr. Biden only narrowly leading among nonwhite voters who did not graduate from college: 47 percent to 41 percent.

An excitement gap between the two parties shows up repeatedly in the survey: Only 23 percent of Democratic primary voters said they were enthusiastic about Mr. Biden — half the share of Republicans who said they were about Mr. Trump. Significantly more Democrats said they were either dissatisfied or angry at Mr. Biden being the leader of the party (32 percent) than Republicans who said the same about Mr. Trump (18 percent).

Both Mr. Trump and Mr. Biden are unpopular. Mr. Trump had a weak 44 percent favorable rating; Mr. Biden fared even worse, at 38 percent. Among the 19 percent of voters who said they disapproved of both likely nominees — an unusually large cohort in 2024 that pollsters and political strategists sometimes call “double haters” — Mr. Biden actually led Mr. Trump, 45 percent to 33 percent.

The candidate who had won such “double haters” was victorious in the elections in both 2016 and 2020.

For now, though, unhappiness with the state of the country is plainly a drag on Mr. Biden’s prospects. Two-thirds of the country feels the nation is headed in the wrong direction — and Mr. Trump is winning 63 percent of those voters.

The share of voters who believe the nation is on the right track remains a dismal and diminutive minority at 24 percent. Yet even that figure is a marked improvement from the peak inflationary days in the summer of 2022, when [*only 13 percent of voters felt the nation was headed in the proper direction*](mailto:shane.goldmacher@nytimes.com).

“If we get Trump for another four years, we get a little better on economics,” said Oscar Rivera, a 39-year-old independent voter who owns a roofing business in Rochester, N.Y.

Mr. Trump’s policies were generally viewed far more favorably by voters than Mr. Biden’s. A full 40 percent of voters said Mr. Trump’s policies had helped them personally, compared to only 18 percent who said the same of Mr. Biden’s.

Only 12 percent of independent voters like Mr. Rivera said Mr. Biden’s policies had personally helped them, compared to 43 percent who said his policies had hurt them.

Mr. Rivera, who is Puerto Rican, said he doesn’t like the way Mr. Trump talks about immigration and the southern border, but is planning to vote for him anyway. “Biden? I don’t know,” Mr. Rivera said. “It looks like we’re weak, America’s weak. We need someone stronger.”

Overall, Mr. Biden and Mr. Trump were dead even among prized independent voters, drawing 42 percent each.

But over and over, the Times/Siena poll revealed how Mr. Trump has cut into more traditional Democratic constituencies while holding his ground among Republican groups. The gender gap, for instance, is no longer benefiting Democrats. Women, who strongly favored Mr. Biden four years ago, are now equally split, while men gave Mr. Trump a nine-point edge. The poll showed Mr. Trump edging out Mr. Biden among Latinos, and Mr. Biden’s share of the Black vote is shrinking, too.

There are, of course, unpredictable X factors in a race where the Republican front-runner is facing four indictments, 91 felony counts and a criminal trial set to begin at the end of March in New York State Supreme Court.

The poll showed that 53 percent of voters currently believe Mr. Trump has committed serious federal crimes, down from [*58 percent in December*](mailto:shane.goldmacher@nytimes.com). But viewed another way, Mr. Trump’s current lead over Mr. Biden is built with a significant number of voters who believe he is a criminal.

The country, meanwhile, remains divided on some of the thorniest domestic and international issues.

By a narrow margin, more voters favor making it more difficult for migrants at the southern border to seek asylum (49 percent to 43 percent). Mr. Trump and Mr. Biden made dueling appearances at the border this week; illegal border crossings set record highs at the end of 2023.

As the Israel-Hamas conflict rages in its fifth month, 40 percent of voters said they sympathized more with Israel compared to 24 percent who said they sympathized more with the Palestinians. Mr. Trump was winning 70 percent of those who backed Israel primarily; Mr. Biden was winning 68 percent of those who sided with the Palestinians, even as he has [*faced demonstrations and a protest vote*](mailto:shane.goldmacher@nytimes.com) over his pro-Israel stance.

Philip Kalarickal, a 51-year-old anesthesiologist in Decatur, Ga., is a Democrat dismayed by Mr. Biden’s handling of the humanitarian fallout from the conflict in Gaza.

“Joe Biden should be doing more to ensure that the Israeli government goes about this in a way that provides safety for them but without the civilian toll,” Dr. Kalarickal said, adding that he would reluctantly back Mr. Biden this fall, given that he lives in a swing state.

“I understand that my vote or lack of vote carries a consequence, and I look at the alternative and that’s worse than the current thing,” Dr. Kalarickal said. “But I do want to register my displeasure. The way I vote doesn’t mean I like it.”

The Biden campaign hopes that more and more voters like Mr. Kalarickal snap back into their usual partisan patterns in the coming months. The return of such reluctant Democrats is one reason the Biden campaign has been optimistic that polling will narrow, and eventually flip, as the choice between Mr. Trump and Mr. Biden becomes clearer.

Nikki Haley, Mr. Trump’s Republican rival, who has made the case that he will lose in November, leads Mr. Biden by double the margin of the former president: a hypothetical 45 percent to 35 percent. But she has struggled to gain traction in the primary and the poll portends landslide losses on Super Tuesday next week, with 77 percent of Republican primary voters picking Mr. Trump over her.

Alyce McFadden and Ruth Igielnik contributed reporting.

The New York Times/Siena College poll of 980 registered voters nationwide was conducted on cellular and landline telephones, using live interviewers, from Feb. 25 to 28, 2024. The margin of sampling error for the presidential ballot choice question is plus or minus 3.5 percentage points among registered voters. Cross-tabs and methodology are available [*here*](mailto:shane.goldmacher@nytimes.com).

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PHOTOS: Donald J. Trump’s policies were generally seen far more favorably by voters than President Biden’s. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY KENT NISHIMURA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; TAYLOR BAUCOM FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A22) This article appeared in print on page A1, A22.

**Load-Date:** March 3, 2024

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The New York Times

December 10, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 34; THE SHORTLIST

**Length:** 1105 words

**Byline:** By May-lee Chai

**Body**

For Jeanette Winterson, ghost stories are not old-fashioned or anachronistic in the modern world, but both cutting-edge and primal. In the introduction to her new collection, NIGHT SIDE OF THE RIVER: Ghost Stories (Grove, 306 pp., $27), she recalls some of her own inexplicable experiences with the uncanny, from the ghost of a writer friend materializing on her computer screen to her childhood premonition of her grandmother's passing. Religion, and specifically faith in an afterlife, ''can be considered as humankind's first disruptive start-up,'' she writes. ''What's being disrupted is death.''

Not every story in the book is meant to be scary; some delight in the clever juxtaposition of ghost tropes and technology. In ''Ghost in the Machine,'' canny A.I. avatars represent unbodied consciousness, tempting humans with the promise of immortality in exchange for cryptocurrency. In the collection's most tender and lyrical story, ''The Undiscovered Country,'' the dead narrator tries to reach out to his grieving male partner via shipping forecasts on the radio.

But Winterson's strongest stories follow characters haunted not just by apparitions but by human bigotry and traditional, toxic gender roles. ''The Door'' is set in a 14th-century Scottish castle-turned-wedding-venue that's inhabited by the spirits of a medieval queer couple who were killed by transphobic villagers. In a pair of linked stories, ''A Fur Coat'' and ''Boots,'' a young scammer couple swindle an earl into letting them live on his rural estate for the winter, rent-free -- but their romantic ''simple life'' is interrupted by the property's surly gardener, who teaches the indoorsy boyfriend how to hunt pheasant and ''to keep an eye on that woman of yours.'' The gardener, who may or may not be a ghost, goads Jonny's hatred (''She's a whore,'' he thinks. ''Edwin's right. Edwin's with him, whistling softly'') until a climactic moment of violence. The ghosts hardly need to show up at all, Winterson knows; the terror's already present in the misogyny of the living.

At first glance the seven stories in Paul Yoon's slim but exquisite collection THE HIVE AND THE HONEY: Stories (Marysue Rucci Books, 150 pp., $26) appear unrelated: A Korean American man from Queens is released from prison and travels to the rural hometown of his former cellmate looking for work; a woman who escaped North Korea decades ago is given one opportunity to send a message to the son she left behind; a Korean immigrant couple who own a corner shop in London plan a seaside vacation. But each narrative is a piece of a larger puzzle that together form a portrait of Korean history and its diaspora that is breathtaking in scope, detailing the persistence of imperialism, war, poverty and dislocation across generations.

Throughout Yoon limns the tiny choices that ripple across his characters' lives -- a prison-yard fight, a refusal to help a mysterious runaway -- before turning his lens on history. In the epistolary title story, set in 1881, a Cossack police officer stationed in a Korean settlement on the Russian border witnesses a local man's brutal vengeance against his brother's wife, who killed her husband after he raped and beat her night after night. But his action is not without consequences: A month later, the narrator writes to his uncle, ''Almost every member of the settlement has been visited by what they are calling the apparition. It's never the husband, always the wife. They describe her in the exact same way. A moving brightness. Anger. The same height and shape as the hanged woman.''

In ''At the Post Station,'' 17th-century Japanese soldiers in service to an Edo-period daimyo end up raising a Korean child whom their lord instructed them to kidnap in battle as an infant 10 years earlier, ''a casualty of the invasion of Korea.'' The final story, ''Valley of the Moon,'' is a masterpiece of emotional restraint in which a Korean War refugee returns to his home village in the South to start a farm, and takes in two orphans who are unaware of his murderous past.

Crisscrossing the globe and the centuries, Yoon expertly telescopes between the long view and the close-up.

Injustice and harm, whether financial or interpersonal or both, loom over the lives of the ***working-class*** Irish women in Louise Kennedy's accomplished latest, THE END OF THE WORLD IS A CUL DE SAC: Stories (Riverhead, 289 pp., $28).

''In Silhouette'' switches from second- to first-person narration as a manicurist reflects on the torture and killing of her older brother during the Troubles 40 years earlier; in ''Belladonna,'' a schoolgirl from Belfast delights in her job with an Irish herbalist until his wife's erratic behavior and a mysterious bruise hint at trouble to come.

Kennedy knows how to ratchet up the tension by teasing out details. In the title story, a woman abandoned by her husband, a shady housing estate developer, is living off the dwindling supply of cash she's found in his dresser. When a young man takes an interest in her (''You're the gangster's moll from down the hill,'' he says), she can't quite place where she's seen him before, until it's too late. On a date with him, she suddenly remembers the time her husband read about the young man in a local tabloid: ''A kingpin, no less, he had said as he folded the paper up. The wee knacker is a kingpin.''

Occasionally the weight of the characters' burdens threatens to overwhelm a story, teetering into hopelessness. ''Brittle Things,'' about a couple with a young, neurodivergent son, feels suffocating in its depiction of the parents' shame and denial. At a restaurant the mother worries constantly as she feeds her child breadsticks to calm him, feeling onlookers' ''eyes on her,'' Kennedy writes. ''It must have looked like she was training a puppy.'' When she seeks answers online for why her son hasn't started speaking at 5, her husband snarls, ''Everything gets a ... label these days.''

But more often Kennedy's droll wit and spot-on dialogue brilliantly illuminate her characters' travails. The middle-aged friends in ''Beyond Carthage'' save up for an ''exotic'' vacation in Tunisia only to arrive amid torrential rains at ''a purpose-built concrete resort arranged around a new marina, as neat and airless as an architect's model.'' Unable to get to the classical ruins of their dreams, they book a visit to what they think is a local spa, but turns out to be ''a glorified brothel, with a clientele of desperate women ... who found themselves single at an age when being alone made them feel ridiculous,'' Therese thinks. ''She and Noreen fitted right in.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/08/books/review/new-short-stories.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/08/books/review/new-short-stories.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS This article appeared in print on page BR34.

**Load-Date:** December 10, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Museum Director Laura Raicovich Gets a Second Act: Barkeep***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B3V-VKN1-JBG3-6040-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 15, 2024 Monday 23:52 EST

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**Section:** ARTS; design

**Length:** 1362 words

**Highlight:** At the Francis Kite Club, a collectively-built space for artists people debate culture and politics over cocktails.

**Body**

There is something bigger than beer brewing at the [*Francis Kite Club*](https://www.franciskiteclub.com/#/events), a new haunt in the East Village whose artists hold performances, shape its programming and debate politics from their barstools.

Above the patrons, including art stars like Marina Abramovic, is a mural by the painter Nina Nichols that imagines New York City repopulated with native plants and animals. A central panel features [*Annie Sprinkle*](https://www.gf.org/fellows/annie-sprinkle/), the artist and sexologist, and Naked Bear, a figure of Iroquois mythology, setting fire to the [*Merchant’s House*](https://merchantshouse.org/), a local historic landmark. Cocktails are named after the picture, with the building’s destruction memorialized by vodka, Earl Grey tea, lemon and honey.

“I wanted to build somewhere warm and convivial, with cheap drinks and good people. Somewhere that definitely does not feel exclusive,” said [*Laura Raicovich,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/26/arts/design/queens-museum-director-laura-raicovich.html) a former museum executive who is entering her second act as a bar impresario. Her business partners include the musician [*Kyp Malone*](https://www.npr.org/2009/11/02/120017602/guest-dj-kyp-malone), the stunt coordinator John McEnerney, the designer Alice McGillicuddy and the artist-activist [*Laura Hanna*](https://debtcollective.org/about-us/our-team/).

In a recent interview, Raicovich said she was done with the rarefied side of the art world after nearly 20 years nudging it toward [*political action*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/08/arts/design/queens-museum-laura-raicovich-daca.html) and social work. During that time she [*clashed with trustees*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/26/arts/design/queens-museum-director-laura-raicovich.html) at the Queens Museum and ultimately resigned in 2018, after disagreements about an event featuring former Vice President Mike Pence that was sponsored by the Israeli government and pushback on her idea that her museum could serve as a sanctuary space for migrants.

Looking back today, she said, “Museums have a tough time at making social spaces because they come out of a model of broadcasting information rather than exchanging it.” She added, “The narrowing of imagination and culture is something that I want to reverse, and investing in culture through the bar is a material way of making that change.”

She is not the only museum professional to spurn a traditional path. Many employees have changed jobs in recent years because of frustrations with low pay and high stress.

A recent [*survey of nearly 2,000 museum workers*](https://museumsmovingforward.com/data-studies) found that 60 percent of employees are thinking about leaving their jobs because of reasons including income and stress. More than a quarter of executives surveyed also said that their salaries could not always cover basic living expenses.

“People are burned out,” said Mia Locks, the director of [*Museums Moving Forward*](https://museumsmovingforward.com/), the nonprofit organization behind the survey. She [*resigned*](https://www.artnews.com/art-news/news/mia-locks-resigns-moca-la-1234590402/) from a senior curatorial role at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles in 2021, among a wave of other leaders during the pandemic.

“The report shows that people are burned out but don’t want to give up on the creative energy of museums,” Locks added. Projects like Raicovich’s, she said, “are evidence that these exchanges can happen outside of museums.”

The owners of [*Francis Kite Club*](https://www.franciskiteclub.com/#/events) said they are self-financing the project until the bar turns a profit, and attendance has steadily increased since the business opened in September.

“We are definitely not trying to build a Soho House or Zero Bond,” Hanna said, referring to the exclusive social clubs that count many wealthy artists and musicians in their ranks. “If you come here, then you will help shape the programming. We are thinking about it like a ***working-class*** cocktail lounge.”

Raicovich sometimes falls into old routines, applying curatorial terms like “modality” and “sociality” to the daily operations of a bar. But the reality is much easier to understand.

Between Monday and Wednesday, when the bar is closed, a small publishing company named [*OR Books*](https://www.orbooks.com/mobile/) rents out the back room as an office to focus on works of literature and political activism. And many evenings, the Francis Kite Club hosts artists who program the evenings, through short residencies provided by the bar.

The costume designer [*Larry Krone*](https://www.out.com/fashion/2015/4/20/house-larreon-fabulous-fashion-larry-krone) spent November in rhinestones at the bar’s microphone, singing songs and reading excerpts from a forthcoming book, including a chapter called “Ruin Your Life (and Look Great Doing it!).”

On New Year’s Eve, [*Chelsea Manning*](https://www.instagram.com/p/C1K4Or0OyOM/), the former intelligence analyst, was the D.J., playing house beats and electronic music into the early morning, mixing records as a disco ball shined above the audience.

And the artist Kameelah Janan Rasheed used time there to develop her own poetic projects, including an [*upcoming exhibition*](https://www.redcat.org/events/2024/kameelah-janan-rasheed) at the California Institute of the Arts. On a recent Friday evening, she skipped the small talk and led about 20 patrons in a discussion about ghosts and spirits with Raicovich, who made homemade onion dip for the crowd.

“It was delicious,” Rasheed said. “And I walked away recognizing that I had some very clear understandings about life and death that I had never fully articulated.” She said she is considering becoming a death doula to “help support people engaging with the afterlife.”

Residencies are currently unpaid, though some performers charge an entrance fee in order to subsidize themselves. Rasheed said the residency also fills a gap in the resources available to artists.

“If you get a research grant, it is because you have already decided a line of thinking,” she explained. “The actual discovery phase is missing.”

The talent who appear at the bar often have personal connections with the Francis Kite Club owners. Rasheed is a friend of Raicovich, and many of the musicians come through the doors because of Malone, best known as the guitarist and vocalist of the band [*TV on the Radio*](https://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/16/arts/music/16radi.html). Recently, he programmed a benefit concert for a charity aiding Palestinians. “It’s about figuring out how to get people together,” Malone said. “And there was an inkling of potentially marrying nightlife with more pressing matters in the world.”

Opening a bar wasn’t exactly pinned on his vision board, nor was it something that Raicovich ever imagined for herself. For years, she had worked on grander designs to transform the Breuer Building on Madison Avenue into a cultural experiment.

She attempted to raise money through donors to lease the Brutalist building — which has previously housed the Whitney Museum of American Art; the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s modern and contemporary exhibitions, and, currently, the Frick Collection — as a collective space where employees were stakeholders in leadership decisions typically reserved for trustees and executives. She hoped to enlist artists like [*Amar Kanwar,*](https://www.veralistcenter.org/publications/my-language-has-disappeared-a-conversation-on-studies-into-darkness) [*Jeanne van Heeswijk*](https://www.jeanneworks.net/) and [*Mel Chin*](https://melchin.org/) to create projects that would begin to fill the space.

But when Sotheby’s auction house purchased the space for [*$100 million*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/01/arts/design/whitney-museum-sells-breuer-building-sothebys.html) last year, Raicovich knew it was time to move on. “In hindsight, this was all related to my desire to be involved in running a collective space,” she explained. “I think the imprint of a single director at museums is not sustainable.”

But that spirit survives on a smaller scale at the Francis Kite Club, which aspires to become this generation’s [*Cedar Tavern*](https://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/18/opinion/bye-bye-bohemia.html), a hangout spot for postwar painters like Willem de Kooning, Jackson Pollock and Robert Motherwell, Raicovich said. Though hopefully with cooler heads prevailing; artists were known for brawling at the bar and Pollock was barred briefly for ripping a bathroom door off its hinges and throwing it at the artist Franz Kline during a fight.

“I wanted something that was a little more about bringing people together,” Raicovich said. “For me, being an adventurous person, experimenting in a bar setting feels like the right thing to do right now.”

PHOTOS: From left, the musician Shahzad Ismaily, the artist Marina Abramovic and the producer Todd Eckert at the Francis Kite Club. Part social club and part collective art space, the club was co-founded by the former Queens Museum director Laura Raicovich. (C1); From top, the band Slowspin with Zeerak Ahmed performing at the Francis Kite Club; the club’s business partners, from left, John McEnerney, Laura Raicovich, Kyp Malone and Alice McGillicuddy; a mural by Nina Nichols shows Annie Sprinkle, a sexologist, and Naked Bear, a creature inspired by Native American mythology, setting fire to the Merchant’s House. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY REBECCA SMEYNE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (C7) This article appeared in print on page C1, C7.

**Load-Date:** January 18, 2024

**End of Document**



[***This Waterfront Community Has a Working-Class Feel***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6313-8NC1-DXY4-X48Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 27, 2021 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section RE; Column 0; Real Estate Desk; Pg. 10; LIVING IN

**Length:** 1658 words

**Byline:** By Jill P. Capuzzo

**Body**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What You'll Find

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

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

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

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

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

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

What You'll Pay

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

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

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

The Vibe

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

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

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

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

The Schools

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

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

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

The Commute

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

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

The History

The Forked River State Game Farm was New Jersey's first state-run game farm, on property just off Route 9 that the state's fish and game commission acquired in 1912 from a former master of a sailing freighter. Every year, the farm would raise and release thousands of pheasants to be hunted by sportsmen and women who visited the farm. In later years, the game farm's management sought the assistance of residents of the neighboring juvenile rehabilitation center. The game farm is now part of the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/23/realestate/lacey-township-nj-a-waterfront-community-with-a-****working-class****-vibe.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/23/realestate/lacey-township-nj-a-waterfront-community-with-a-working-class-vibe.html)

**Graphic**

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

**Load-Date:** June 27, 2021

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[***A Reporter's 'Responsibility' After Maui Fire***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69DT-TDN1-DXY4-X03K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 18, 2023 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 2; RACE/RELATED

**Length:** 682 words

**Byline:** By The New York Times

**Body**

A New York Times reporter spent more than a week in Maui talking with residents who lost relatives in the fire.

This article is also a weekly newsletter. Sign up for Race/Related here.

The fire that swept through the town of Lahaina, on Maui, in early August destroyed much of a beloved place with a deep history for Native Hawaiians. At least 98 people are believed to have died in the wildfire, the country's deadliest in more than 100 years.

Corina Knoll traveled to Maui to cover the tragedy for The New York Times, and spent time talking with residents who lost relatives in the fire and learning about one family's harrowing escape. We asked her over email what it was like to report on such a painful experience. This interview has been lightly edited and condensed for clarity.

How did you find the family you wrote about?

The Tone family had posted some details about themselves on a GoFundMe page, and I started looking more deeply into them because it seemed particularly heartbreaking that four people from the same household had died -- and that one was a 7-year-old boy. It was also important to me to write about a ***working-class*** Pacific Islander family, as I'm always hoping to illuminate the lives of people of color. The labor force that sustains Maui's tourism industry deserves to be highlighted. I couldn't get in touch with them at first, but eventually reached a pastor who helped connect me with them.

It's difficult reporting on disasters. How did you approach talking to this family? What kind of sensitivities did you have in mind?

There is a very strange and hard line we walk when trying to get victims' families to talk to us. They're going through the worst time of their lives, and a stranger is asking them to open up. But we are on the ground for a limited number of days, and are highly aware that the world's attention soon moves on. I tell people very gently that if they want to tell their story, the timing does matter.

At first, Folau Tone didn't seem to want to meet. When I arrived on Maui, we started communicating mostly through texts. His replies were usually short and vague, and it was hard to tell what he would be up for. But I figured, he hadn't told me to go away, so I kept checking in with him.

I tried to make it clear that I wanted to tell a sensitive story that would hopefully honor his family members. He finally agreed to an interview at his hotel. I ended up talking to him and his wife, Sabrina, for a few hours.

I'll always be grateful that they spoke to me. Stories like theirs are so invaluable. It revealed how harrowing and terrible the escape was for survivors and how much was truly lost.

What was it like being on Maui and seeing the wildfire's devastation firsthand?

When I arrived, three weeks after the fire, sections of Lahaina were closed off, but you could still see burned areas and scorched cars that had been abandoned. There was a row of white crosses, each one for a victim. It was odd to be on a beautiful island that was heavy with tragedy.

But there was also such community at work: makeshift centers where volunteers cooked food and played music and tried to create a vibe of peace and fellowship. I attended a memorial for a 28-year-old father, and his family invited me to their home afterward. They were so warm and open, and the night was filled with laughter and honesty. It felt like something that would only happen in a place like Hawaii.

Is it emotional for you to work on these stories? How do you cope and process what you're feeling?

When Folau spoke, it brought me to tears. But that emotion tells me that the story matters, and I use it while I'm writing. That's one way of coping -- being able to get it out and onto paper.

It can be an all-consuming process because I take stories like these personally, which is admittedly not healthy. But I feel a great responsibility to write something that is worth the trust someone gave me.

Invite your friends.Invite someone to subscribe to the Race/Related newsletter. Or email your thoughts and suggestions to [*racerelated@nytimes.com*](mailto:racerelated@nytimes.com)

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/14/us/maui-wildfires-coverage.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/14/us/maui-wildfires-coverage.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: A makeshift memorial for the victims of the wildfire in Lahaina, Hawaii, on Aug. 8, lined Lahaina Bypass Road. The fire killed at least 98 people.

Four members of the Tone family, from three generations, died trying to escape the fire. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHELLE MISHINA KUNZ FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A2.

**Load-Date:** October 18, 2023

**End of Document**



[***The Old New Way to Provide Cheap Housing; Nicholas Kristof***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69TY-5401-DXY4-X09J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 9, 2023 Saturday 10:03 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1025 words

**Highlight:** Twenty-first-century versions of rooming houses are cropping up and housing workers with few other options.

**Body**

Homelessness is an American tragedy, but it’s not hopeless. In a [*recent column*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/22/opinion/homeless-houston-dallas.html), I explored how Houston has become a national model by reducing homelessness by more than 60 percent.

One takeaway is that homelessness, above all, reflects a shortage of cheap housing. So I’m intrigued by an approach to providing such housing that’s gaining ground around the country. It’s an idea so old, it seems new: converting single-family houses to rooming houses.

Rooming houses, boardinghouses or single room occupancy (S.R.O.) hotels used to be ubiquitous. President Thomas Jefferson stayed in [*a boardinghouse*](https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-32-02-0171) for several months before moving into the White House. At the seedier end, S.R.O.s largely disappeared over the past half-century, partly because of zoning and economic development projects.

In Houston I dropped in on a home operated by [*PadSplit*](https://www.padsplit.com/), a company that offers furnished bedrooms for ***working-class*** Americans. PadSplit, which is something like a long-term Airbnb for rooming houses, has housed 22,000 people so far and is growing fast.

The PadSplit model is to take a house that is near public transportation, convert the living room to a bedroom, put locks on each bedroom door and then rent out each room by the week. This typically means a shared bathroom and kitchen, and some tenants have [*complaints*](https://www.fastcompany.com/90891909/the-dark-reality-of-the-modern-day-rooming-house), but it’s affordable for people who have few other options.

“It’s reasonable!” said Gregory Walker, 46, a warehouse employee who takes home $2,300 a month.

He pays $150 a week, or a bit more than $600 a month, for a furnished bedroom in the PadSplit I visited. He shares it with six others in a middle-class neighborhood. Utilities and Wi-Fi are included in the rent.

Previously, Walker was stuck in a “sleazy hotel,” as he put it, for $1,950 a month because he had a poor credit record that made it difficult to rent an apartment.

Rooming houses are quite different from the practice of young professionals having housemates in cities like New York and Boston. PadSplit rooms are often cheaper (partly because there aren’t shared living areas), management is by a company rather than the residents, and payment is by the week to make it more workable for people living paycheck by paycheck. S.R.O.s were often squalid, but PadSplit is trying to elevate the experience.

PadSplit is the brainchild of an Atlanta real estate developer, Atticus LeBlanc, the company’s chief executive. He studied architecture and urban studies at Yale but knew little of rooming houses. Then in 2009 he was renting out a home, and two men asked if they could rent individual rooms in it.

The men had only Social Security for income — $685 per month for one man and $735 for the other — and had been paying $100 a week for rooms in a decrepit house with no heating or air conditioning, but that home had been foreclosed on, and they needed to find somewhere else to live.

LeBlanc realized that if he rented rooms out at $100 a week, he could give people with low incomes comfortable accommodations and increase his income from the house.

“This was mind-blowing,” LeBlanc told me.

He entered a competition for ideas to provide affordable housing and won foundation funding that allowed him to start PadSplit in 2017. It’s a public benefit corporation, meaning that it is for profit but also aims to advance a social purpose.

Now operating in 18 cities, PadSplit provides an online platform for low-income workers to find furnished rooms offered by landlords. Sometimes the landlords rent out the entire house, room by room; others rent out just a room or two. PadSplit renters have an average age of 35 and earn a median of $30,000 per year.

The S.R.O. model addresses a mismatch between our housing stock and household size. Some [*28 percent*](https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/housing/info-2018/making-room-download-page.html) of American households consist of a single person living alone, yet fewer than 1 percent of housing units are studios. Many large houses can be used much more efficiently if they’re converted to rooming houses.

PadSplit hasn’t received direct public subsidies, and the model has room to scale up; census data suggests that there are tens of millions of bedrooms in America that no one sleeps in. This can provide low-cost housing more quickly and cheaply than public efforts to build housing: San Francisco has built some housing units for people who are homeless for [*more than $1 million each*](https://www.sfchronicle.com/sf/article/it-now-costs-more-than-1-2-million-to-build-a-17463355.php).

There’s no one answer to America’s housing crisis, but I’d like to see local governments experiment by rewarding landlords for creating basement flats, taking in boarders or creating rooming houses. A major impediment is local zoning regulations, which sometimes limit how many unrelated people can live together in a house.

I’m sure some readers will see this model as [*exploitative*](https://newrepublic.com/article/162513/affordable-housing-cheap-rent-padsplit) and think that people should have the right to their own home. Yes, that would be nice, but that sentiment doesn’t actually get anyone housed. And while sharing a bathroom and kitchen isn’t ideal, it’s so much better than living in a car.

Millions of Americans working as teachers, firefighters or factory workers simply can’t afford to rent apartments, or credit problems mean they can’t get approved to rent. PadSplit takes people with eviction histories or weak credit but still makes it work with modern real estate management practices: It claims a 97.5 percent collection rate.

All this is a reminder that we used to have solutions to homelessness — like S.R.O.s — that we mostly eliminated half a century ago. This was a catastrophe of good intentions: We aimed to improve housing and neighborhoods and instead we got people sleeping in cars and on sidewalks.

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I’m delighted to announce my annual [*win-a-trip*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/09/opinion/win-a-trip-in-2024.html) contest to choose a university student to travel with me on an expense-paid reporting trip. Information is at nytimes.com/winatrip, and please pass the word to students you know.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/31/opinion/letters/letters-to-editor-new-york-times-women.html) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://help.nytimes.com/hc/en-us/articles/115014925288-How-to-submit-a-letter-to-the-editor). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](mailto:letters@nytimes.com).

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PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page SR3.

**Load-Date:** December 11, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Whisky From Wales? Believe It, Say the Welsh.; Abergwyngregyn Dispatch***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B3J-YDV1-JBG3-625H-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 14, 2024 Sunday 12:50 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; europe

**Length:** 1252 words

**Highlight:** It is no simple task to get an official seal of approval for a bottle of Welsh spirits. Persuading purists to give it a try may also be a challenge.

**Body**

It is no simple task to get an official seal of approval for a bottle of Welsh spirits. Persuading purists to give it a try may also be a challenge.

It is famed for a love of singing and a passion for rugby. It has a distinctive Celtic language and is the birthplace of the poet Dylan Thomas. But few would claim that Wales, a nation of three million people outnumbered by sheep, is well known for whiskey, or whisky, as it is known in Wales.

Yet the country has played its part in distilling history — a Welshman is considered one of the founding fathers of bourbon — and a recent revival of whisky production has prompted new rules governing which liquor can call itself Welsh.

That was how the problems began in Abergwyngregyn (pronounced ABER-gwin-gregin), in the shadow of the ice-capped Snowdonia mountain range, where Aber Falls single-malt whisky is produced in a distillery filled with the strong malty aroma of barley.

Made with exclusively Welsh grain and water from a picturesque nearby waterfall, the light, slightly fruity, single-malt whisky [*distilled by Aber Falls*](https://www.aberfallsdistillery.com/) was the first in more than a century to be produced in North Wales.

The packaging is red — one of the national colors of Wales — and bears an image of a dragon, the country’s symbol. When the distillery opened in 2017, its mission was to create “a Welsh brand, supporting Wales and collaborating with other Welsh businesses,” said Carole Jones, its general manager.

But it still was not Welsh enough.

Last year, Aber Falls whisky failed a test for certification as a protected Welsh product because the bottling was taking place not at the distillery, but 50 miles across the border, in England. The company had a choice: move the bottling back to Wales, or banish any mention of Welshness from the label — even the red dragon.

That, said Ms. Jones, would have been a “catastrophe” for Aber Falls, so by September, bottling was back on Welsh soil, allowing the company to [*join a list*](https://www.gov.wales/aber-falls-distillery-sees-its-single-malt-welsh-whisky-protected) with four other certified Welsh whisky makers.

Awkward though it was, the wrangle over provenance highlights the growing interest in whisky in Wales, where a small number of commercial distilleries have followed in the footsteps of the [*best-known modern day producer*](https://www.penderyn.wales/), Penderyn. In total, Welsh whisky firms generate an estimated 23 million pounds, or about $29 million, in revenue a year.

Though for some, whisky is synonymous with Scotch, Wales enjoys an unusual place in liquor history because a Welshman, Evan Williams, is hailed as one of the first distillers of bourbon in the United States.

Historical details are sketchy and disputed, but, according to Heaven Hill Brands, the producers of a bourbon named for him, Mr. Williams was born in 1755, immigrated to North America in the late 1770s or early 1780s, and began distilling in 1783 in Louisville, Ky. He was probably raised in Dale, Pembrokeshire, where his family may have had a distillery.

The country he left behind never developed commercial production on the scale of Scotland or Ireland, but in 1889, one large producer, the Welsh Whisky Distillery Company, was founded in Frongoch, near Bala, around 50 miles from Aber Falls.

It did not survive long. In England, the whisky’s reception was lukewarm. In Scotland, it was cooler, and in Wales, social forces were gathering against it, including the temperance movement.

“Conditions in many of the factories and mines were so bad, and poverty was so rife, that there was a movement to galvanize people into Christian communities,” said Alexander Langlands, an associate professor of history at Swansea University. “In hard-working ***working-class*** communities, you really didn’t want young men, fathers and grandfathers, and women in the family, taking to the bottle. So there is a reason why it died — a cultural reason — here in Wales.”

It took a century, but the revival began in 2004, when Penderyn was opened in South Wales. It expanded a decade later and has won critical acclaim.

“It’s a whisky I would keep in my collection,” said Vic Cameron, a whisky lecturer at the University of the Highlands and Islands in Scotland, referring to a Penderyn single malt finished in a former Madeira cask.

While “Scotch took over the world,” Mr. Cameron said, whisky can be produced wherever cereals grow.

“If you ferment it and distill it, it’s whisky,” he said. “And the Welsh have everything that we have: They have decent water, they have malted barley, and they have yeast, so they can make good whisky.”

Still, selling whisky, said Dr. Langlands, who advised Penderyn on branding, often requires creating “a sort of mystique.” He said, “You really do need to pull on some sort of heritage.”

To that end, Penderyn uses an old copper works in Swansea, while Aber Falls, on the banks of the gushing river that flows from the waterfall to the Menai Strait, distills in a 19th-century slate works (previously used as a margarine factory).

Starting with a staff of only five, Aber Falls now employs 35 people, 29 of whom work at the distillery, with the remainder in Bangor, about 10 miles away, where bottling now takes place.

Spirits were first produced here in 2018, but whisky must be matured in casks for at least three years, so it was not until 2021 that a single malt was released.

Last year, still adapting to its exit from the European Union, Britain introduced a system of “geographical indicators” [*intended to replace*](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/protected-geographical-food-and-drink-names-uk-gi-schemes) a pan-European system meant to protect products like Champagne and Cognac from imitations.

Aber Falls supported the new rules that required that Welsh water be used and that the whisky be distilled, matured and bottled in Wales. But it fell foul of them when staff shortages made bottling in Bangor uneconomical and Aber Falls began turning to a site owned by its parent company in Chorley, England.

With the coveted “Welsh” designation at stake, the company moved swiftly to resume bottling in Wales, aided by the closure of a local factory that freed up more workers.

Business is good, and last January, the company moved to 24-hour distilling. Around 6,000 bottles of whisky are produced each week in Bangor, and exports go to 40 countries, including China and Kazakhstan, with plans to add the United States next year.

In the summer, there are as many as seven tours of the distillery a day, drawing many of the thousands of tourists who visit the spectacular Aber Falls waterfall. Some of them are whisky aficionados. Others come for other reasons.

“It’s something to do, particularly if it’s raining,” said Steve Bell, 65, a part-time tour guide.

Ms. Jones, the general manager, is 52 and was born and raised in Wales. She said there was now a big push by the government “to build Wales’s brand” — including gaining global recognition for its whisky.

That may pose a bit of a challenge.

Ms. Jones said she believed her single malt competes with those from Scotland, but she acknowledged that, after missing out on a century of distilling, Welsh whisky lacked renown.

“I think we still have a lot of work to do,” she said. “There are still people in a lot of countries who don’t know where Wales is.”

PHOTOS: Clockwise from top left: whisky flowing at the Aber Falls distillery; the Aber Falls waterfall in Snowdonia National Park in Wales; bottles of the whisky; and Carole Jones, the general manager of Aber Falls, at the distillery. The brand is available in 40 countries, including China and Kazakhstan, but not yet in the United States. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARY TURNER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A4.

**Load-Date:** January 16, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Ghost Stories, Both Literal and Figurative; The Shortlist***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69TP-VNN1-JBG3-63V4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 8, 2023 Friday 12:13 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 1099 words

**Byline:** May-lee Chai

**Highlight:** Three new collections by Jeanette Winterson, Paul Yoon and Louise Kennedy.

**Body**

For Jeanette Winterson, ghost stories are not old-fashioned or anachronistic in the modern world, but both cutting-edge and primal. In the introduction to her new collection, NIGHT SIDE OF THE RIVER: Ghost Stories (Grove, 306 pp., $27), she recalls some of her own inexplicable experiences with the uncanny, from the ghost of a writer friend materializing on her computer screen to her childhood premonition of her grandmother’s passing. Religion, and specifically faith in an afterlife, “can be considered as humankind’s first disruptive start-up,” she writes. “What’s being disrupted is death.”

Not every story in the book is meant to be scary; some delight in the clever juxtaposition of ghost tropes and technology. In “Ghost in the Machine,” canny A.I. avatars represent unbodied consciousness, tempting humans with the promise of immortality in exchange for cryptocurrency. In the collection’s most tender and lyrical story, “The Undiscovered Country,” the dead narrator tries to reach out to his grieving male partner via shipping forecasts on the radio.

But Winterson’s strongest stories follow characters haunted not just by apparitions but by human bigotry and traditional, toxic gender roles. “The Door” is set in a 14th-century Scottish castle-turned-wedding-venue that’s inhabited by the spirits of a medieval queer couple who were killed by transphobic villagers. In a pair of linked stories, “A Fur Coat” and “Boots,” a young scammer couple swindle an earl into letting them live on his rural estate for the winter, rent-free — but their romantic “simple life” is interrupted by the property’s surly gardener, who teaches the indoorsy boyfriend how to hunt pheasant and “to keep an eye on that woman of yours.” The gardener, who may or may not be a ghost, goads Jonny’s hatred (“She’s a whore,” he thinks. “Edwin’s right. Edwin’s with him, whistling softly”) until a climactic moment of violence. The ghosts hardly need to show up at all, Winterson knows; the terror’s already present in the misogyny of the living.

At first glance the seven stories in Paul Yoon’s slim but exquisite collection THE HIVE AND THE HONEY: Stories (Marysue Rucci Books, 150 pp., $26) appear unrelated: A Korean American man from Queens is released from prison and travels to the rural hometown of his former cellmate looking for work; a woman who escaped North Korea decades ago is given one opportunity to send a message to the son she left behind; a Korean immigrant couple who own a corner shop in London plan a seaside vacation. But each narrative is a piece of a larger puzzle that together form a portrait of Korean history and its diaspora that is breathtaking in scope, detailing the persistence of imperialism, war, poverty and dislocation across generations.

Throughout Yoon limns the tiny choices that ripple across his characters’ lives — a prison-yard fight, a refusal to help a mysterious runaway — before turning his lens on history. In the epistolary title story, set in 1881, a Cossack police officer stationed in a Korean settlement on the Russian border witnesses a local man’s brutal vengeance against his brother’s wife, who killed her husband after he raped and beat her night after night. But his action is not without consequences: A month later, the narrator writes to his uncle, “Almost every member of the settlement has been visited by what they are calling the apparition. It’s never the husband, always the wife. They describe her in the exact same way. A moving brightness. Anger. The same height and shape as the hanged woman.”

In “At the Post Station,” 17th-century Japanese soldiers in service to an Edo-period daimyo end up raising a Korean child whom their lord instructed them to kidnap in battle as an infant 10 years earlier, “a casualty of the invasion of Korea.” The final story, “Valley of the Moon,” is a masterpiece of emotional restraint in which a Korean War refugee returns to his home village in the South to start a farm, and takes in two orphans who are unaware of his murderous past.

Crisscrossing the globe and the centuries, Yoon expertly telescopes between the long view and the close-up.

Injustice and harm, whether financial or interpersonal or both, loom over the lives of the ***working-class*** Irish women in Louise Kennedy’s accomplished latest, THE END OF THE WORLD IS A CUL DE SAC: Stories (Riverhead, 289 pp., $28).

“In Silhouette” switches from second- to first-person narration as a manicurist reflects on the torture and killing of her older brother during the Troubles 40 years earlier; in “Belladonna,” a schoolgirl from Belfast delights in her job with an Irish herbalist until his wife’s erratic behavior and a mysterious bruise hint at trouble to come.

Kennedy knows how to ratchet up the tension by teasing out details. In the title story, a woman abandoned by her husband, a shady housing estate developer, is living off the dwindling supply of cash she’s found in his dresser. When a young man takes an interest in her (“You’re the gangster’s moll from down the hill,” he says), she can’t quite place where she’s seen him before, until it’s too late. On a date with him, she suddenly remembers the time her husband read about the young man in a local tabloid: “A kingpin, no less, he had said as he folded the paper up. The wee knacker is a kingpin.”

Occasionally the weight of the characters’ burdens threatens to overwhelm a story, teetering into hopelessness. “Brittle Things,” about a couple with a young, neurodivergent son, feels suffocating in its depiction of the parents’ shame and denial. At a restaurant the mother worries constantly as she feeds her child breadsticks to calm him, feeling onlookers’ “eyes on her,” Kennedy writes. “It must have looked like she was training a puppy.” When she seeks answers online for why her son hasn’t started speaking at 5, her husband snarls, “Everything gets a … label these days.”

But more often Kennedy’s droll wit and spot-on dialogue brilliantly illuminate her characters’ travails. The middle-aged friends in “Beyond Carthage” save up for an “exotic” vacation in Tunisia only to arrive amid torrential rains at “a purpose-built concrete resort arranged around a new marina, as neat and airless as an architect’s model.” Unable to get to the classical ruins of their dreams, they book a visit to what they think is a local spa, but turns out to be “a glorified brothel, with a clientele of desperate women … who found themselves single at an age when being alone made them feel ridiculous,” Therese thinks. “She and Noreen fitted right in.”

PHOTOS This article appeared in print on page BR34.

**Load-Date:** December 8, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Inflation concerns are at the center of an Ohio Senate contest.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65CW-T4Y1-DXY4-X2XP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 6, 2022 Friday 19:33 EST

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**Section:** BUSINESS

**Length:** 422 words

**Byline:** Jazmine Ulloa

**Highlight:** The race between Representative Tim Ryan and J.D. Vance will require them to win over establishment Republicans and ***working-class*** voters.

**Body**

The race between Representative Tim Ryan and J.D. Vance will require them to win over establishment Republicans and ***working-class*** voters.

Inflation and high gas, food and energy prices were among the top issues animating voters in this week’s primary contests in Ohio, where an intense general election battle for a Senate seat is now unfolding between Representative Tim Ryan and J.D. Vance, the author and investor. The race is expected to largely center on winning over establishment Republicans and ***working-class*** voters.

Mr. Ryan, a Democrat, and Mr. Vance, a Republican, have both pledged to bring back jobs, rebuild Ohio’s manufacturing industry and withstand competition from China. But Mr. Vance’s stump speeches and ads have also included heavy appeals to social conservatives, with hard-right attacks on immigrants and transgender people, as well as digs at President Biden, whose low approval ratings are expected to hurt Democrats.

“I’m sick of the president, Joe Biden, who will buy oil and gas from every single person in the world except for a middle-class southeastern Ohioan who’s trying to earn a living to support his family,” Mr. Vance said, to cheers, at an April rally with former President Donald J. Trump outside Columbus.

Polls show that Americans, and Republicans in particular, are more concerned about inflation than at any other time since the 1980s. In Ohio, that worry was echoed at candidate events and forums, where voters often pointed to gas prices that had risen above $4 a gallon, despite other economic markers that have improved. The unemployment rate in the state was a low 4.1 percent in March, and Help Wanted signs have become commonplace outside storefronts, restaurants and gas stations across the state.

At an election night event for former State Treasurer Josh Mandel, who came in a close second to Mr. Vance in the Republican primary, Matthew Kearney, 32, a partner at a law firm, said he supported Mr. Mandel because of his stances opposing abortion and “critical race theory,” the catchall conservative term for public school curriculums that focus on the functions of race and racism in American society.

He also pointed to his pocketbook.

“Inflation at the grocery store, gas prices,” Mr. Kearney said. “I think people are motivated to vote based on how that is impacting them.”

PHOTO: J.D. Vance, above, the Republican nominee in Ohio’s senate race, will face Representative Tim Ryan, a Democrat, in the general election. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Drew Angerer/Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** May 6, 2022

**End of Document**



[***French Fury Against Macron Over Retirement Age***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67W9-S041-DXY4-X1RY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 28, 2023 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 21; LETTERS

**Length:** 302 words

**Body**

Summary summary summary

To the Editor:

Re ''In France, the Damage Can't Be Undone,'' by Cole Stangler (Opinion guest essay, March 25):

France's president, Emmanuel Macron, has undoubtedly been maladroit in his handling of the retirement age issue, as Mr. Stangler points out. But the merits of Mr. Macron's proposal are compelling.

France's pension program will run out of money as the population ages and the ratio of workers to retirees diminishes. Further, France's current retirement age of 62 is the lowest among its peers in Europe (which mostly run from 65 to 67).

By toughing out the demonstrators, Mr. Macron is risking ruining his presidency to do the right thing for his country.

Contrast this with the actions of another leader, Bibi Netanyahu, also facing massive demonstrations against his policy of weakening the Israeli judiciary, a key institution providing checks on the power of the executive and legislative branches.

Though he is now delaying any action, Mr. Netanyahu has seemed perfectly content to throw his country under the bus in order to avoid being prosecuted for corruption.

Daniel R. MartinHartsdale, N.Y.

To the Editor:

Re ''Macron Draws Anger Not Just for Law, But for His Monarch-Like Disposition'' (news article, March 25):

I am mystified that people aren't talking about the obvious alternative to raising the retirement age in France to keep the system financially afloat: increase social security taxes on the wealthiest French.

President Biden proposed just such a solution this month to keep Medicare solvent for at least 25 years. It would appeal to the French ***working class***, which feels so abused by President Emmanuel Macron and his government, as they seem more concerned with protecting the benefits of the French upper class.

Stephen BinghamSan Rafael, Calif.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/27/opinion/letters/french-fury-against-macron-over-retirement-age.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/27/opinion/letters/french-fury-against-macron-over-retirement-age.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A21.

**Load-Date:** March 28, 2023

**End of Document**



[***For Those Who 'Deserve to Be Remembered'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69YH-YMB1-DXY4-X0SD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 26, 2023 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2023 The New York Times Company

**Section:** Section C; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. 2

**Length:** 1161 words

**Byline:** By Lola Fadulu

**Body**

The museum has shared the stories of immigrants and migrants who lived in New York City in the 19th and 20th centuries for nearly four decades. For the first time, a Black family's apartment will be included.

For the past 35 years, the Tenement Museum has told the stories of immigrants and migrants who lived in New York City in the 19th and 20th centuries to help visitors better understand the city through the lives of its ***working class***.

For the first time in its history, the museum will soon feature the apartment of a Black family as a permanent exhibit.

''A Union of Hope,'' the new exhibit in the Lower East Side museum, will include the recreated apartment of Joseph Moore, a coachman, and Rachel Moore, a housekeeper. The exhibit was supposed to open in 2022, but was delayed because of renovations to modernize the building. Limited tours begin on Dec. 26, and it will open completely in February.

The Tenement Museum has centered Black history in the past, including during walking tours and public talks, said Kat Lloyd, the museum's vice president of programs and interpretation. But the families featured since the museum's opening in 1988 have largely been immigrants and refugees from Europe. This is, in part, because the museum has focused on people who lived in the two buildings where the museum is located, Ms. Lloyd said.

But that's changing.

''The most sort of glaring gap for us was the story of Black New Yorkers who lived in tenements,'' Ms. Lloyd said. The new exhibit will help the organization achieve ''this goal of restoring history and telling a fuller wider story.''

The shift caused some controversy. In 2021, a former educator at the museum, Peter Van Buren, wrote in The Spectator World that the museum was constructing a ''big fat lie'' by including the Moore family, noting that they had never lived on the Lower East Side. Mr. Van Buren claimed the museum had been letting politics influence its decisions after the 2016 election of President Trump.

''This wokeness, which drove me to quit, is now headed for a new low,'' Mr. Van Buren wrote, describing the planned Moore exhibit as a ''desperate move to shoehorn'' a Black family into the mix. His column circulated widely in conservative media after nationwide protests against the police after the murder of George Floyd in 2020. He declined to comment further on Tuesday.

At the time, Annie Polland, the Tenement Museum president, dismissed the criticism, telling The Daily Beast in 2021, ''It has always been part of our mission to tell complicated stories, and it's always been part of our mission to expand the stories that we told while keeping the stories we already have.''

The Moore exhibit had been in the works since at least 2019. The museum said it had learned of the family in 2008. One of its exhibits featured an Irishman also named Joseph Moore who had lived in one of the museum's buildings at 97 Orchard Street. Over the years, visitors were curious about another Joseph Moore listed in a city directory that was part of the exhibit.

That Joseph Moore had ''col'd'' next to his name, an abbreviation for ''colored,'' signifying he was Black.

In 2019, the museum decided to create an exhibit about that Joseph Moore. He was born in Belvidere, N.J., and moved to New York City in 1857, where slavery had already been outlawed for 30 years. He married Ms. Moore in 1864, and they lived in a two-room apartment at 17 Laurens Street, in what is now SoHo, for at least six years.

In addition to the Moores, three other people lived in the apartment: Jane Kennedy, a dressmaker and Ms. Moore's sister-in-law from her first marriage; Rose Brown, an Irish immigrant who worked as a washerwoman; and Louis Munday, Ms. Brown's son who was Irish and Black.

Curators of the exhibit drew from a number of resources, including published essays and newspaper clippings, to recreate the two-room apartment.

In one room, two beds are against the walls, one of which the Moores would have shared and the other for Ms. Kennedy, Ms. Lloyd said. A sewing station for Ms. Kennedy sits near a window. Museum curators also included a framed photo of Abraham Lincoln on the fireplace mantle after finding that a newspaper article about another of Mr. Moore's apartments in 1889 had noted such a portrait.

''It's very, very rare for us to have a description of an actual apartment where one of our subjects lives,'' Ms. Lloyd said, adding that the portrait encourages visitors to dwell on ''what kind of symbolism Lincoln might hold for Joseph, for others within his community.''

The apartment's only other room includes a turkey carcass stored in a larder, or cupboard. The carcass was inspired by an essay in ''Heads of Colored People'' by Dr. James McCune Smith, the first African American to receive a medical degree. The essay describes a woman who receives a turkey carcass as payment from her employer.

''The washerwoman essay is really like the closest we have to a source that is describing a Black tenement home in this period,'' Ms. Lloyd said.

The second room also features a stove with enough space to fit a large pot of water for laundry. Oysters, which were sort of the ''pizza slice of the 1860s,'' Ms. Lloyd said, rest in a pan on the stove.

To give visitors an idea of what the conversations among Black Americans in the 1860s might have sounded like, the Tenement Museum partnered with the Black Gotham Experience, an organization offering walking tours across the city.

In one such conversation, two school-age children discuss ''Uncle Tom's Cabin,'' which was published in 1852. Another features adults crowded around a newspaper, discussing the ratification of the 15th Amendment in 1870, paving the way for Black men to vote.

Marquis Taylor, the lead researcher for the exhibit, said photos, speeches and newspapers, including the six or so Black newspapers in New York in the 1850s and 1860s, were essential to constructing the conversations.

The newspapers captured a ''diversity of opinions,'' he noted, covering events at Black churches, efforts by Black New Yorkers to repeal the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 and efforts by Black women to repeal property requirements to vote.

Recently, Ms. Lloyd wondered aloud what a Black woman named Gina Manuel would think about the exhibit. In 1989, Ms. Manuel wrote to Ruth J. Abram, one of the museum's founders, after listening to her on WNYC AM Radio, Ms. Lloyd said.

In the letter, Ms. Manuel told Ms. Abram about her ancestors who lived in tenement buildings on the Lower East Side before being ''pushed out'' to Hell's Kitchen. She begged Ms. Abram to not forget them in the museum.

''Their spirits walk those halls, and their bones lay in the earth there, and we remember them,'' Ms. Manuel wrote.

''Most of society seems to write us off when they look at the history of New York City, and America, but my people were part of New York City,'' she said. They ''deserve to be remembered.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/19/nyregion/tenement-museum-black-family.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/19/nyregion/tenement-museum-black-family.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: The Tenement Museum, left, features ''A Union of Hope,'' a permanent exhibition about a Black family who lived in New York City in the 1860s. Curators designed the exhibition (above and below) based on resources such as essays and newspaper clippings. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROSHNI KHATRI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page C2.

**Load-Date:** December 26, 2023

**End of Document**



[***U.A.W. Members Skeptical of Biden's Commitment to Their Cause***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:696M-NDB1-DXY4-X029-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 19, 2023 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1494 words

**Byline:** By Trip Gabriel

**Body**

The president has highlighted his pro-union credentials, but inflation has eroded blue-collar livelihoods and chilled support for the president on the picket lines.

President Biden, who calls himself the most pro-union president ever and has sided with striking United Auto Workers -- calling for ''record contracts'' as the union walked out on Friday -- has yet to convince many rank-and-file U.A.W. members that his sentiments are more than just nice-sounding words.

That was the prevailing view in interviews with two dozen striking workers for Ford and Jeep in Michigan and Ohio this weekend. Many, including some who voted for him, said inflation had so undercut their wages that they felt pushed out of the middle class, laying the blame with Mr. Biden.

Despite the president's ''middle class Joe'' persona, and his potential 2024 rival Donald J. Trump's record and rhetoric undermining unions, many autoworkers were not convinced that the current Oval Office occupant was the one more forcefully on their side.

''I can't tell when he speaks to the public if he's being told to say it or if he's genuinely saying it,'' Jennifer Banks, a striking worker, said of Mr. Biden's pro-union remarks on Friday during which he unequivocally backed the U.A.W.

Ms. Banks, a 29-year Ford employee, was picketing on Saturday at the company's vast Michigan Assembly Plant in Wayne. A sign outside Gate 2 warned, ''Absolutely no foreign vehicles allowed!''

The ambivalence toward Mr. Biden underscores an ongoing challenge to his re-election, as Democrats try to stanch any more bleeding of blue-collar support after three years of inflation and high interest rates.

Mr. Trump, in the meantime, has continued to appeal to union voters, renewing his attacks on China, immigrants and liberal priorities like renewable energy, issues that fueled his historically large inroads with white, ***working-class*** voters in 2016 and 2020.

Ms. Banks, 50, a political independent who voted for Mr. Trump in 2020, said that in a potential rematch between him and Mr. Biden she would be torn, because she doesn't like much of what Republicans stand for.

''I think our president is not as strong a president as we need,'' she said. ''I'm hoping somebody can replace him. I hope it doesn't leave me no choice but to vote the other way.''

An hour's drive south of Wayne, Beverly Brown was the strike captain for a team of workers who attach the hoods to Jeeps at the massive Toledo Assembly Complex in Ohio. ''No Justice, No Jeeps'' was written on a vehicle's window. Ms. Brown, 65, voted for Mr. Biden but said that when it came to backing working people, ''I don't think he's doing enough.'' Neither did she view Mr. Trump as an ally of working people, saying, ''Everything he's done up until now proves otherwise: He's for the rich.''

On Friday, 13,000 workers at three Midwest plants, owned by Ford, General Motors and Stellantis -- the parent of Jeep and Chrysler -- walked out in what the U.A.W. called a targeted strike, demanding nearly 40 percent raises over four years, the end of a two-tier system in which newer workers get lower pay, and the restoration of benefits that the union gave up during the Great Recession in 2008.

Despite Mr. Biden's decades-long emphasis of his roots in Scranton, Pa., and his well-honed brand as a hero for the middle class, strikers did not necessarily see him as their champion. Their wages, which range from $18 to $32 an hour, have eroded significantly amid rising prices, many said, with an apparent political cost to the White House.

A lengthy strike that reduces the supply of cars and drives up prices could force the Federal Reserve to keep interest rates high, with repercussions for Mr. Biden's re-election.

''Back when I hired in here, there was a middle class,'' Garth Potrykus, 68, a longtime electrician in the Ford plant, said. ''The middle class -- they're gone.''

Ford, he said, hires waves of temporary workers who earn below fast-food wages. ''They might hang around two or three weeks, then they go down to McDonald's and they make more money,'' he said. ''How are those people ever going to afford the, quote, American dream?''

Mr. Biden has centered his re-election campaign around the idea of ''Bidenomics,'' his record of infrastructure, high tech and clean energy spending aimed at creating good industrial jobs and shrinking income inequality. Despite those broad policies, Mr. Potrykus, eyeing his own expenses, said he didn't see either Democrats or Republicans as fighting for the ***working class***.

''I don't think either party is really interested in that,'' he said. ''It's a war on us now. You've got the super rich and then you've got the poor.''

That many union workers don't automatically align with Democrats and reject Republicans, who often support policies that suppress blue-collar pay, has confounded Democratic strategists since at least the era of the Reagan Democrats of the 1980s. Large numbers of Republicans in Congress last year sponsored legislation to weaken organized labor by allowing workers in all 50 states to opt out of union dues.

Mr. Trump, who also supports ''right to work'' laws, has a mixed record on organized labor. In office, he renegotiated a North American trade deal to give more protections to American workers. But lately he has attacked U.A.W. leadership, saying in an interview broadcast Sunday that its leaders, along with the carmakers and the Biden administration, were in cahoots to force a transition to electric vehicles made in China.

While union leaders almost universally endorse Democrats for president because of their pro-labor agendas, a sizable rank-and-file contingent votes Republican, often over conservative social issues.

In 2020, Mr. Trump won about four in 10 voters in union households, according to exit polls and an internal survey by the A.F.L.-C.I.O. Michael Podhorzer, a former longtime A.F.L.-C.I.O. political director, said that was hardly surprising. ''The demographics of union members are the ones who've been trending away from Democrats for quite some time,'' he said. This is particularly true of industrial unions.

Mr. Trump emphasized ''a set of issues that union members never agreed with Democrats on,'' most prominently immigration, Mr. Podhorzer added. Despite the trend, union members still tend to vote five to 10 points more Democratic than similar voters who are not in unions, he said.

''People don't join unions because they're Democrats or liberals,'' Mr. Podhorzer said. ''People are in unions because that's where they work.'' It's misguided to expect that ''they should be voting like MoveOn members,'' he added, referring to the progressive policy group and political action committee.

But the union's membership is not monolithic in its voting patterns. Younger strikers, and particularly nonwhite U.A.W. members, were not as critical of Mr. Biden. Anthony Thompson, 54, said that he, too, struggled to make ends meet, in part because his wife, Uleana, has lupus and medical costs mean the family ends up living paycheck to paycheck.

But Mr. Thompson, who joined Ford two years ago and has worked up to $20 an hour, did not blame the president. ''I would say he's doing the best under the circumstances that he can,'' Mr. Thompson said.

Jason Grammer-Gold, 42, a striker at Jeep, said that Mr. Trump's promises to rebuild the industrial heartland ''was all talk'' and that he left office with little to show for it.

''I don't feel Trump is for the working American at all,'' he said. ''His presidency was to get his taxes down.'' Mr. Grammer-Gold said that he, his husband and their adopted child recently moved from Ohio across the border to Michigan to live in a state where Democrats control government. ''Republicans are passing tons of anti-gay laws,'' he said.

Outside Gate 2 at the Jeep plant, two longtime workers who met on the strike line, Ronald Flores and Frank Luvinski, each said their pay didn't go as far as it used to, but they had opposite views of Mr. Biden and Mr. Trump.

''In 2018, I felt like I had finally gotten ahead,'' Mr. Luvinski, 52, a Trump supporter, said. ''I finally had money in my bank account. And now, I make more money than ever, and I have less. My energy bill just doubled in June.''

Across the street, Mr. Flores, 56, had parked his white Jeep Gladiator pickup. ''We built that right on the line,'' he said. Peeling back a piece of interior carpet, he showed where co-workers signed their names on painted steel.

Mr. Flores's grandfather, son and multiple cousins have been union autoworkers, jobs that helped them build comfortable lives. He drew an analogy between his employer, whom he respects, his truck and what he considers Mr. Trump's unfulfilled campaign promises.

''If you say you want to make something great again, when you leave, greatness should continue,'' he said. ''You leave a legacy. Like Jeep has a legacy. The brand speaks for itself.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/18/us/politics/uaw-strike-biden.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/18/us/politics/uaw-strike-biden.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: JENNIFER BANKS, a striking worker, said of President Biden's pro-union remarks on Friday.

BEVERLY BROWN, who was the strike captain for a team of workers who attach the hoods to Jeeps at the massive Toledo Assembly Complex in Ohio.

JASON GRAMMER-GOLD, a striker at Jeep, who said that Donald J. Trump's promise to rebuild the industrial heartland 'was all talk.' (PHOTOGRAPH BY EMILY ELCONIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

President Biden has often tried to build a brand as a champion for the middle class. This article appeared in print on page A17.

**Load-Date:** September 19, 2023

**End of Document**



[***How a Vermont Ski Area Roared Back From a Financial Scandal***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BF6-FNY1-JBG3-64C8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 28, 2024 Wednesday 17:23 EST

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**Section:** TRAVEL

**Length:** 1732 words

**Byline:** David Goodman

**Highlight:** Less than a decade ago, the biggest fraud in ski industry history nearly took down a beloved ski area. But Jay Peak, long known for its powder, has since transformed into a sparkling modern resort.

**Body**

Less than a decade ago, the biggest fraud in ski industry history nearly took down a beloved ski area. But Jay Peak, long known for its powder, has since transformed into a sparkling modern resort.

Settling into the first tram of the morning at Vermont’s [*Jay Peak*](https://jaypeakresort.com/) resort last month, I looked down to see a young boy wearing a neon helmet pressed against the window, his father next to him, as excited as I was to ski the foot of fresh snow. The boy told me that he was 10 years old. I asked him why he liked coming to Jay Peak.

“Because of the Jay Cloud,” he said matter-of-factly, as if it were obvious. “It has the best snow.” As if on cue, the world outside the aerial tram car suddenly went from blue to white. Sixty of us in the rising tram were in our own personal snow globe.

The mystique of Jay Peak, the northernmost ski area in Vermont, is intimately bound to the Jay Cloud, a mythical storm cloud that hovers over its rocky summit. The resort, five miles from Quebec, claims to receive more snow — an average of about 350 inches — than any resort east of the American Rockies, and even more than many Western ski areas, including Park City, Utah, and Steamboat Springs, Colo.

But another cloud, for years, hung over Jay Peak Resort: Its former owners perpetrated the biggest financial fraud in ski industry history — as well as the biggest fraud in the state of Vermont.

In 2016, [*officials from the Securities and Exchange Commission seized the ski resort*](https://jaypeakresort.com/) and accused its owners, the longtime Jay Peak president, Bill Stenger, and a Miami businessman named Ariel Quiros, of defrauding foreign investors of $200 million in a Ponzi-like scheme. Both men landed in jail. The ski area remained open while under federal receivership, emerging from it in the fall 2022 when the area was purchased by the Park City-based [*Pacific Group Resorts*](https://jaypeakresort.com/) for $76 million.

Once the cloud of scandal was finally lifted, a sparkling modern resort was — perhaps paradoxically — revealed. Three hotels, an ice rink, a 60,000-square-foot indoor water park, climbing gym, movie theater, multiple condo complexes, and numerous bars and restaurants have been built since 2009, largely with money from defrauded investors. The buildings and attractions teem with visitors.

“If you haven’t been to Jay Peak in a decade, you literally won’t even recognize the place you pull up to,” said Steve Wright, the resort’s general manager.

But the cloud has been slower to clear from other parts of the state’s Northeast Kingdom. While the resort bustles with new lodging and amenities, [*related promises to bring thousands of jobs*](https://jaypeakresort.com/) and extensive development to the region, Vermont’s most impoverished, fell far short. In the nearby city of Newport, a 20-mile drive from Jay Peak, there is still a hole in the heart of its downtown.

Powder, challenge and scandal

Jay Peak opened for skiing in 1957, its signature, craggy summit becoming accessible to skiers in the mid-1960s with the opening of a chairlift and Vermont’s only tramway. In the 1970s, the Hotel Jay opened with 48 slope-side rooms.

By the early 2000s, Jay Peak Resort was renowned among hard-core skiers for its powder and challenge. Half of its skiers were Canadian, with Montreal just two hours away. But its infrastructure of lifts and hotels “was pretty well banged up,” said Mr. Wright, who was hired in 2004 by Mr. Stenger, who led the resort since the mid-1980s. The Tyrolean-themed base lodge and hotel was dated and the ski area described in one news account as shabby, unchic and seedy.

Then came the prospect of seemingly easy money: Mr. Stenger turned to a federal initiative, called the EB-5 Immigrant Investor Program, that offers foreign investors an expedited path to obtaining green cards in return for a job-creating investment of $500,000 if the project is in an economically depressed area like the Northeast Kingdom.

In 2008, Mr. Stenger joined with Mr. Quiros to purchase Jay Peak Resort and they acquired the nearby [*Burke Mountain Resort*](https://jaypeakresort.com/) several years later. They raised a staggering $350 million from EB-5 investors to upgrade and transform the facilities at both resorts.

But the pair didn’t limit their vision to skiing. In their most ambitious — and outlandish — gambit, they also proposed to locate a biotechnology company in Newport, a ***working-class*** city of 4,400 people, and redevelop the city’s downtown, including building a boutique hotel, a conference center and new marina on Lake Memphremagog. They said that the project would employ directly or indirectly 10,000 people, transform the ski areas into four-season resorts and help revitalize the struggling Northeast Kingdom, which has the highest poverty rate, the lowest household income and the highest median age in Vermont.

It turned out that Mr. Quiros had bought the resort with investor funds intended to build hotels, then continued to improperly redirect funds from subsequent projects in a Ponzi-like scheme to cover this original sin. When the S.E.C. and Vermont officials caught up with him, they revealed that Mr. Quiros, along with Mr. Stenger, had misused $200 million of the funds they had raised, including $50 million that Mr. Quiros had spent on luxury purchases, such as a condo in Trump Place New York. Mr. Stenger, who was not accused of personally profiting from the scandal, was nevertheless charged by the S.E.C. with being part of a “massive eight-year fraudulent scheme” that [*“systematically looted” foreign investors*](https://jaypeakresort.com/).

“I’m outraged at what he did and I feel abused,” Mr. Stenger said recently.

Mr. Quiros was sentenced to five years in prison for wire fraud and money laundering, and Mr. Stenger was sentenced to 18 months for submitting falsified documents. He served nine months and was released from prison in March 2023. “I’m embarrassed that I didn’t see it earlier,” Mr. Stenger said.

Busted

Michael Goldberg, a top receivership attorney who has handled hundreds of Ponzi cases and represented many clients of [*Bernie Madoff*](https://jaypeakresort.com/), the financier and architect of the largest Ponzi scheme in history, was appointed federal receiver of Jay Peak in 2016.

Jay Peak was “at one point the poster child of everything good about the EB-5 program,” Mr. Goldberg said. “When it collapsed, it became the poster child for everything bad about the EB-5 world.”

Mr. Wright, Jay Peak’s general manager, teamed up with Mr. Goldberg to steer Jay Peak through a different kind of storm.

Some 836 investors from 74 countries had been duped by the [*Kingdom Con*](https://jaypeakresort.com/), as the scandal was later coined. While Mr. Goldberg’s job was to ensure that defrauded investors were made whole, Mr. Wright understood that Jay Peak “has to be successful, not only for making sure that the staff kept their jobs, but because the investors getting their visas was predicated on the business being successful.”

A lot was on the line: Jay Peak’s staff had grown from 350 to 1,200, making it the biggest employer in the region.

“We were nervous that no one was ever going to buy a season pass for Jay Peak or book a vacation here anymore,” Mr. Wright said. To his surprise, as word spread about the ski area’s improvements, skier visits set records.

After the fraud

Then the pandemic shut everything down. The Canadian border [*closed for nonessential travel for 19 months*](https://jaypeakresort.com/). For the entire winter of 2020-2021, Jay Peak was inaccessible to half of its clientele and subject to strict health restrictions by the state of Vermont. Annual skier visits plunged to 75,000 from some 300,000.

In a curious twist, weathering the EB-5 scandal prepared the resort for surviving the pandemic. “We can probably get through this,” Mr. Wright recalled thinking during the height of the pandemic. “A lot of it was with the resiliency that we built up through surviving the receivership.”

Jay Peak has set records in revenue and lift ticket sales annually since 2006, said Mr. Wright, who would not reveal exact sales figures. One reason is the many non-skiing options available to visitors, evident in the bustling water park I saw when I visited on a brisk January day. Another is Jay Peak’s tree skiing. Nearly a third of its 385 skiable acres are glades and the mountain has a throwback feel, offering skiers a mix of narrow natural snow trails and broad boulevards. Skiing Jay Peak feels like a safari, where skiers freely roam the snowy landscape, in contrast to the domesticated feel of other resorts.

Jay Peak’s new owners are not planning major changes. “We are very cognizant of the loyal clientele and the unique vibe that it has,” said Mark Fischer of [*Pacific Group Resorts*](https://jaypeakresort.com/). “We don’t want to change that culture.”

Chris Young, the principal of the nearby North Country High School, is a lifelong Jay Peak skier.

“I don’t think the Jay vibe has changed at all. If anything, it’s gotten better,” he said.

But wounds from the scandal are still visible in the surrounding area. Burke Mountain Resort, where Mr. Quiros and Mr. Stenger built a hotel, is still under federal receivership (Mr. Goldberg expects the ski area to be sold this year). In Newport, a gaping weed-filled hole sits in the center of downtown. An entire block was razed in 2015 to make way for what Mr. Stenger and Mr. Quiros promised would be a multimillion dollar hotel and conference center. [*The hole*](https://jaypeakresort.com/) is like a scarlet letter from a cheating paramour. The parcel is awaiting sale by the federal receiver.

The outcome for the foreign investors has been decidedly mixed. Eighty percent of Jay Peak’s EB-5 investors have received green cards, Mr. Goldberg said, but none of the 121 investors in Burke have received one. Getting green cards for investors is one of his remaining priorities, he said. Many investors have lost money.

Is it ironic that one fruit of the fraud is that Jay Peak is a thriving modern resort?

“Having a fraud and having a beautiful end product are not inconsistent,” Mr. Goldberg quipped.

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PHOTO: Jay Peak’s main draw has always been its snowy trails. Skiing the mountain feels like a safari, with skiers freely roaming the snowy landscape, in contrast to the domesticated feel of many other resorts. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Caleb Kenna for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 10, 2024

**End of Document**



[***At 116, She Has Outlived Generations of Loved Ones. But Her Entire Town Has Become Family.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B8R-3071-JBG3-600P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 7, 2024 Wednesday 14:30 EST

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 1437 words

**Byline:** Soumya Karlamangla Soumya Karlamangla reports on California news and culture and is based in San Francisco. She writes the California Today newsletter.

**Highlight:** When the nation’s oldest person has a birthday, a California community makes sure to celebrate.

**Body**

(Update: Edith Ceccarelli died on Feb. 22, two weeks after her 116th birthday, at the Mendocino County care home where she lived.)

When Edith Ceccarelli was born in February 1908, Theodore Roosevelt was president, Oklahoma had just become the nation’s 46th state and women did not yet have the right to vote.

At 116, Ms. Ceccarelli is the oldest known person in the United States and the second oldest on Earth. She has lived through two World Wars, the advent of the Ford Model T — and the two deadliest pandemics in American history.

For most of that time, she has lived in one place: Willits, a village tucked in California’s redwood forests that was once known for logging but now may be better known for Ms. Ceccarelli.

At Willits City Hall, where 100-foot redwoods tower overhead, a gold-framed photograph of Ms. Ceccarelli sits in a display case. Last year, the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors [*proclaimed*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/california-today) Feb. 5 as a day to celebrate the county’s favorite daughter.

“When she hit her hundredth birthday, the whole community was kind of in awe, and she became a bit of a local celebrity,” said Mayor Saprina Rodriguez, who at 52 is less than half Ms. Ceccarelli’s age.

Nestled in a valley surrounded by forested peaks in rural Mendocino County, in California’s North Coast region, Willits prospered from its booming lumber industry when Ms. Ceccarelli was a little girl. But that boom is long gone, and Willits remains a small, ***working-class*** community of about 5,000 people.

Because it is about 30 miles inland from the Pacific Ocean, Willits has never attracted the tourists who flock to coastal destinations like Mendocino and Fort Bragg, with their Instagrammable wineries and cottages perched on seaside bluffs, along with whale-watching opportunities.

But neither of those places has Ms. Ceccarelli.

On Sunday, Willits hosted its annual celebration for its most treasured resident, who watched from the porch of her care home. It was raining, the beginning of [*another atmospheric river*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/california-today) — what they just called downpours for most of Ms. Ceccarelli’s life — but nobody in Willits gave a thought to canceling the annual festivities.

A parade of flashing police cruisers and fire trucks passed by. Then a garbage truck. Sedans adorned with garlands, balloons and flowers followed, ferrying residents who waved and sang to their beloved Edie.

“She’s a local icon,” said Suzanne Picetti-Johnson, a longtime Willits resident who had donned a rain jacket and beanie and was directing an S.U.V. with “Happy Sweet 116!” scrawled on its rear window. “She’s always been just a total delight, and we’re thrilled to celebrate her one more year.”

On Feb. 5, 1908, Edith Recagno was delivered by her aunt in a house in Willits that her father had built by hand. The home had no electricity or running water, so a hand-dug well provided the family with drinking water and, in lieu of a refrigerator, a cool place to hang milk and meat.

She was the first of seven children born to Agostino and Maria Recagno, who were Italian immigrants drawn to Mendocino County by opportunity. Willits, where bright green moss covers tree trunks and giant ferns unfurl along the banks of icy creeks, was settled by pioneering ranchers in the 1850s as fortune-seekers flocked to California during the Gold Rush.

But then big trees became big business here. Groves of ancient redwoods and other trees were chopped down and sent south to help build a fast-growing San Francisco. Ms. Ceccarelli’s father worked as a carpenter to extend the railroad to Willits, which by the early 1900s allowed Bay Area tourists to come and vacation in the Redwood Empire’s crisp mountain air. For $2.50 a night, guests at the 100-room Hotel Willits enjoyed on-site tennis courts, a bowling alley and a dining room known as the finest north of San Francisco.

Growing up, Ms. Ceccarelli played basketball, tennis and saxophone — her mother had to save up money to buy the instrument — and she loved to sing and dance. She recalled that her father, who opened a grocery store in Willits in 1916, would chop firewood and haul it home after work.

“He would sit with us after dinner and help us read,” Ms. Ceccarelli once [*wrote*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/california-today). “He only had a third-grade education, but he was smart. I can still see the oil lamp on the table where we read.”

From there, Ms. Ceccarelli’s life unfolded like many others. She married her high school sweetheart, Elmer Keenan, when she was 25, and they moved to nearby Santa Rosa, where he took a job as a typesetter at The Press Democrat newspaper. The couple soon adopted a baby daughter. In 1971, after her husband retired, the pair returned to Willits.

Ms. Ceccarelli continued to age, but not everyone in her life was so lucky. Her husband died in 1984, after more than 50 years of marriage. Ms. Ceccarelli remarried, and her second husband, Charles Ceccarelli, died in 1990. Her daughter died, at age 64, in 2003. Ms. Ceccarelli has since outlived her six younger siblings, as well as her three granddaughters, who each died in their 40s because of a genetic condition.

“They’re all gone — they’ve been gone for years and years,” Evelyn Persico, 84, said while thumbing through black-and-white photo albums captioned in Ms. Ceccarelli’s cursive. Ms. Persico, who is married to Ms. Ceccarelli’s second cousin and lives on a ranch in Willits, is one of her few remaining relatives.

So when her 100th birthday approached in 2008, Ms. Ceccarelli herself extended the invitation to all of Willits. Despite decades of change, such as the 101 highway cutting through Main Street and the growth of marijuana farms, Willits remained a tight-knit community. The elegant Ms. Ceccarelli had become known for never missing a dance at the senior center and for her daily walks through town.

Wearing a fuchsia suit and heels, she waltzed alongside more than 500 people who had come to celebrate her new status as a centenarian, and a tiara was placed on her white hair by the mayor at the time.

From then on, Ms. Ceccarelli’s birthday each year has been marked by a party, a lunch or, in the Covid era, a parade, open to all Willits residents. Often wearing a colorful scarf and pearls, she would pass on her wisdom on how to live a long life: “Have a couple of fingers of red wine with your dinner, and mind your own business.”

Other years, she would regale guests with stories of bygone days, of meeting a man who had lunched with Abraham Lincoln or of hearing all the bells in Willits ring on Nov. 11, 1918, signaling the end of World War I.

“I like the small town, you know more people,” Ms. Ceccarelli [*told*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/california-today) the local paper just before her 107th birthday party. “You go to a big city, you don’t know anybody.”

When her longtime dance partner and companion died, she turned again to Willits for support. She put an ad in the local paper:

“I, Edith Ceccarelli, also known as ‘Edie’ by her family and a multitude of friends, would like to keep on dancing,” she [*wrote*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/california-today) in 2012. “Dancing keeps your limbs strong. What is nicer than holding a lovely lady in your arms and dancing a beautiful waltz or two-step together?

“Try it, you will like it,” she added, along with her phone number. She was 104 at the time.

Ms. Ceccarelli lived on her own until she was 107, and then moved into a residential care home in Willits. She has now lived 37 years longer than American women on average. The only person known to be older than her is Maria Branyas Morera, who lives in Spain, but was born in San Francisco 11 months before Ms. Ceccarelli.

The town has taken over the planning of her birthday parties, as her dementia has recently advanced, so she isn’t always aware of what is happening. On the morning of her party, she seemed satisfied to learn that everyone was there for her. She enjoyed a taste of her carrot cake adorned with “116.”

“I just marvel at her,” said Ms. Persico, who greeted Ms. Ceccarelli that day with a kiss on the forehead. “I can’t believe that this little Italian baby has such an amazing record for longevity, coming from such a small town like we are.”

PHOTOS: Mendocino County proclaimed Feb. 5 as a day to celebrate Edith Ceccarelli, who turned 116 this week.; Above, Edith Ceccarelli with Evelyn Persico, 84, who is one of her few remaining relatives. Below, clockwise from top left: Several generations attended the annual celebration; a family photo album; a car in the parade of residents who waved and sang to their beloved Edie.; SUZANNE PICETTI-JOHNSON, a longtime resident of Willits, Calif., who attended the celebration for Ms. Ceccarelli. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALEXANDRA HOOTNICK FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A12.

**Load-Date:** February 28, 2024

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[***Bound for Glory***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69M6-4J21-DXY4-X022-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 12, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section M2; Column 0; TStyle; Pg. 82; ARTS AND LETTERS

**Length:** 2959 words

**Byline:** By Adam Bradley and Justin French

**Body**

TRAY WELLINGTON KNOWS that many will take the title of his 2022 album, ''Black Banjo,'' as an oxymoron. The banjo, and with it an entire body of folk-based music, is now so thoroughly associated with whiteness as to obscure its origins in Black musical tradition. ''One of the first things I heard when I started playing banjo was, 'You're not supposed to be doing this,''' says Wellington, 24, whose father is Black and mother is white. But for him, playing the banjo has become an act of reclamation.

Contemporary audiences still tend to associate the banjo with white Southern traditions of bluegrass, old-time and what record labels used to market as hillbilly music, but its roots are in Africa, in stringed instruments like the akonting, the buchundu and the ngoni. During the 19th century, the banjo became inextricably linked to minstrelsy: variety shows in which white performers (and, increasingly after the Civil War, Black performers) ''blacked up,'' grotesquely caricaturing Black facial features. The minstrel show, which persisted onstage and onscreen well into the 20th century, accounts for the banjo's conflicted legacy -- both part of the visual vocabulary of white supremacy and a point of creative contact between Black and white musicians.

Wellington's interest in the banjo was stoked by his maternal grandfather's love of classic country, which he'd play for Wellington on fishing trips or while working in the backyard garden of the family home in Ashe County, N.C. After some cajoling, Wellington's mother (a hip-hop fan) took her 13-year-old son to a pawnshop, where they purchased one on layaway. Playing banjo eventually led Wellington to East Tennessee State University's renowned Bluegrass, Old-Time and Roots Music program, where he learned the history and practice of folk music and joined a community of mostly white teachers and students. Many of his classmates welcomed him (he plays with fellow E.T.S.U. grads in his current band); a few subjected him to scorn. ''People would often ask me, 'How does it feel to be Black in this music?' I would put if off because I didn't want to talk about it,'' Wellington says. Recording ''Black Banjo'' during the pandemic lockdown and amid protests for racial justice, however, occasioned an awakening. Being a Black banjo player is ''kind of a rare thing,'' he says. ''It's who I am.''

Today Black folk performers have reached a critical mass and level of exposure not seen since the early decades of the 20th century, when Black bands like Cannon's Jug Stompers and the Memphis Jug Band were among the most commercially popular in the country, touring in medicine shows and playing vaudeville stages. In a 2013 essay about Gus Cannon, the banjo-playing frontman of the Jug Stompers, the multi-instrumentalist and cultural historian Dom Flemons writes that it was only out of an ''absurd racial insensitivity'' that a ''legitimate Black art form developed.'' Flemons, 41, who goes by the name the American Songster in tribute to the players of the past, believes we've now entered ''a postmodern contemporary folk period'' in which new and more expansive definitions of traditional music are taking root. He's among a new generation of Black folk musicians that includes Rhiannon Giddens, Valerie June, Amythyst Kiah, Allison Russell and many others who are returning to songs that are decades (even centuries) old. They play fiddles and jugs, bones and guitar -- and most of all the banjo.

Some of these performers veer into activism. For Hannah Mayree, 34, a Northern California-based musician, ''playing banjo as a Black person is not enough.'' That's why she founded the Black Banjo Reclamation Project, which supplies instruments to Black musicians and holds workshops where participants learn to make banjos for themselves. ''The knowledge of how to build a banjo lives inside my body,'' she says. Other musicians are folklorists, introducing listeners to source recordings that testify to an unbroken tradition of Black folk music in America. Still others see reclaiming the past as a means of creating a future. ''As opposed to someone who is the caretaker of an archive, I think of my role as a living musician as a member of a future archive,'' says Jake Blount, 28, a banjo and fiddle player from Washington, D.C. His most recent album, ''The New Faith'' (2022), presents an Afrofuturist refiguring of traditional songs. Black Americans, Blount says, have ''had to be a forward-facing people because the past has been denied to us.'' Part of that history is recoverable through sheet music and source recordings, but much is lost to memory.

IN THE BROADEST sense, folk music is a multiracial, ***working-class*** tradition, stretching across time and continents. In the United States alone, it comprises a repertoire of ballads and work songs, blues and breakdowns, songs of love and songs of protest. Folk is a body of simple tunes played by beginners -- ''Tom Dooley,'' ''Oh! Susanna,'' ''Down in the Valley'' -- and a platform for the greatest virtuosity. For some the term conjures a cinematic shorthand: the dueling banjos of ''Deliverance'' (1972) and George Clooney mugging his way through ''O Brother, Where Art Thou'' (2000). Folk's history over the past century or more is best told through revivals, periods of intensified interest and participation in the music. In moments when the notion of a shared cultural heritage is most desirable -- during the Great Depression, or the Red Scare paranoia of the '40s and '50s -- people have often returned to what the 20th-century folklorists John Lomax and his son Alan once described as ''the big song bag which the folk have held in common for centuries.'' During a 1956 live performance of the spiritual ''This Train (Bound for Glory)'' -- a song that's now been recorded by scores of artists, including Louis Armstrong, Alice Coltrane, Bob Marley and Sister Rosetta Tharpe -- the guitar legend Big Bill Broonzy teased an audience of earnest college students swept up in the latest revival. ''Some people call these 'folk songs,''' he said while noodling on his guitar, with the singer-songwriter Pete Seeger playing banjo onstage beside him. ''Well, all the songs that I've heard in my life was folk songs. I've never heard horses sing none of them yet!''

Folk is indeed the people's music, yet early efforts to market it ended up, to borrow the historian Karl Hagstrom Miller's phrase, segregating sound. In the 1920s, with the advent of the modern recording industry and broadcast radio, music executives, most notably Ralph Peer of Okeh Records, leveraged emergent technology to define marketable genre categories along racial lines. Out of this came so-called race records (which first appeared at the beginning of the 1920s, aimed at Black Americans) and hillbilly records (which arrived a few years later, geared toward Southern whites). Even as folk crossed racial boundaries -- as in the Lomaxes' recordings of Lead Belly for the Library of Congress -- white song hunters often constrained Black performers inside narrow presumptions: attributing virtuosity to natural gifts rather than to musical skill; soliciting songs of protest and lament rather than those of love and happiness; and conjuring a mythic authenticity instead of making space for the real thing (as happened when the Lomaxes, after helping to secure Lead Belly's release from Angola prison in 1934 in Louisiana, made him perform thereafter in a prison jumpsuit).

Over the decades, race records gave way to more coded genre designations, like R&B and soul. Hillbilly morphed into country and western and finally simply into country. By midcentury, folk was widely considered a genre, too, a narrow term to define acoustic, string-based music, mostly by white musicians and often with a political bent. Folk songs inspired generations of singer-songwriters like Seeger, Joan Baez, Woody Guthrie and Bob Dylan, whose global fame the term ''folk'' was too small to contain. Folk, at least for some, became a backward glance to a distant past, nostalgic and reverential. It became Southern and ***working class*** and, in the minds of many, it became white.

THE RENAISSANCE OF Black folk music can be traced back to a single event nearly 20 years ago. In April 2005 in Boone, N.C., some 30 Black string-band musicians and dozens of other attendees came together for fellowship. Black Banjo Then and Now, as the gathering was called, began as an online community of over 200 members (only a small percentage of whom were Black), formed the year before by Tony Thomas, a Black banjo player from Miami. Among the group's most junior members were Flemons, an Arizona native, then 23, and the then-27-year-old Rhiannon Giddens, a classically trained soprano from Greensboro, N.C. After graduating from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music in 2000 with a bachelor's degree in music performance, Giddens found her way back home, working two jobs -- one as a singing hostess at Romano's Macaroni Grill -- until she earned enough money to buy her instruments, and calling contra dances, a form of line-based group folk dancing with roots in the British Isles.

Giddens sought a way to embrace her love of folk music and her Blackness, too. It's a central paradox of folk today: How can a music so thoroughly identified with whiteness that, for the better part of 50 years, found definition in contradistinction to Black music and even Black people be so Black? She found her answer at the in-person gathering of Black Banjo Then and Now. At the time, she told the Greensboro News & Record that old-time was ''something that really spoke to me, and it was OK that the people who were playing it were white. But when I discovered my people had so much to do with the music, and the string bands at the turn of the century were Black, well, this is a part of history.'' The four-day event, held on the campus of Appalachian State University, drew musicians from afar, including the New York-based old-time string band the Ebony Hillbillies, and living legends from close to home, like the then-86-year-old North Carolina old-time fiddle virtuoso Joe Thompson. The experience was unforgettable, with epic jam sessions and intergenerational camaraderie. ''It changed my life,'' Giddens says. Out of this gathering, she, along with Flemons and, eventually, a third member, Justin Robinson, formed a modern Black string band called the Carolina Chocolate Drops.

The Chocolate Drops were both interested in history and utterly contemporary. All members sang and played multiple instruments, with the banjo at the center of their sound. Their style of performance owes a debt to Thompson (who died in 2012). ''We had a pure mission to expose this music to as many people as possible and to tell Joe's story,'' Giddens says. On their 2010 album, ''Genuine Negro Jig,'' which won a Grammy Award for best traditional folk album, they covered the 2001 R&B song ''Hit 'Em Up Style (Oops!)'' by Blu Cantrell, taking a time-bound pop hit and making it feel nearly as timeless as ''This Train.'' The group disbanded in 2014, at which point, as Giddens says, the project had done ''exactly what it was meant to do: inspire a whole generation of young people of color to say, 'Hey, I see myself.'''

THE CAROLINA CHOCOLATE Drops and many others have now ensured that future generations can see themselves onstage but, once up there, such Black performers rarely see themselves in the crowd. Do Black artists need a Black audience? It's a longstanding debate that sometimes pits the artistic against the sociopolitical functions of song. The writer Amiri Baraka once defined Black music as ''American music expanded past the experience of the average American.'' ''It gets down,'' he wrote. ''It is about the life of the downed, yet its dignity is in the fantastic sophistication even at the moment of would-be, should-be humiliation and actual despair.'' Giddens, who once described her music as ''Black non-Black music'' and now prefers to call it simply ''American music,'' understands this implicitly. ''All the good things that come from American music [come from] mixture,'' she says. ''Hiding in plain sight in all the different types of American music is cross-cultural ***working-class*** collaboration. It's people making music because that's what they've got.''

The most powerful folk music has always addressed points of tension: between Black and white, rich and poor, sophistication and humiliation. Cannon's 1927 song ''Can You Blame the Colored Man?'' tells the story of Booker T. Washington, the founder of the Tuskegee Institute, dining with President Theodore Roosevelt at the White House in 1901, the year Washington's best-selling autobiography, ''Up From Slavery,'' was published. ''Could you blame the colored man for makin' them goo-goo eyes?'' Cannon sings, after describing in detail the lavish dinner at the president's table. Likewise, today's best folk music still confronts issues of race and class. In 2019 Amythyst Kiah, now 36, a guitarist and banjo player from Tennessee, joined Giddens, along with Leyla McCalla and Allison Russell, in a string-band collective called Our Native Daughters. They decided to excavate American history, going back to the trans-Atlantic slave trade to find inspiration for new songs. One of the songs that came of that process was the startling and soulful ''Black Myself.''

I don't pass the test of the paper bag'Cause I'm Black myselfI pick the banjo up and they sneer at me'Cause I'm Black myselfYou better lock your doors when I walk by'Cause I'm Black myselfYou look me in my eyes but you don't see me'Cause I'm Black myself

The brown paper bag test, as the literary scholar Henry Louis Gates Jr. has written, was born out of colorism within the Black community, in nightclubs and house parties in New Orleans where anyone darker than the bag taped to the door would be denied entrance. In a song that confronts the experience of being shut out of traditionally white spaces -- such as contemporary folk and country music -- Kiah's lyrics build toward resistance and joy: ''I'll stand my ground and smile in your face / 'Cause I'm Black myself.''

Addressing her race so explicitly in her music was a departure for Kiah. ''I've always written songs in a way where anybody can put themselves in that position,'' she says. Throughout her years of playing, she's subscribed to the theory that the more specific and personal a song's perspective, the more a listener -- any listener -- will relate to it. Just as Kiah, no poor white Southern girl from rural Kentucky, could relate to Loretta Lynn's 1970 single ''Coal Miner's Daughter,'' she says, so she hopes that listeners, whomever they may be, will relate to ''Black Myself.''

Bluegrass and country, the music first marketed a century ago as hillbilly, might seem inhospitable to Black listeners and musicians. But there's a longstanding tradition that binds Black people, both personally and aesthetically, to these sounds. ''The way I talk is with an accent, so the way I sing is with an accent. And that has always needed to be explained because I'm in the skin I'm in,'' says Valerie June, 41, whose voice carries the cadences of her native Jackson, Tenn. ''There are [Black] people from where I'm from that talk like me. And if they started singing, they would probably sound like me.''

This rootedness in place, particularly a rural Southern place where many Black Americans no longer live but that they never left behind, is central to Black folk music's endurance. When Kara Jackson was a child, during the first decades of the 2000s, in Oak Park, Ill., just outside of Chicago, characters from her father's hometown of Dawson, Ga., populated her imagination. ''I grew up knowing these nicknames, hearing these stories from this small Southern town of 4,000 people,'' she says. ''It almost felt like hearing superhero tales.'' She reveled in the stories she heard in songs as well, be they Wu-Tang Clan tracks that her older brother played or ballads from Dolly Parton LPs in the family collection. It wasn't long before she began to write songs herself, composing by voice, then on guitar, then using the banjo that her father gave her when she was in high school. She wrote poetry, too, so well that she was named the national youth poet laureate in 2019-20.

Earlier this year, Jackson, 24, released her debut album, ''Why Does the Earth Give Us People to Love?,'' with songs that partake of folk and jazz, blues and rap. Her lyrics layer sound and simile: ''I wanna be as dangerous as a dancing dragon / Or a steam engine, a loaded gun,'' she sings on ''No Fun/Party.'' Her music is sometimes playful, sometimes searing; above all, it's story driven, like the nearly eight-minute ballad ''Rat,'' in which Jackson assumes the role of troubadour from the opening couplet: ''Take the story of Rat who's headed west / His buddy once told him he likes the girls there best.'' Memorializing the lives of people both real and real enough for Jackson to imagine is what her music does best. ''I love songs that tell stories,'' she says. ''That's what folk music is for me.''

After composing many of her songs in the isolation of her bedroom during the pandemic, she's now growing accustomed to playing them for an audience. She recalls a recent performance where the energy was great, but the crowd was mostly white, which left her conflicted. ''I am so grateful for anyone who listens to my music,'' Jackson says. ''But I secretly and very selfishly do want my music to reach my own people. And to prove that this is our music also. It's not even like I'm doing something subversive. I'm just making the music that we came up with in the first place.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/10/t-magazine/black-folk-musicians.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/10/t-magazine/black-folk-musicians.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Tray Wellington with his banjo at the Pour House, a music venue and record store in Raleigh, N.C.

Rhiannon Giddens at Cecil Sharp House, an arts center in London named for the English folklorist.

Amythyst Kiah in front of her father's home in Johnson City, Tenn.

Dom Flemons at the nightclub FitzGerald's in Berwyn, Ill., outside of Chicago. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JUSTIN FRENCH) This article appeared in print on page M282, M284, M286, M288.

**Load-Date:** November 12, 2023

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[***Studios' Labor Negotiator, Usually Coy, Has Lead Role***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6925-8521-DXY4-X00P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 29, 2023 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1488 words

**Byline:** By Brooks Barnes and John Koblin

**Body**

Carol Lombardini, the studio voice in union talks, values a low profile. That hasn't kept striking writers and actors from casting her as a villain.

As the Hollywood union strikes have dragged on, key characters have taken turns in the spotlight.

There is Fran Drescher, the comedic actress who, with surprising ferocity, has rallied the actors' union against television and film companies, and enraged studio executives in the process. Robert A. Iger, who leads Disney, publicly pushed back against the striking workers, and found himself jeered on picket lines as a robber baron.

But one crucial participant has remained an enigma: Carol Lombardini, 68, the top union negotiator for studios and a 41-year veteran of Hollywood labor battles.

For someone who sits at the center of two increasingly bitter strikes -- writers walked off the job on May 2, followed by actors on July 14 -- very little is known about her. Ms. Lombardini has not given an interview of more than a few words since 2009, when she ascended from the No. 2 job to become president of the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers, the organization that bargains on behalf of the eight largest entertainment companies.

Until now, her tenure had been marked by labor peace. Studios reached an agreement with the directors' union in June; the writers last struck in 2008, the actors in 1980. Over the years, she has told colleagues that cultivating a public persona would only undercut her effectiveness at the bargaining table. Or at least it would not help. She declined to comment for this article.

Wanted or not, the spotlight has found her. Many union members blame her for the negotiating logjam that has brought almost all movie and television production in Hollywood to a halt. Partly because of her woman-of-mystery persona and partly because she's an easy target, Ms. Lombardini has become an avatar for the grievances of tens of thousands of striking workers. ''Carol can go kick rocks,'' Caroline Renard, a striking writer, said this month on X, the social media platform formerly known as Twitter.

With her public personality absent, actors and writers have invented one. In May, someone started a parody account on X that has portrayed Ms. Lombardini as a crass tyrant declaring, ''I'm a goddess of chaos!'' (Yes, she has seen it, an associate said. No, she is not amused.)

Another group of screenwriters have mocked Ms. Lombardini online as a fuddy-duddy who hangs out at chain restaurants, the taunt being that no Hollywood person would be caught dead in one. (Her office is near a Cheesecake Factory in suburban Los Angeles.)

Other union members seem to have simply grown curious about the Oz-like negotiator behind the curtain. ''Will we ever find out what Carol Lombardini is in the flesh?!'' Maridia Minor, a writer, asked on X last week.

A few facts are known about Ms. Lombardini. She is a devoted baseball fan. She grew up in a ***working-class*** town outside Boston. And of course, she has enormous power. Ms. Lombardini is responsible for negotiating all 58 of Hollywood's union agreements, from contracts with the Writers Guild of America and SAG-AFTRA, as the actors' union is known, to ones with the American Federation of Musicians and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. How she handles herself -- union officials who have negotiated with her describe her as blunt yet cordial -- can make the difference between smooth talks and a strike.

Jeff Ruthizer, who spent 40 years as a labor negotiator at Disney, ABC and NBC and recently wrote a book, ''Labor Pains,'' drawing on that experience, called Ms. Lombardini ''a funny person'' who ''knows how to read a room and is tough when she needs to be.''

At the end of the day, however, Ms. Lombardini is an employee, albeit one whose duties require deft ego management. She answers to moguls like Mr. Iger of Disney and Ted Sarandos of Netflix, who are not used to managing by committee. The other alliance members are NBCUniversal, Apple, Warner Bros. Discovery, Amazon, Paramount Global and Sony Pictures. Ms. Lombardini advises them on a course of action, but they ultimately decide on a strategy and then she does their bidding.

In late July, for instance, some company leaders pressed Ms. Lombardini to reopen negotiations with the Writers Guild. (The two sides had not met since early May.) While not adamantly opposed, Ms. Lombardini expressed skepticism; she was not convinced that the Writers Guild was ready to soften its stance, according to two studio chiefs and one studio labor lawyer involved in the talks, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss private conversations. Ultimately, the companies directed her to re-engage with the writers.

The subsequent talks have gone poorly, with the Writers Guild holding firm to demands related to staffing minimums in television writers' rooms and transparency into streaming-service viewership, among others. Frustrated, studio leaders told Ms. Lombardini on Tuesday to release the details of their sweetened proposal -- which included higher wages, a pledge to share some viewership data and additional protections around the use of artificial intelligence -- to the news media. It was essentially a strategy to go around the guild's negotiating committee and appeal to rank-and-file members.

In a message to its 11,500 members on Thursday, the Writers Guild said it was ''undeterred by this latest tactic.''

The Writers Guild declined to discuss Ms. Lombardini. Other unions did the same. (SAG-AFTRA, whose contract covers tens of thousands of movie and television actors, has not returned to the bargaining table in more than six weeks.) It appears, however, that union leaders have a grudging respect for her.

''She's been around a long time, and she knows what she's doing, and she commands a lot of respect as well,'' Lindsay Dougherty, the lead Teamsters organizer in Hollywood, said in an interview with an entertainment trade news publication last year.

''I think she's a fair individual,'' Ms. Dougherty added. (Teamsters represent drivers, casting directors and animal handlers, among other Hollywood specialties.)

Ms. Lombardini, an avid Red Sox and Dodgers fan, had a ***working-class*** upbringing in Framingham, Mass., and was inspired to become a lawyer by reading articles about F. Lee Bailey, according to an associate. After getting a bachelor's degree in Renaissance history from the University of Chicago and a law degree from Stanford, she started her career at law firms in Los Angeles, specializing in labor by happenstance after one firm moved her from its quiet trusts and estates department to its bustling labor one.

She has worked at the studio alliance since its creation in 1982 and is married to William Cole, a prominent labor lawyer whose clients have often included studios.

''Carol has one of the most complicated jobs in Hollywood -- and it's growing even more so -- but I think she clearly understands and appreciates the challenge,'' said Barry M. Meyer, a former Warner Bros. chairman who worked closely with Ms. Lombardini. ''It's actually been an integral part of her life's work.''

By all accounts, Ms. Lombardini knows various union contracts cold, which is no small feat; the most recent Writers Guild contract ran 740 pages. Ms. Lombardini is not a zealot in the negotiating room, according to union officials who have sat across the table from her, but she can be brusque and unyielding. In a letter to its members this month, the Writers Guild said Ms. Lombardini would not engage on certain topics. ''Carol's response -- something she repeated three times during the meeting: 'People just want to get back to work.'''

In the past, studio leaders have prized her efficiency. ''Carol has done a very good job this past year,'' Kevin Tsujihara, who was the Warner Bros. chairman, wrote in a 2014 email that was made public as part of the Sony Pictures hack, noting that she had recently concluded six negotiations.

''There was no public drama and all were concluded within parameters we had established,'' Mr. Tsujihara wrote. He recommended a bonus of $365,000, or 30 percent of her salary, which he listed as $1.2 million.

The job has become much more difficult. For a start, the studio alliance's relatively recent additions of Apple, Netflix and Amazon have made its priorities more varied and unwieldy than in the past. The unions have grown more aggressive. And bargaining issues -- the rise of artificial intelligence, for instance, and its potential to disrupt the creative process -- have become more complex.

''She has to unify the various views of the studios and get everyone to agree,'' Mr. Ruthizer, the labor lawyer, said. ''And then she has the other job of negotiating with the other side of the table.''

''The challenge now is greater than she's ever seen,'' he added. ''It's bigger than anybody has ever seen.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/27/business/hollywood-strike-studios-lombardini.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/27/business/hollywood-strike-studios-lombardini.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Carol Lombardini in 2014. Until the two strikes this year, her tenure had been marked by labor peace. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MIKE WINDLE/GETTY IMAGES) (B3) This article appeared in print on page B1, B3.

**Load-Date:** August 29, 2023

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[***How to Stay Sane In Brutalizing Times***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69JP-B6S1-JBG3-62KR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 5, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section SR; Column 0; Sunday Review Desk; Pg. 6; DAVID BROOKS

**Length:** 1877 words

**Byline:** By David Brooks

**Body**

We're living in a brutalizing time: Scenes of mass savagery pervade the media. Americans have become vicious toward one another amid our disagreements. Everywhere I go, people are coping with an avalanche of negative emotions: shock, pain, contempt, anger, anxiety, fear.

The first thing to say is that we in America are the lucky ones. We're not crouching in a cellar waiting for the next bomb to drop. We're not currently the targets of terrorists who massacre families in their homes. We should still start every day with gratitude for the blessings we enjoy.

But we're faced with a subtler set of challenges. How do you stay mentally healthy and spiritually whole in brutalizing times? How do you prevent yourself from becoming embittered, hate-filled, calloused over, suspicious and desensitized?

Ancient wisdom has a formula to help us, which you might call skepticism of the head and audacity of the heart.

The ancient Greeks knew about violent times. They lived with frequent wars between city-states, with massacres and mass rape. In response, they adopted a tragic sensibility. This sensibility begins with the awareness that the crust of civilization is thin. Breakdowns into barbarism are the historical norm. Don't fool yourself into believing that you're living in some modern age, too enlightened for hatred to take over.

In these circumstances, everybody has a choice. You can try to avoid thinking about the dark realities of life and naïvely wish that bad things won't happen. Or you can confront these realities and develop a tragic mentality to help you thrive among them. As Ralph Waldo Emerson would write centuries later, ''Great men, great nations have not been boasters and buffoons, but perceivers of the terror of life, and have manned themselves to face it.'' And that goes for great women, too.

This tragic sensibility prepares you for the rigors of life in concrete ways. First, it teaches a sense of humility. The tragedies that populated Greek stages sent the message that our accomplishments were tenuous. They remind us that it's easy to become proud and conceited in moments of peace. We begin to exaggerate our ability to control our own destinies. We begin to assume that the so-called justice of our cause guarantees our success. Humility is not thinking lowly of yourself; it's an accurate perception of yourself. It is the ability to cast aside illusions and vanities and see life as it really is.

Second, the tragic sensibility nurtures a prudent approach to life. It encourages people to focus on the downsides of their actions and work to head them off. As Hal Brands and Charles Edel write in ''The Lessons of Tragedy,'' Greek tragedies were part of a wide culture that forced the Greeks to confront their own ''frailty and fallibility.'' By ''shocking, unsettling and disturbing the audience, the tragedies also forced discussions of what was needed to circumvent such a fate.'' In this way, people are taught resilience and anti-fragility -- to be prepared for the pain that will inevitably come.

Third, this tragic mentality encourages caution. As Thucydides would argue, in politics, the lows are lower than the highs are high. The price we pay for our errors is higher than the benefits we gain from our successes. So be careful of rushing headlong into maximalist action, convinced of your own righteousness. Be incremental and patient and steady. This is advice I wish the Israelis would heed as they wage war on Hamas. This is advice that Matt Gaetz and the burn-it-all-down caucus among the House Republicans will never understand.

Fourth, the tragic mentality teaches people to be suspicious of their own rage. ''Rage'' is in the first line of ''The Iliad.'' We immediately see Agamemnon (whom we detest) and Achilles (whom we admire) behaving stupidly because they are filled with anger. The lesson is that rage might feel luxurious because it makes you convinced of your own rightness, but ultimately, it blinds you and turns you into a hate-filled monster. This is advice I wish the hard left would heed, the people who are so consumed by their self-righteous fury that they become cruel -- desensitized to the suffering of Israelis, because Israelis are the bad guys in their simple ideological fables.

Over time, I'd add, rage hardens and corrodes the mind of its bearer. It hardens into the sort of cold, amoral, nihilistic attitude that we see in Donald Trump and in many others who inhabit what the political sociologist Larry Diamond has called the ''authoritarian zeitgeist.'' This attitude says: The enemy is out to destroy us. The ends justify the means. Savagery is necessary. The only thing we worship is power.

Fifth, tragedies thrust the harsh realities of individual suffering in our faces, and in them we find our common humanity. I've always been amazed by Aeschylus' play ''The Persians.'' It was performed only eight years after the major battle that would eventually secure Athenian victory over the Persians, and it was written by a man who fought in that battle. And yet it is written from the Persian vantage point and elicits sympathy for the Persians, in all their hubris and suffering. It teaches us to be empathetic to all those who suffer, not just those on our own side.

From this sort of work, we learn to have a contempt for sadism, for anything that dehumanizes, and to have compassion for the everyday people who pay the price for the designs of proud and evil men. That compassion is the noble flame that keeps humanity alive, even in times of war and barbarism. That compassion recognizes the infinite dignity of each human soul.

So far, I've been describing the cool, prudent and humble mentality we learn from the Athenians. Now I turn to a different mentality, a mentality that emerged among the great Abrahamic faiths, and in their sacred city, Jerusalem. This mentality celebrates an audacious act: the act of leading with love in harsh times.

As much as we need bread and sleep, human beings need recognition. The essence of dehumanization is not to see someone, to render him inconsequential and invisible. For example, over the last few decades, we in the college-educated media and cultural circles have increasingly shut out ***working-class*** voices. Many people look at the national conversation and don't see themselves represented there, and hence grow bitter and alienated. Members of the ***working class*** are far from the only people who feel invisible these days.

The core counterattack against this kind of dehumanization is to offer others the gift of being seen. What sunlight is to the vampire, recognition is to the dehumanizers. We fight back by opening our hearts and casting a just and loving attention on others, by being curious about strangers, being a little vulnerable with them in the hopes that they might be vulnerable, too. This is the kind of social repair that can happen in our daily encounters, in the way we show up for others.

I recently published a book on the concrete skills you need to do this, called ''How to Know a Person.'' During a recent Zoom call, someone asked me: Isn't it dangerous to be vulnerable toward others when there is so much bitterness, betrayal and pain all around? My answer to that good question is: Yes, it is dangerous. But it is also dangerous to be hardened and calloused over by hard times. It is also dangerous, as C.S. Lewis put it, to guard your heart so thoroughly that you make it ''unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable.''

The great Black theologian Howard Thurman faced a lot of bigotry in his life, but as he put it in his 1949 book, ''Jesus and the Disinherited,'' ''Jesus rejected hatred because he saw that hatred meant death to the mind, death to the spirit, death to communion with his Father.''

This is not a call to naïveté. Of course there are toxic people in the world. Donald Trump is not going to change just because his opponents start feeling warm and fuzzy toward him. Genocidal fanatics like the leaders of Hamas just need to be defeated by force of arms.

But most people -- maybe more than you think -- are peace- and love-seeking creatures who are sometimes caught in bad situations. The most practical thing you can do, even in hard times, is to lead with curiosity, lead with respect, work hard to understand the people you might be taught to detest.

That means seeing people with generous eyes, offering trust to others before they trust you. That means adopting a certain posture toward the world. If you look at others with the eyes of fear and judgment, you will find flaws and menace; but if you look out with a respectful attitude, you'll often find imperfect people enmeshed in uncertainty, doing the best they can.

Will casting this kind of attention change the people you are encountering? Maybe; maybe not. But this is about who you are becoming in corrosive times. Are you becoming more humane or less? Are you a person who obsesses over how unfairly you are treated, or are you a person who is primarily concerned by how you see and treat others? ''Virtue is the attempt to pierce the veil of selfish consciousness and join the world as it really is,'' Iris Murdoch wrote.

One of my heroes is a woman named Etty Hillesum, a young Jewish woman who lived in Amsterdam in the 1930s and '40s. Her early diaries reveal her to be immature and self-centered. But as the Nazi occupation lasted and the horrors of the Holocaust mounted, she became more generous, kind, warm and ultimately heroic toward those who were being sent off to the death camps. She volunteered to work at a labor camp called Westerbork, where Dutch Jews were held before being transferred to the death camps in the east. There she cared for the ill, tended to those confined to the punishment barracks and became known in the camp for her sparkling compassion, her selfless love. Her biographer wrote that ''it was her practice of paying deep attention which transformed her.'' It was her ability to really observe others -- their anxieties, their cares and their attachments -- that enabled her to enter into their lives and serve them.

It did not save her. In 1943, she herself was sent to Auschwitz and was murdered. But she left a legacy: what it looks like to shine and grow and be a beacon of humanity, even in the worst imaginable circumstances.

I'm trying to describe a dual sensibility -- becoming a person who learns humility and prudence from the Athenian tradition, but also audacity, emotional openness and care from the Jerusalem tradition. Can a single person possess both traits? This was the question Max Weber asked in his classic essay ''Politics as a Vocation'': ''How can warm passion and a cool sense of proportion be forged together in one and the same soul?''

It's a hard challenge that most of us will fail at most of the time. But I think it's the only practical and effective way to proceed in times like these.

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**Graphic**

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY GETTY IMAGES) (SR7) This article appeared in print on page SR6, SR7.

**Load-Date:** November 5, 2023

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[***The Best Restaurants in Austin***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BW4-95N1-JBG3-600H-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 24, 2024 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section D; Column 0; Dining In, Dining Out / Style Desk; Pg. 6; WHERE TO EAT

**Length:** 3237 words

**Byline:** By Priya Krishna and Brett Anderson

**Body**

In the Where to Eat: 25 Best series, we're highlighting our favorite restaurants in cities across the United States. These lists will be updated as restaurants close and open, and as we find new gems to recommend. As always, we pay for all of our meals and don't accept free items.

Birdie's

East Austin | Wine bar

Birdie's is not just another wine bar. Chalk that up to the partnership of Tracy Malechek-Ezekiel and her husband, Arjav Ezekiel -- she's a highly skilled chef, and he has the energy and affability of the dancing tableware in ''Beauty and the Beast.'' Birdie's is the place to be whether you just want to drink something interesting or you're planning the big night out. In Ms. Malechek-Ezekiel's hands, simple food -- a creamy vegetable soup, roasted carrots with pesto -- feels anything but simple. Add to that an electric atmosphere and wine glasses that seem to magically refill themselves -- you'll want to return just to see what the couple might cook or pour next. PRIYA KRISHNA

2944 East 12th Street, Unit A; no phone; birdiesaustin.com

Canje

East Austin | Caribbean

The chef Tavel Bristol-Joseph made a name for himself in Austin with the pastries at Emmer & Rye and Hestia, which he co-owns. Here at Canje -- an ode to his Guyanese roots, with a menu that also stretches across the Caribbean -- he has switched gears, with brilliant results. The food is a tangy, spicy, coconutty dreamscape. Tilefish soaked in tamarind and rum butter. Prawns brushed with a verdant green seasoning and smoked chiles. A tres leches cake drenched in coconut milk. What makes the jerk chicken so supercharged with flavor? Mr. Bristol-Joseph ferments his seasoning. And plan on at least one order of the buttery Guyanese-style roti per person. PRIYA KRISHNA

1914 East Sixth Street, Suite C; 512-706-9119; canjeatx.com

Comadre Panadería

East Austin | Bakery

Hidden in an unassuming building in a residential neighborhood is the concha-meets-funfetti-pastry fever dream that is Comadre Panadería. Here, conchas dusted with Barbie-pink strawberry jamaica powder share space with a sheet cake topped with prickly-pear buttercream and a black-bean honey bun. Every creation from the baker Mariela Camacho feels simultaneously innovative and nostalgic -- as if a panadería took a trip through the snack aisle of an American grocery store. PRIYA KRISHNA

1204 Cedar Avenue; no phone; comadre-panaderia.square.site

Cuantos Tacos

East Austin | Mexican, Tacos

In a city of superlative tacos, the ones that Luis ''Beto'' Robledo (above) makes at Cuantos stand out. It's the choricera -- a round pot with deep sides and a shallow center, commonly used for cooking the meats in their own fat -- that makes the difference in these Mexico City-style tacos. The standout is the suadero, in which brisket is plucked from the pot, still dripping with juices, sliced into thick slabs and then loaded into fresh, two-bite tortillas with plenty of cilantro and onion. These tacos demand to be eaten immediately, messily and with the understanding that you'll be ordering three more. PRIYA KRISHNA

1108 East 12th Street; 512-905-0533; cuantostacosaustin.com

Dai Due

Cherrywood/East Austin | Modern Texas

Locavore restaurant iconography tends toward still-life-worthy artichokes, tomatoes and gourds. Dai Due is different. Its commitment to Texas ingredients, extending from produce to its wine list, is all but unrivaled, yet the image that best captures the restaurant's ethos is meat sizzling over live fire. The chef and owner, Jesse Griffiths, channeled his passion for Texas' great outdoors -- and more specifically the animals he hunts there -- into this lusty, idiosyncratic butcher shop and chophouse. The seasonal vegetables are often very good, in no small part because they're often cooked in tallow (as are the seasonal fried crawfish hand-pies, which are wonderful). But you're here for what the chef de cuisine, Janie Ramirez, is grilling over Texas post oak: coffee-cured antelope leg fillets, aoudad meatballs, memorably flavorful pork chops, and quail stuffed with boudin and plated with pickled blueberries. BRETT ANDERSON

2406 Manor Road; 512-524-0688; daidue.com

Dee Dee

South Lamar | Thai

If the chef Lakana Sopajan-Trubiana's zippy, herbaceous and deeply comforting northeastern Thai food tastes farm-fresh, that's because it is. Ms. Sopajan-Trubiana, who was raised on a farm in Isaan, grows many of the vegetables and herbs used in her restaurant, and her green thumb makes the Thai flavors sing. Dishes you've seen at other Thai restaurants, like laab or red curry, seem far more interesting here. The om gai, a chicken soup heady with lemongrass and dill, is comfort in a takeout container. PRIYA KRISHNA

4204 Menchaca Road; no phone; deedeeatx.com

Discada

East Austin | Mexican, Tacos

Discada serves one type of taco, and it's unforgettable. The restaurant uses the discada method, also known as ''cowboy wok'' cooking, that's popular in Mexico City. In this style, various chopped meats and aromatics are cooked in a plow disc from a tractor and added in layers, to build on the rendered fat and flavor from each one. The tacos, brought to Austin by the high-school friends and co-owners Anthony Pratto and Xose Velasco, are dainty but pack a big punch. Even in a taco-saturated city, there's truly nothing else like Discada. PRIYA KRISHNA

1319 Rosewood Avenue; 512-920-5473; discadatx.com

El Naranjo

South Lamar| Oaxacan

El Naranjo's story -- from food truck to brick-and-mortar restaurant to its current incarnation inside a slick, window-lined space on South Lamar Boulevard -- mirrors that of Austin's restaurant scene over the past dozen years. But the restaurant's roots are in Mexico. Iliana de la Vega and Ernesto Terrealba opened the first El Naranjo in Oaxaca City in 1997, and the Austin restaurant's food, now overseen by their daughter Ana Torrealba, still reflect those origins. The daily-changing ceviches, huitlacoche-queso empanadas and blistered octopus will make you fall in love with the cooking. But it would be a mistake to miss the moles: the dark, raspy, 30-plus ingredient mole negro; or the nutty, relatively lean mole blanco, sparked with a drizzle of habanero oil. Either pairs well with a refreshing mezcal cocktail. BRETT ANDERSON

2717 South Lamar Boulevard, Suite 1085; 512-520-5750; elnaranjorestaurant.com

Este

East Austin | Coastal Mexican

Este is inspired by the seafood dishes of the Mexican coast, but it's not strictly limited to them. The menu isn't filled with faithful recreations of the aguachiles and tostadas found in cities like Ensenada or Veracruz. Instead, the chef Fermín Núñez isn't afraid to go off-road in the name of uncovering something delicious. Grilled turbot with salsa verde shines even brighter with a rich slick of hummus on the bottom. Hazelnuts and brown butter enliven the salsa macha in the grilled squid. ''You wouldn't find it in Mexico,'' Mr. Nuñez said of his cooking. ''But it is Mexican.'' PRIYA KRISHNA

2113 Manor Road; 512-522-4047; esteatx.com

Ezov

Holly | Israeli Texan

Ezov's food features Texas ingredients in dishes that are colorful, sprightly spiced and inspired by the chef Berty Richter's upbringing in Tel Aviv. There are audibly crisp falafel riding a swirl of tahini, amba and schug; cubes of pomegranate-stained raw snapper, scattered with chopped pistachios; and juicy, skewered kofta riding a bed of fire roasted eggplant and topped with charred, oil-slicked pine nuts. If you're interested in wines from the Eastern Mediterranean, especially Lebanon, ask to see the bottle list. That said, if you dare to order the everything bagel martini, consider yourself warned. BRETT ANDERSON

2708 East Cesar Chavez; 512-305-1118; ezovatx.com

Franklin BBQ

East Austin | Barbecue

Why wait hours for barbecue in a city where there are excellent alternatives? Fair question. The answer is that Franklin's barbecue is as good, if not better, today than it was when Aaron and Stacy Franklin graduated in 2011 from a food truck to this cinder block building. Mr. Franklin has since become one of the country's most recognizable pitmasters. His buttery-tender brisket, juicy sausage and weekend-only beef ribs remain consistently exceptional. And the hospitality, extended even in the pre-opening hours to customers waiting on the sidewalk, bears none of the entitlement or cynicism typically found at restaurants where the demand for seats so vastly exceeds the supply. All of which makes Franklin a rare breed: a restaurant that has become a tourist attraction, while upholding the standards that made it famous in the first place. BRETT ANDERSON

900 East 11th Street, Austin; 512-653-1187; franklinbbq.com

InterStellar BBQ

Anderson Mill | Barbecue

Texas barbecue has always been great. It has also never been better. Get yourself to this northwest Austin joint for a taste of how both things can be true. The brisket and pork spare ribs are as good as any you'll find, traditionally prepared and reminiscent of what Texans have been eating for generations. But the owner and co-pitmaster John Bates also applies the techniques and creative license of fine dining to expand the Texas barbecue repertoire, which here includes pulled lamb shoulder, pork belly glazed with peach tea and turkey breast marinated in hefeweizen. The sides are so delicious -- smoked scalloped potatoes, a citrusy beet salad topped with pumpkin seeds -- you could even post a sign once unthinkable near Texas barbecue: vegetarians welcome. BRETT ANDERSON

12233 Ranch Road 620 North, Suite 105; 512-382-6248; theinterstellarbbq.com

Joe's Bakery & Coffee Shop

Holly| Tex-Mex

Are you the type of person who finds outsize comfort in short-order cafes and diners, preferably with a bit of age on them? Perhaps you feel the same about Mexican restaurants where you can get a pork chop with your huevos, the taco selection runs to nearly 20 and refried beans are effectively unavoidable? You'll love Joe's, which also happens to be a time capsule from the era when East Austin was a ***working-class*** Mexican American stronghold. The breakfast-and-lunch restaurant has been run by the women of the Avila family for most of the years since Joe Avila opened it in 1962. You'll undoubtedly want more of the fluffy, housemade flour tortillas; extras are 50 cents apiece. BRETT ANDERSON

2305 East Seventh Street; 512-472-0017; joesbakery.com

Kemuri Tatsu-Ya

Holly | Barbecue Izakaya

Kemuri is arguably (along with Blood Bros. BBQ, outside Houston) the state's most fully realized Asian-influenced barbecue place. What the chef-owners Tatsu Aikawa and Takuya Matsumoto call a Texas izakaya is also a full-service restaurant that imagines what a Japanese chef might have been cooking at a Texas roadhouse 100 years ago. The answer covers a lot of ground, from smoked eel, hamachi collar and brisket to rayfin jerky, karaage with egg salad and a daily-changing sashimi. Mr. Aikawa and Mr. Matsumoto are innovative tastemakers who operate a number of popular Texas-inspired Japanese restaurants in Austin. This restaurant and bar, first opened in 2017 and decorated with Texas flags, taxidermy and vintage signs in Japanese, is their crowning achievement, at least thus far. BRETT ANDERSON

2713 East Second Street, Austin; 512-803-2224; kemuri-tatsuya.com

LeRoy and Lewis

South Manchaca | Barbecue

The pitmaster Evan LeRoy has been building a following for his open-minded take on Texas barbecue since 2017, when he opened the first LeRoy and Lewis as a food truck with his wife, Lindsey, and partners Sawyer and Nathan Lewis. So it's no surprise to find crowds at the brick-and-mortar location that opened this winter. Established favorites (Citra hop pork sausage, brisket burger, cauliflower ''burnt ends'') are on a menu that also expands on L and L's freewheeling style. Lamb kofta tacos and smoked Italian beef sandwiches are among the new additions that will leave diners grateful to live in the age when Texas barbecue is so open to experimentation. (Note: The original LeRoy and Lewis is still parked outside the South Austin Cosmic Coffee + Beer Garden.) BRETT ANDERSON

5621 Emerald Forest Drive; 512-962-7805; leroyandlewisbbq.com

Micklethwait

East Austin | Barbecue

For those who come to Austin for great barbecue but don't want to wait in a certain hourslong line, Micklethwait remains reliably great. The owner, Tom Micklethwait, specializes in the oak-fired Central Texas-style, and unlike many Texas pitmasters who have expanded into multiple locations, he has kept his operation lean -- you can taste the attention and care that goes into the meats. The bright, balanced sides and dreamy oatmeal cream pie are a bonus. PRIYA KRISHNA

1309 Rosewood Avenue; 512-791-5961; craftmeatsaustin.com

Mum Foods

Windsor Park/East Austin | Barbecue, Deli

Giving Jewish deli food the barbecue treatment is one of those ideas that feels obvious as soon as you chow down on peppery, smoky slabs of pastrami between two thick pieces of toast with a big smear of mustard. But you didn't think of it. The chef Geoffrey Ellis did. Mum Foods -- which operates as a brick-and-mortar as well as a farmers' market stall -- is a sandwich lover's dream, a place where the ratio of meat to bread to condiments feels obsessively considered. PRIYA KRISHNA

5811 Manor Road; 512-270-8021; mumfoodsatx.com

Nixta Taqueria

East Austin | Mexican

At Nixta, Edgar Rico and Sara Mardanbigi are throwing a big backyard party, and you're invited. Mr. Rico, the chef, uses heirloom varieties of corn that he grinds himself to make the outstanding tortillas, and his arsenal of vibrant salsas and sauces can make even a plate of raw vegetables feel cutting-edge. Ms. Mardanbigi's warm service makes the place seem more like a friend's house than a restaurant, and her Iranian heritage occasionally finds its way into dishes like sholeh zard, a marriage between the Persian rice pudding and arroz con leche. PRIYA KRISHNA

2512 East 12th Street; no phone; nixtataqueria.square.site

Olamaie

North Side | Southern

Many people consider Texas part of the Deep South. Olamaie embraces this, with buttermilk biscuits that are the stuff of county-fair blue ribbons (albeit offered with sturgeon caviar), oysters Rockefeller and gumbo z'herbes that would bring nods of approval in New Orleans. Nevertheless, Olamaie, housed in a renovated bungalow, is not defined by its exacting takes on traditional dishes. Amanda Turner, the chef de cuisine, nimbly stretches the boundaries of Southern cuisine. The smoked amberjack crudo sparkles with leche de tigre and chile crunch. The grilled pork chop is redolent of jerk spices. This is expansive Southern cooking, befitting a native Texan who was raised in the diverse kitchens of its capital city. BRETT ANDERSON

610 San Antonio Street; 512-474-2796; olamaieaustin.com

Ramen Del Barrio

North Austin | Mexican Japanese

The chef Christopher Krinsky probably isn't the first person to put taco toppings on ramen, but he certainly won't be the last. In his tiny shop tucked inside a grocery store, the bowls of ramen are flavor bombs whose blending of Mexican and Japanese tradition works brilliantly -- mole serves as the dipping sauce for tsukemen, while carnitas and charred chiles swim in the tonkotsu. And no, the restaurant doesn't serve birria ramen, so don't even think about asking. PRIYA KRISHNA

1700 West Parmer Lane, Suite 100; no phone; ramendelbarrio.com

Suerte

East Austin | Mexican

What, exactly, did they put in this snapper to make it taste this good? And the cabbage? And the beans? At this Mexican-inspired restaurant, practically every dish inspires that level of wonder. Only a chef as wildly creative as Fermín Núñez could think to give beans the aligot treatment and slather them on a tlayuda, or reinvent the Choco Taco with cinnamon semifreddo and peanut caramel. Mr. Núñez is charting a distinctive path for himself in Mexican cooking. PRIYA KRISHNA

1800 East Sixth Street; 512-522-3031; suerteatx.com

Uchi

Bouldin Creek | Japanese

In 1995, Tyson Cole, a white, Florida-born sushi novice, was hired by Takehiko Fuse, a revered Japanese chef working in Austin, on the condition that he learn to speak, read and write Japanese. That discipline is still evident in the food at Uchi, the restaurant Mr. Cole opened eight years later. This sequence of events helps explain how Austin, a landlocked city where people of Japanese descent make up only 0.2 percent of the population, became home to one of the country's most dynamic Japanese restaurant scenes. Dishes that partner raw or lightly cooked seafood with non-Japanese marinades and sauces, fruits and even goat cheese are emblematic of Uchi's locally influential cross-culture style -- now found at Uchi locations around the country. Nevertheless, dinner here is a uniquely Austin experience. BRETT ANDERSON

801 South Lamar Boulevard; 512-916-4808; uchi.uchirestaurants.com

Underdog

Bouldin Creek | Korean

Underdog is a wine bar and shop combined with a Korean American restaurant. The appeal of eating here is as simple and direct as the concept. The menu is filled with successfully playful takes on Korean cuisine, including a steamy egg soufflé covered in bonito flakes, Korean fried chicken with shiso ranch, and thick-cut galbi that showcases Texas beef. The worldly wine list is smartly curated and offers glasses (and even half-glasses) of wines (like a 2010 Il Poggione Brunello di Montalcino) that are normally only available by the bottle. The co-owners, Claudia Lee and Richard Hargreave, a sommelier, bring a personal touch to their fashionable place. The business is named after their dog, Squid, in case you're wondering. BRETT ANDERSON

1600 South First Street, Suite 100; 512-367-2441; underdog-atx.com

Veracruz All Natural

Various locations | Mexican

In the Texas breakfast-taco wars, Veracruz All Natural remains one of Austin's stalwart champions. And it's not just because of the restaurant's beloved migas taco, a delightful mess of tortilla chips, scrambled eggs and pico de gallo wrapped in a fresh corn tortilla. The sisters and owners Maritza and Reyna Vazquez have created a mini-chain of taquerias, inspired by their coastal Mexican hometown, that helped move the city beyond Tex-Mex, toward Mexican fare that emphasizes fresh produce, bright flavors and pressed juices. Austin is a better food town for it. PRIYA KRISHNA

Various locations; veracruzallnatural.com

Wee's Cozy Kitchen

Downtown | Malaysian

In Texas, it's not unusual to find exceptional food in a gas station or convenience store. Wee's Cozy Kitchen, which recently located from a Shell station to the downtown corner store Royal Blue Grocery is the perfect example. The food by owner Wee Fong Ehlers is as good as ever, and the scene is still the same: satisfied locals digging into bowls of curry laksa that are heady with herbs and chiles. From her tiny kitchen, Ms. Ehlers cooks every dish to order, even freshly chopping the lemongrass. Wee's provides all the warmth of home cooking, and yes, you can pick up a six pack of beer, too. PRIYA KRISHNA

609 Congress Avenue; 512-577-8626; wees-cozy-kitchen.square.site

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**Graphic**

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAWRENCE PEART

MONTINIQUE MONROE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

MARS TELLO

DREW ANTHONY SMITH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

JESSICA ATTIE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page D6.

**Load-Date:** April 24, 2024

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[***The Wife Has Committed Murder but It’s the Husband Who Scares Her Lawyer; Fiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69CS-9SD1-DXY4-X008-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 13, 2023 Friday 22:31 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 786 words

**Byline:** Lovia Gyarkye

**Highlight:** In Marie NDiaye’s new novel, “Vengeance Is Mine,” a woman is haunted by a decades-old trauma she feels, but cannot quite remember.

**Body**

In Marie NDiaye’s new novel, “Vengeance Is Mine,” a woman is haunted by a decades-old trauma she feels, but cannot quite remember.

VENGEANCE IS MINE, by Marie NDiaye. Translated by Jordan Stump.

The characters in Marie NDiaye’s novels are an unsettling brood. They fret and pace around their homes, tormented by their pasts. Their minds trap and trick them. A daughter can’t shake memories of her mother’s murder; a man gropes for the truth about his imprisonment in a deserted vacation town; a chef pursues culinary perfection at any cost; a woman — reminded of a friend, a schoolteacher or was it her mother? — fatally chases an apparition in green.

We meet these figures in their worst states. They’ve been run ragged by despair, exhausted by distress. Their warped realities coagulate into a strange and curdled mass. NDiaye, a French author of a dozen books and a handful of plays, is a master at agitating, probing and upending expectations. In her latest offering, “Vengeance Is Mine,” dutifully translated by Jordan Stump, she presents a new litter of misfits and constructs one of her most beguiling and visceral tales.

The novel kicks off with a meeting between Maître Susane, an industrious lawyer who has just opened her own practice in Bordeaux, and Gilles Principaux, a charmed and alluring professorial man seeking legal representation for his wife, Marlyne, who murdered their three children. Maître Susane knows the couple’s situation from the news, but she takes the case because she recognizes Gilles from her childhood. Wasn’t he the teenage boy “permanently lodged in her soul,” she wonders. The one who made the modest attorney yearn for life beyond her ***working-class*** milieu?

Something happened in Principaux’s bedroom 30 years ago, but exactly what remains opaque to Maître Susane, who can neither remember the details of the incident nor make sense of the fear she feels around Gilles. NDiaye describes their encounter in vague, almost shimmering terms — Gilles “enraptured” Maître Susane; he was the “encystment of pure joy” — that assume a more sinister sheen later on.

As in NDiaye’s other novels, the story lives not in the incident but its aftermath. The mystery grips Maître Susane. She spirals toward a nervous breakdown. “Who, to her, was Gilles Principaux?” The question — the novel’s refrain — contaminates the lawyer’s relationships. It alienates her from her parents, who fearfully dismiss her memories, and disturbs her attorney-client meetings with Marlyne.

It snakes its way into Maître Susane’s home, disrupting an already unstable relationship with Sharon, her diligent housekeeper from Mauritius. Desperation and distance define their interactions. Maître Susane pines for approval from this African woman, a yearning that aligns the lawyer with other NDiaye characters harboring a faint racial angst. Determined to do right by Sharon, she takes on her complicated citizenship case, which is stalled by the absence of the calm steward’s marriage papers. Retrieving them unwittingly plunges Maître Susane into another adventure.

In “Vengeance Is Mine,” NDiaye circles a familiar configuration of ideas: trauma and memory, class anxiety, isolation and otherness, the warped savagery of domestic life, the rupture between parents and their children. But she also considers the texture of justice — what it means, how it’s determined and who enacts it. Maître Susane counsels on the law but can’t find redress for her own problems. She’s the lawyer, but who holds the power in her interactions with Gilles, with Marlyne, with Sharon?

NDiaye deals in impressions and captures a particular kind of emotional delirium in “Vengeance.” She leans into jaggedness, twisting her narrative to mimic Maître Susane’s fraying psychological state as she searches for a kind of truth. Intrusive ellipses, a legion of conjunctions and abrupt paragraph breaks reflect the lawyer’s unraveling. Appreciating this moody, sensual and sometimes feverish prose requires submission — to the grooves of language, the performance of storytelling. Maître Susane’s thoughts are strewn across the page in a way that, at first, feels haphazard, but there is an organizing principle at play. It’s a subtle query, a haunting inversion of the novel’s refrain. Perhaps the question is not who is Gilles Principaux but who, to us, is Maître Susane?

Lovia Gyarkye, formerly an associate editor at The New York Times Magazine Labs, is a critic at The Hollywood Reporter.

VENGEANCE IS MINE | By Marie NDiaye | Translated by Jordan Stump | 226 pp. | Knopf | $28

Lovia Gyarkye, formerly an associate editor at The New York Times Magazine Labs, is a critic at The Hollywood Reporter.

PHOTO This article appeared in print on page BR16.

**Load-Date:** October 25, 2023

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[***Trump Is in His Element; The Conversation***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BDS-HFJ1-JBG3-61K4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 26, 2024 Monday 14:05 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1606 words

**Byline:** Gail Collins and Bret Stephens Gail Collins is an Opinion columnist, is a former member of the editorial board and was the first woman to serve as the Times editorial page editor, from 2001 to 2007. Bret Stephens is an Opinion columnist for The Times, writing about foreign policy, domestic politics and cultural issues.

**Highlight:** What can Biden do about it?

**Body**

Bret Stephens: Hi, Gail. I know we’ll get around to talking about Donald Trump’s big South Carolina primary win, but first I want to pick your brain about Joe Biden’s State of the Union address. It isn’t happening till next week, but I’m guessing the White House speechwriters are working hard on it now.

Any advice on what the president should say and how he should say it?

Gail Collins: Let’s presume he’s going to tell the country how well things are going in the economy, the progress he’s made on priorities like improving America’s infrastructure and getting relief to folks who are drowning in student debt.

Bret: Will quarrel with you in a minute. Go on.

Gail: Then at some point he’ll turn to foreign affairs. You know that’s not my subject, but even a spectator like me could guess that the evils of Russia will be paired with Donald Trump’s claim that the United States shouldn’t protect any NATO country that doesn’t spend a certain amount on defense.

Biden’s already laced into that one once, but he was so … vigorous that I’m hoping for a repeat.

OK, your turn.

Bret: A lot of Americans are looking at a Trump-Biden rematch as a case of the morally unfit versus the mentally unfit. So the most important thing Biden has to do with this speech is dispel the perception that he’s tipping into senility. If he stumbles even a little, it’s going to cost him a lot.

Next thing he needs to do is acknowledge the magnitude of the crisis at the border and blame Republicans for rejecting the bipartisan Senate bill to help address the crisis — a cynical MAGA maneuver intended solely to keep the crisis alive for Trump’s political benefit. Finally, declare that he’s ordering many thousands of troops to the border, with authority to detain migrants. It would remind people who’s president and take the issue straight out of the G.O.P.’s hands.

Gail: Lord, I forgot about the border. Just blocked it out, I guess. We can fight about that later. Go on with your topics for Biden.

Bret: On Ukraine, I was disappointed by the fairly ineffectual sanctions the administration announced last week as retaliation for Aleksei Navalny’s cruel death in a Siberian prison. I’m hoping that Biden is waiting for the State of the Union to declare that he’s going to seize frozen Russian assets held by the United States and give the money to Ukraine for the purpose of buying U.S. weapons. The alternative is to allow Ukraine to lose the war on account of House Republicans’ craven deference to Trump. It’s un-American, and Biden should challenge them directly. Republicans are to Russia today what the Western far left was to the Soviet Union a generation ago: fellow travelers, apologists and naifs.

And about those student loans …

Gail: Ah yes, always a point of conflict for us. There obviously has to be a rational student loan program that encourages the generally very young borrowers to be smart about what kind of deal they buy into. Wasn’t the case early on, and a lot of innocent people got trapped in huge debt while flooding the schools with money that was too often used for unnecessary expansion. They deserve some help to salvage their already half-ruined careers and lives.

Bret: Not to sound like Mother Superior at the orgy, but for a president to unilaterally forgive $138 billion in debt is flat-out unconstitutional. Congressional control of the purse strings is basic to our system, and all but defying a Supreme Court ruling, as Biden boasted of doing last week, is a real road to hell: Just imagine how Trump might use the precedent if he gets back in the White House.

Also, while the president surely thinks he’s currying favor with younger people whose votes he desperately needs, he’s also alienating a lot of ***working-class***, non-college-educated voters who see this as another huge giveaway to imprudent borrowers. So: bad policy and bad politics. But now you’ll tell me why I’m wrong.

Gail: The folks who are getting the greatest benefit from Biden’s forgiveness plan are the ones who most deserve it — low-to-middle-income former students who went to community colleges. They believed the national mantra that college would lead to a good job, but many emerged shackled in debt while qualified for careers that didn’t pay all that well.

There are people out there who’ve spent decades saddled with these obligations, and barely able to meet the interest payments. After a certain number of years, they deserve an escape route.

Bret: And what about all of those people who took out loans and dutifully repaid them over many years? Or those who wisely decided against saddling themselves with debt in the first place by skipping college? In effect, they’re being penalized for their diligence and foresight. And I don’t even want to think about how this loan forgiveness creates a moral hazard when it comes to other types of debt.

But, hey, we said we’d talk about South Carolina. You probably don’t lie awake thinking about Nikki Haley’s best interests, but is she wise, politically speaking, to keep this contest going any further?

Gail: Well, when you lose your home state, it’s probably a message to pack your bags and go for a nice long vacation. On the other hand, Haley was never going to win anyway, and running through primaries is a commendable way to focus voters’ attention on Trump’s terrible flaws. As well, of course, as a diverting way to spend the spring.

Bret: The smart advice or the honorable advice?

Gail: You know I’m going to demand both.

Bret: Well, the smart advice, politically speaking, is for her to end her campaign, endorse Trump, sedulously kiss up to him and his voters and hope to win his — and their — blessing for a 2028 bid.

The honorable advice is for her to come to terms with the fact that she may never be president, but she can become a leader of a principled conservative movement that rejects demagoguery, supports the rule of law, champions free people, free speech, free trade and free markets — and bides its time until the Republican Party is de-zombified and wants to return to its former self. That means campaigning for a while longer, maybe even to the convention.

And speaking of zombies, did I mention I spent 40 minutes on Friday watching a Trump rally?

Gail: The one where he kept talking about the size of the audience?

Bret: Size is a theme with him.

I watched the rally with my mother, who found it reminiscent of the style of the Mussolini regime under which she was born in wartime Italy. She was referring to the incoherence, the bombast, the grandiosity, the extravagant lies, the demonization, the xenophobia, the bogus nods to religiosity and patriotism, the references to himself with the royal “we,” the condescending sops to his toadies, the ecstatic gaze of the people arranged behind him on the stage. But there’s also an undeniably comic aspect, too, especially when he riffed about how he had taken the moniker “crooked” from Hillary Clinton (who is now “Beautiful Hillary”) and given it to Biden, who used to be “Sleepy” (and probably still is). I admit I sorta giggled, against my better judgment. The whole thing was sorta like, “Il Duce, Live at the Comedy Cellar.”

It’s … scarily effective. If his opponents are Biden and Kamala Harris, I fear he wins.

Gail: Funny, I watched his speech to the Conservative Political Action Conference on Saturday and found myself nodding off. I guess I’ve just seen his act too often. I usually try to keep alert by counting the number of times he quotes somebody calling him “Sir,” but this time it just didn’t work.

Still, it’s totally wrong to get sleepy when somebody’s telling the audience, “The only thing standing between you and obliteration is me.”

Bret: It’s the sort of thing you’d expect a cult leader to say right before he passes out the Kool-Aid.

Gail: I can’t argue with you about his talent for whipping up a crowd when he’s in the mood. But it’s way, way, way too early to give up hope. Lord knows what’s going to happen between now and November.

Bret: Truer words never spoken. What do you think is likelier: Biden drops out of the race after some awful stumble? Or Trump gets convicted of a felony? Both, of course, are possible.

Gail: Wow, imagine an election without either of the Two Inevitables. If Trump gets convicted of a felony, he’d appeal and that could lead to a very interesting nominating convention. He’d never give up for the good of the party, even if he was being led away in shackles.

Hmm. Really liking that image.

Bret: Just remember James Michael Curley, the Boston mayor who ran for his fourth term while under federal indictment, went to prison for a few months, had his sentence commuted by President Harry Truman, returned to a hero’s welcome and served out the rest of his mayoral term. That could be Trump, too.

Gail: They made a movie about Curley called “The Last Hurrah,” right? Great Spencer Tracy flick. Wish Trump was at the last … something.

Biden is, of course, a much saner guy, although clearly one without the ability to acknowledge the limits of mortality. If the Democrats managed to rally against his nomination at the convention, he’d concede, I’m sure, but hard to imagine which one particular Democrat could organize such a rally.

Bret: Anyone, anyone, anyone who can stop Trump — I’m for.

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PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK PETERSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A18.

**Load-Date:** February 27, 2024

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[***President Bolsters Union Support in Illinois After a Landmark Deal***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69KR-D3G1-JBG3-61X1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 10, 2023 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 864 words

**Byline:** By Lisa Friedman and Neal E. Boudette

**Body**

The trip, including a meeting with the president of the United Automobile Workers, offered the president a chance to celebrate a landmark labor deal.

President Biden pulled a red United Automobile Workers T-shirt over his button-down on Thursday and celebrated a landmark labor deal that kept a Stellantis manufacturing plant in business, using an appearance in Illinois to shore up crucial union support.

''I've worn this shirt a lot, man,'' Mr. Biden told a man in the crowd, one month after he walked a picket line to support autoworkers in their strike for higher wages. ''I've been involved in the U.A.W. longer than you've been alive,'' the 80-year-old president said.

The speech before the boisterous crowd was a victory lap for Mr. Biden after the union reached an agreement with Ford, General Motors and Stellantis late last month on a contract that included pay increases and reopened the plant in Belvidere, Ill.

Mr. Biden made the case for clean energy even as many workers fear the president's climate change agenda could endanger their jobs. He also drew a contrast with his likely Republican opponent in the 2024 presidential race, former President Donald J. Trump.

''When my predecessor was in office, six factories closed across the country. Tens of thousands of auto jobs were lost nationwide, and on top of that he was willing to cede the future of electric vehicles to China,'' Mr. Biden said. He added that Mr. Trump has insisted that electric vehicles will lead to the loss of thousands of manufacturing jobs.

''Well, like almost everything else he said, he's wrong,'' Mr. Biden added. ''And you have proved him wrong. Instead of lower wages, you won record gains. Instead of fewer jobs, you won a commitment for thousands of more jobs.''

During Mr. Trump's four years in office, the National Labor Relations Board often took pro-corporate stances and was actively hostile to unions. While Mr. Biden in September became the first president to appear on a picket line, Mr. Trump visited a nonunion plant in Michigan and said union members ''were being sold down the river by their leadership.''

The Biden administration has proposed the nation's most ambitious climate regulations yet, which would ensure that two-thirds of new passenger cars are all-electric by 2032 -- up from just 5.8 percent today. The rules, if enacted, could sharply lower planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions from vehicle tailpipes, the nation's largest source of greenhouse emissions.

But they also come with costs for autoworkers, because it takes fewer than half the laborers to assemble an all-electric vehicle as it does to build a gasoline-powered car. Union leaders also fear that many of the new manufacturing plants for electric vehicle batteries and other parts are being built in states that are hostile to unions.

On Thursday, Mr. Biden showered praise on union leaders, particularly Shawn Fain, the president of the U.A.W., saying the strike that Mr. Fain led saved the automobile industry. ''You've done a hell of a job, pal,'' Mr. Biden told him.

Mr. Fain did not offer Mr. Biden the endorsement of his powerful union with about 400,000 active members, including a major presence in the swing state of Michigan.

In the past, the union boss has been vocally critical of some administration decisions around its push for electric vehicles, writing in a memo to union members in May that ''the E.V. transition is at serious risk of becoming a race to the bottom.'' He wrote that the union wanted to see ''national leadership have our back on this'' before making a decision on an endorsement.

''His view was: We're two guys from ***working-class*** backgrounds,'' Gene Sperling, Mr. Biden's liaison to the U.A.W., said of the president's view shortly before he invited Mr. Fain to the Oval Office in July. The two have spoken on the phone several times since, including once when Mr. Biden called Mr. Fain to wish him a happy birthday.

Administration officials said the tenor of the relationship changed when Mr. Biden joined striking autoworkers in Michigan in September. When word came down that the union had struck a deal with the automakers, Mr. Biden stepped away during a state dinner welcoming the Australian prime minister and called Mr. Fain, a senior administration official said.

David Popp, a professor of public administration at Syracuse University, noted that while new factories will be needed to build electric vehicle batteries, the vehicles will require fewer suppliers producing parts. Many assembly workers will also need to be retrained.

''We may also need fewer workers,'' Mr. Popp said in an email. But, he said, ''there doesn't seem to be a consensus yet on whether that is the case.''

Kristine Lynn, who spent 17 years on the assembly line at the Belvidere manufacturing plant before it shuttered eight months ago, said she had ''mixed emotions'' about the transition to clean energy and electric vehicles.

Ms. Lynn, 49, said she was unsure what job she was returning to, but knew she would face changes in the long run. Her last position involved putting gas tanks into automobiles.

''That job isn't going to exist anymore,'' she said.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/09/us/politics/biden-auto-plant-illinois-uaw.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/09/us/politics/biden-auto-plant-illinois-uaw.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: President Biden wore a United Automobile Workers T-shirt on Thursday in Belvidere, Ill. His speech made a case for clean energy. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HAIYUN JIANG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A17.

**Load-Date:** November 10, 2023

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[***Black Folk Musicians Are Reclaiming the Genre; arts and letters***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69KR-NH81-JBG3-62H1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 10, 2023 Friday 11:08 EST

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**Section:** T-MAGAZINE

**Length:** 3007 words

**Byline:** Adam Bradley and Justin French

**Highlight:** In returning to a songbook that is decades — if not centuries — old, a new generation of performers is expanding the definition of what their traditional art form can be.

**Body**

TRAY WELLINGTON KNOWS that many will take the title of his 2022 album, “[*Black Banjo*](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=OLAK5uy_mCXoQKY_a4SJWCds13SW58yCXgv2lDUSI),” as an oxymoron. The banjo, and with it an entire body of folk-based music, is now so thoroughly associated with whiteness as to obscure its origins in Black musical tradition. “One of the first things I heard when I started playing banjo was, ‘You’re not supposed to be doing this,’” says Wellington, 24, whose father is Black and mother is white. But for him, playing the banjo has become an act of reclamation.

Contemporary audiences still tend to associate the banjo with white Southern traditions of bluegrass, old-time and what record labels used to market as hillbilly music, but its roots are in Africa, in stringed instruments like the akonting, the buchundu and the ngoni. During the 19th century, the banjo became inextricably linked to minstrelsy: variety shows in which white performers (and, increasingly after the Civil War, Black performers) “blacked up,” grotesquely caricaturing Black facial features. The minstrel show, which persisted onstage and onscreen well into the 20th century, accounts for the banjo’s conflicted legacy — both part of the visual vocabulary of white supremacy and a point of creative contact between Black and white musicians.

Wellington’s interest in the banjo was stoked by his maternal grandfather’s love of classic country, which he’d play for Wellington on fishing trips or while working in the backyard garden of the family home in Ashe County, N.C. After some cajoling, Wellington’s mother (a hip-hop fan) took her 13-year-old son to a pawnshop, where they purchased one on layaway. Playing banjo eventually led Wellington to East Tennessee State University’s renowned Bluegrass, Old‑Time and Roots Music program, where he learned the history and practice of folk music and joined a community of mostly white teachers and students. Many of his classmates welcomed him (he plays with fellow E.T.S.U. grads in his current band); a few subjected him to scorn. “People would often ask me, ‘How does it feel to be Black in this music?’ I would put if off because I didn’t want to talk about it,” Wellington says. Recording “Black Banjo” during the pandemic lockdown and amid protests for racial justice, however, occasioned an awakening. Being a Black banjo player is “kind of a rare thing,” he says. “It’s who I am.”

Today Black folk performers have reached a critical mass and level of exposure not seen since the early decades of the 20th century, when Black bands like Cannon’s Jug Stompers and the Memphis Jug Band were among the most commercially popular in the country, touring in medicine shows and playing vaudeville stages. In [*a 2013 essay*](https://oxfordamerican.org/magazine/issue-83-winter-2013/can-you-blame-gus-cannon) about Gus Cannon, the banjo-playing frontman of the Jug Stompers, the multi-instrumentalist and cultural historian Dom Flemons writes that it was only out of an “absurd racial insensitivity” that a “legitimate Black art form developed.” Flemons, 41, who goes by the name the American Songster in tribute to the players of the past, believes we’ve now entered “a postmodern contemporary folk period” in which new and more expansive definitions of traditional music are taking root. He’s among a new generation of Black folk musicians that includes Rhiannon Giddens, Valerie June, Amythyst Kiah, Allison Russell and many others who are returning to songs that are decades (even centuries) old. They play fiddles and jugs, bones and guitar — and most of all the banjo.

Some of these performers veer into activism. For Hannah Mayree, 34, a Northern California-based musician, “playing banjo as a Black person is not enough.” That’s why she founded the Black Banjo Reclamation Project, which supplies instruments to Black musicians and holds workshops where participants learn to make banjos for themselves. “The knowledge of how to build a banjo lives inside my body,” she says. Other musicians are folklorists, introducing listeners to source recordings that testify to an unbroken tradition of Black folk music in America. Still others see reclaiming the past as a means of creating a future. “As opposed to someone who is the caretaker of an archive, I think of my role as a living musician as a member of a future archive,” says Jake Blount, 28, a banjo and fiddle player from Washington, D.C. His most recent album, “[*The New Faith*](https://jakeblountmusic.bandcamp.com/album/the-new-faith)” (2022), presents an Afrofuturist refiguring of traditional songs. Black Americans, Blount says, have “had to be a forward-facing people because the past has been denied to us.” Part of that history is recoverable through sheet music and source recordings, but much is lost to memory.

IN THE BROADEST sense, folk music is a multiracial, ***working-class*** tradition, stretching across time and continents. In the United States alone, it comprises a repertoire of ballads and work songs, blues and breakdowns, songs of love and songs of protest. Folk is a body of simple tunes played by beginners — “Tom Dooley,” “Oh! Susanna,” “Down in the Valley” — and a platform for the greatest virtuosity. For some the term conjures a cinematic shorthand: the “Dueling Banjos” of “Deliverance” (1972) and George Clooney mugging his way through “O Brother, Where Art Thou” (2000). Folk’s history over the past century or more is best told through revivals, periods of intensified interest and participation in the music. In moments when the notion of a shared cultural heritage is most desirable — during the Great Depression, or the Red Scare paranoia of the ’40s and ’50s — people have often returned to what the 20th-century folklorists John Lomax and his son Alan once described as “the big song bag which the folk have held in common for centuries.” During a 1956 live performance of the spiritual “[*This Train (Bound for Glory)*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&amp;v=bB_BwpyT_VA)” — a song that’s now been recorded by scores of artists, including Louis Armstrong, Alice Coltrane, Bob Marley and Sister Rosetta Tharpe — the guitar legend Big Bill Broonzy teased an audience of earnest college students swept up in the latest revival. “Some people call these ‘folk songs,’” he said while noodling on his guitar, with the singer-songwriter Pete Seeger playing banjo onstage beside him. “Well, all the songs that I’ve heard in my life was folk songs. I’ve never heard horses sing none of them yet!”

Folk is indeed the people’s music, yet early efforts to market it ended up, to borrow the historian Karl Hagstrom Miller’s phrase, segregating sound. In the 1920s, with the advent of the modern recording industry and broadcast radio, music executives, most notably Ralph Peer of Okeh Records, leveraged emergent technology to define marketable genre categories along racial lines. Out of this came so-called race records (which first appeared at the beginning of the 1920s, aimed at Black Americans) and hillbilly records (which arrived a few years later, geared toward Southern whites). Even as folk crossed racial boundaries — as in the Lomaxes’ recordings of Lead Belly for the Library of Congress — white song hunters often constrained Black performers inside narrow presumptions: attributing virtuosity to natural gifts rather than to musical skill; soliciting songs of protest and lament rather than those of love and happiness; and conjuring a mythic authenticity instead of making space for the real thing (as happened when the Lomaxes, after helping to secure Lead Belly’s release from Angola prison in 1934 in Louisiana, made him perform thereafter in a prison jumpsuit).

Over the decades, race records gave way to more coded genre designations, like R&amp;B and soul. Hillbilly morphed into country and western and finally simply into country. By midcentury, folk was widely considered a genre, too, a narrow term to define acoustic, string-based music, mostly by white musicians and often with a political bent. Folk songs inspired generations of singer-songwriters like Seeger, Joan Baez, Woody Guthrie and Bob Dylan, whose global fame the term “folk” was too small to contain. Folk, at least for some, became a backward glance to a distant past, nostalgic and reverential. It became Southern and ***working class*** and, in the minds of many, it became white.

THE RENAISSANCE OF Black folk music can be traced back to a single event nearly 20 years ago. In April 2005 in Boone, N.C., some 30 Black string-band musicians and dozens of other attendees came together for fellowship. Black Banjo Then and Now, as the gathering was called, began as an online community of over 200 members (only a small percentage of whom were Black), formed the year before by Tony Thomas, a Black banjo player from Miami. Among the group’s most junior members were Flemons, an Arizona native, then 23, and the then-27-year-old [*Rhiannon Giddens*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/07/arts/music/rhiannon-giddens-youre-the-one.html), a classically trained soprano from Greensboro, N.C. After graduating from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music in 2000 with a bachelor’s degree in music performance, Giddens found her way back home, working two jobs — one as a singing hostess at Romano’s Macaroni Grill — until she earned enough money to buy her instruments, and calling contra dances, a form of line-based group folk dancing with roots in the British Isles.

Giddens sought a way to embrace her love of folk music and her Blackness, too. It’s a central paradox of folk today: How can a music so thoroughly identified with whiteness that, for the better part of 50 years, found definition in contradistinction to Black music and even Black people be so Black? She found her answer at the in-person gathering of Black Banjo Then and Now. At the time, [*she told the Greensboro News &amp; Record*](https://greensboro.com/black-banjo-benefit/article_abd389ea-09ce-5b56-b87b-fad76e1bdf5a.html) that old-time was “something that really spoke to me, and it was OK that the people who were playing it were white. But when I discovered my people had so much to do with the music, and the string bands at the turn of the century were Black, well, this is a part of history.” The four-day event, held on the campus of Appalachian State University, drew musicians from afar, including the New York-based old-time string band the Ebony Hillbillies, and living legends from close to home, like the then-86-year-old North Carolina old-time fiddle virtuoso Joe Thompson. The experience was unforgettable, with epic jam sessions and intergenerational camaraderie. “It changed my life,” Giddens says. Out of this gathering, she, along with Flemons and, eventually, a third member, Justin Robinson, formed a modern Black string band called the Carolina Chocolate Drops.

The Chocolate Drops were both interested in history and utterly contemporary. All members sang and played multiple instruments, with the banjo at the center of their sound. Their style of performance owes a debt to Thompson (who died in 2012). “We had a pure mission to expose this music to as many people as possible and to tell Joe’s story,” Giddens says. On their 2010 album, “Genuine Negro Jig,” which won a Grammy Award for best traditional folk album, they covered the 2001 R&amp;B song “[*Hit ’Em Up Style (Oops!)*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Rn7YZWtZEo)” by Blu Cantrell, taking a time-bound pop hit and making it feel nearly as timeless as “This Train.” The group disbanded in 2014, at which point, as Giddens says, the project had done “exactly what it was meant to do: inspire a whole generation of young people of color to say, ‘Hey, I see myself.’”

THE CAROLINA CHOCOLATE Drops and many others have now ensured that future generations can see themselves onstage but, once up there, such Black performers rarely see themselves in the crowd. Do Black artists need a Black audience? It’s a longstanding debate that sometimes pits the artistic against the sociopolitical functions of song. The writer Amiri Baraka once defined Black music as “American music expanded past the experience of the average American.” “It gets down,” he wrote. “It is about the life of the downed, yet its dignity is in the fantastic sophistication even at the moment of would-be, should-be humiliation and actual despair.” Giddens, who once described her music as “Black non-Black music” and now prefers to call it simply “American music,” understands this implicitly. “All the good things that come from American music [come from] mixture,” she says. “Hiding in plain sight in all the different types of American music is cross-cultural ***working-class*** collaboration. It’s people making music because that’s what they’ve got.”

The most powerful folk music has always addressed points of tension: between Black and white, rich and poor, sophistication and humiliation. Cannon’s 1927 song “Can You Blame the Colored Man?” tells the story of Booker T. Washington, the founder of the Tuskegee Institute, dining with President Theodore Roosevelt at the White House in 1901, the year Washington’s best-selling autobiography, “Up From Slavery,” was published. “Could you blame the colored man for makin’ them goo-goo eyes?” Cannon sings, after describing in detail the lavish dinner at the president’s table. Likewise, today’s best folk music still confronts issues of race and class. In 2019 Amythyst Kiah, now 36, a guitarist and banjo player from Tennessee, joined Giddens, along with Leyla McCalla and Allison Russell, in a string-band collective called Our Native Daughters. They decided to excavate American history, going back to the trans-Atlantic slave trade to find inspiration for new songs. One of the songs that came of that process was the startling and soulful “[*Black Myself*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mqtPxwOW3HU).”

I don’t pass the test of the paper bag

’Cause I’m Black myself

I pick the banjo up and they sneer at me

’Cause I’m Black myself

You better lock your doors when I walk by

’Cause I’m Black myself

You look me in my eyes but you don’t see me

’Cause I’m Black myself

The brown paper bag test, as the literary scholar Henry Louis Gates Jr. has written, was born out of colorism within the Black community, in nightclubs and house parties in New Orleans where anyone darker than the bag taped to the door would be denied entrance. In a song that confronts the experience of being shut out of traditionally white spaces — such as contemporary folk and country music — Kiah’s lyrics build toward resistance and joy: “I’ll stand my ground and smile in your face / ’Cause I’m Black myself.”

Addressing her race so explicitly in her music was a departure for Kiah. “I’ve always written songs in a way where anybody can put themselves in that position,” she says. Throughout her years of playing, she’s subscribed to the theory that the more specific and personal a song’s perspective, the more a listener — any listener — will relate to it. Just as Kiah, no poor white Southern girl from rural Kentucky, could relate to Loretta Lynn’s 1970 single “[*Coal Miner’s Daughter*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zoKThsOCjuU),” she says, so she hopes that listeners, whomever they may be, will relate to “Black Myself.”

Bluegrass and country, the music first marketed a century ago as hillbilly, might seem inhospitable to Black listeners and musicians. But there’s a longstanding tradition that binds Black people, both personally and aesthetically, to these sounds. “The way I talk is with an accent, so the way I sing is with an accent. And that has always needed to be explained because I’m in the skin I’m in,” says Valerie June, 41, whose voice carries the cadences of her native Jackson, Tenn. “There are [Black] people from where I’m from that talk like me. And if they started singing, they would probably sound like me.”

This rootedness in place, particularly a rural Southern place where many Black Americans no longer live but that they never left behind, is central to Black folk music’s endurance. When Kara Jackson was a child, during the first decades of the 2000s, in Oak Park, Ill., just outside of Chicago, characters from her father’s hometown of Dawson, Ga., populated her imagination. “I grew up knowing these nicknames, hearing these stories from this small Southern town of 4,000 people,” she says. “It almost felt like hearing superhero tales.” She reveled in the stories she heard in songs as well, be they Wu-Tang Clan tracks that her older brother played or ballads from Dolly Parton LPs in the family collection. It wasn’t long before she began to write songs herself, composing by voice, then on guitar, then using the banjo that her father gave her when she was in high school. She wrote poetry, too, so well that she was named the national youth poet laureate in 2019-20.

Earlier this year, Jackson, 24, released her debut album, “Why Does the Earth Give Us People to Love?,” with songs that partake of folk and jazz, blues and rap. Her lyrics layer sound and simile: “I wanna be as dangerous as a dancing dragon / Or a steam engine, a loaded gun,” she sings on “No Fun/Party.” Her music is sometimes playful, sometimes searing; above all, it’s story driven, like the nearly eight-minute ballad “Rat,” in which Jackson assumes the role of troubadour from the opening couplet: “Take the story of Rat who’s headed west / His buddy once told him he likes the girls there best.” Memorializing the lives of people both real and real enough for Jackson to imagine is what her music does best. “I love songs that tell stories,” she says. “That’s what folk music is for me.”

After composing many of her songs in the isolation of her bedroom during the pandemic, she’s now growing accustomed to playing them for an audience. She recalls a recent performance where the energy was great, but the crowd was mostly white, which left her conflicted. “I am so grateful for anyone who listens to my music,” Jackson says. “But I secretly and very selfishly do want my music to reach my own people. And to prove that this is our music also. It’s not even like I’m doing something subversive. I’m just making the music that we came up with in the first place.”

PHOTOS: Tray Wellington with his banjo at the Pour House, a music venue and record store in Raleigh, N.C.; Rhiannon Giddens at Cecil Sharp House, an arts center in London named for the English folklorist.; Amythyst Kiah in front of her father’s home in Johnson City, Tenn.; Dom Flemons at the nightclub FitzGerald’s in Berwyn, Ill., outside of Chicago. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JUSTIN FRENCH) This article appeared in print on page M282, M284, M286, M288.

**Load-Date:** November 29, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Biden Bolsters Union Support in Illinois***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69KH-P981-DXY4-X2B5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 9, 2023 Thursday 01:18 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 891 words

**Byline:** Lisa Friedman and Neal E. Boudette

**Highlight:** The trip, including a meeting with the president of the United Automobile Workers, offered the president a chance to celebrate a landmark labor deal.

**Body**

The trip, including a meeting with the president of the United Automobile Workers, offered the president a chance to celebrate a landmark labor deal.

President Biden pulled a red United Automobile Workers T-shirt over his button-down on Thursday and celebrated a landmark labor deal that kept a Stellantis manufacturing plant in business, using an appearance in Illinois to shore up crucial union support.

“I’ve worn this shirt a lot, man,” Mr. Biden told a man in the crowd, one month after he walked a picket line to support autoworkers in their strike for higher wages. “I’ve been involved in the U.A.W. longer than you’ve been alive,” the 80-year-old president said.

The speech before the boisterous crowd was a victory lap for Mr. Biden after the union reached an agreement with Ford, General Motors and Stellantis late last month on a contract that included pay increases and reopened the plant in Belvidere, Ill.

Mr. Biden made the case for clean energy even as many workers fear the president’s climate change agenda could endanger their jobs. He also drew a contrast with his likely Republican opponent in the 2024 presidential race, former President Donald J. Trump.

“When my predecessor was in office, six factories closed across the country. Tens of thousands of auto jobs were lost nationwide, and on top of that he was willing to cede the future of electric vehicles to China,” Mr. Biden said. He added that Mr. Trump has insisted that electric vehicles will lead to the loss of thousands of manufacturing jobs.

“Well, like almost everything else he said, he’s wrong,” Mr. Biden added. “And you have proved him wrong. Instead of lower wages, you won record gains. Instead of fewer jobs, you won a commitment for thousands of more jobs.”

During Mr. Trump’s four years in office, the National Labor Relations Board often took pro-corporate stances and was actively hostile to unions. While Mr. Biden in September became the [*first president to appear on a picket line*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/26/us/politics/biden-uaw-strike-picket-michigan.html), Mr. Trump [*visited a nonunion plant*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/27/us/politics/trump-autoworkers-detroit.html) in Michigan and said union members “were being sold down the river by their leadership.”

The Biden administration has proposed [*the nation’s most ambitious climate regulations yet*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/12/climate/biden-electric-cars-epa.html), which would ensure that two-thirds of new passenger cars are all-electric by 2032 — up from just 5.8 percent today. The rules, if enacted, could sharply lower planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions from vehicle tailpipes, the nation’s largest source of greenhouse emissions.

But they also come with costs for autoworkers, because it takes fewer than half the laborers to assemble an all-electric vehicle as it does to build a gasoline-powered car. Union leaders also fear that many of the new manufacturing plants for electric vehicle batteries and other parts are being built in states that are hostile to unions.

On Thursday, Mr. Biden showered praise on union leaders, particularly Shawn Fain, the president of the U.A.W., saying the strike that Mr. Fain led saved the automobile industry. “You’ve done a hell of a job, pal,” Mr. Biden told him.

Mr. Fain did not offer Mr. Biden the endorsement of his powerful union with about 400,000 active members, including a major presence in the swing state of Michigan.

In the past, the union boss has been vocally critical of some administration decisions around its push for electric vehicles, writing in a memo to union members in May that “the E.V. transition is at serious risk of becoming a race to the bottom.” He wrote that the union wanted to see “national leadership have our back on this” before making a decision on an endorsement.

“His view was: We’re two guys from ***working-class*** backgrounds,” Gene Sperling, Mr. Biden’s liaison to the U.A.W., said of the president’s view shortly before he invited Mr. Fain to the Oval Office in July. The two have spoken on the phone several times since, including once when Mr. Biden called Mr. Fain to wish him a happy birthday.

Administration officials said the tenor of the relationship changed when Mr. Biden joined striking autoworkers in Michigan in September. When word came down that the union had struck a deal with the automakers, Mr. Biden stepped away during a state dinner welcoming the Australian prime minister and called Mr. Fain, a senior administration official said.

David Popp, a professor of public administration at Syracuse University, noted that while new factories will be needed to build electric vehicle batteries, the vehicles will require fewer suppliers producing parts. Many assembly workers will also need to be retrained.

“We may also need fewer workers,” Mr. Popp said in an email. But, he said, “there doesn’t seem to be a consensus yet on whether that is the case.”

Kristine Lynn, who spent 17 years on the assembly line at the Belvidere manufacturing plant before it shuttered eight months ago, said she had “mixed emotions” about the transition to clean energy and electric vehicles.

Ms. Lynn, 49, said she was unsure what job she was returning to, but knew she would face changes in the long run. Her last position involved putting gas tanks into automobiles.

“That job isn’t going to exist anymore,” she said.

PHOTO: President Biden wore a United Automobile Workers T-shirt on Thursday in Belvidere, Ill. His speech made a case for clean energy. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HAIYUN JIANG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A17.

**Load-Date:** November 10, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Director Dazzled By One City's 'Little Jewels'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B83-NYR1-DXY4-X064-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 4, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section AR; Column 0; Arts and Leisure Desk; Pg. 8

**Length:** 1475 words

**Byline:** By Motoko Rich

**Body**

A behind-the-scenes look at ''Perfect Days,'' which features Koji Yakusho as a cleaner of public bathrooms in Tokyo.

As artistic inspiration goes, public toilets don't usually stir the spirit.

Then again, most toilets aren't like the public bathrooms in Tokyo.

So when Wim Wenders, the German film director of art-house favorites like ''Paris, Texas'' and ''Wings of Desire,'' first toured more than a dozen public toilet buildings around the Japanese capital city in the spring of 2022, he was enchanted by what he described as ''little jewels'' designed by Pritzker Prize winners including Tadao Ando, Shigeru Ban and Kengo Kuma. Those stylish commodes provided the creative sparks for his latest movie, ''Perfect Days,'' which has been nominated in the international feature category for an Academy Award and opens in theaters in the United States on Feb. 7.

The movie -- a poignant character study of a public-toilet cleaner with a mysterious past who lives a spartan existence and works with the care of a master craftsman -- actually had its roots in a bit of propaganda. Wenders had been invited to Japan as the guest of a prominent Japanese businessman who hoped that the director might want to make a series of short films featuring the toilets, which had been conceived as showcases for Japanese artistry and hygienic mastery.

Koji Yanai, the son of the founder of Fast Retailing (the sprawling clothing giant best known for its Uniqlo brand) and a senior executive officer there, had spearheaded the public toilet project to be an architectural display of ''Japanese pride.''

''If I say Japanese toilets are world number one, no one will disagree,'' Yanai said in an interview late last year. He had recruited the architects to design the public buildings with a distinctive aesthetic that would make them as much art as public utility.

Originally built to welcome the world to Japan for the summer Olympic Games scheduled for 2020, the toilets did not get their moment because the pandemic forced the postponement of the Games to 2021, which were then staged without spectators.

After the quashed Olympic debut, Yanai was seeking another path to promotion. He reached out to Takuma Takasaki, a screenwriter and creative director at Dentsu, Japan's largest advertising firm, to help hatch a plan to champion the toilets internationally.

Takasaki suggested recruiting a filmmaker -- Quentin Tarantino, perhaps, or someone like Martin Scorsese or Steven Spielberg. The wish list also included Wenders, and Yanai, a fan since seeing ''Paris, Texas'' in college, recalled that the director already had an abiding interest in Japan, having made a documentary, ''Tokyo-Ga,'' a visual diary and homage to the great Japanese director Yasujiro Ozu.

When the invitation arrived, it was the middle of the pandemic and Wenders was feeling nostalgia for Japan, which he had not visited in eight years. ''I always felt strangely at home in Tokyo,'' Wenders said, as he peeled the wrappers off chocolates his staff had laid in front of him in a bare conference room during the Tokyo International Film Festival last fall, where Wenders was serving as president of the jury.

Having come from Berlin, Wenders was dismayed by the deterioration of civic spirit during the pandemic as residents had trashed a park near his home. In Tokyo -- and in the designer toilets in particular -- he believed he saw the embodiment of purer impulses like cleanliness and community cooperation.

''I have never seen any toilet anywhere in the world that was done with so much care for detail,'' Wenders said. He may have attributed to civic spirit what was accomplished by sanitary workers: Yanai funds cleaners to tend to the architectural toilets two to three times daily, whereas standard public toilets are cleaned once a day.

Before he left Tokyo, Wenders decided he wanted to make a feature-length film where the central character would be a toilet cleaner. Yanai had suggested Koji Yakusho, one of Japan's most well-known actors, who had gained an international following after he starred in the 1996 romantic drama ''Shall We Dance?''

To begin crafting a story, Wenders felt like he needed to know where the main character would live. He spent his last days on that Tokyo reconnaissance trip visiting locations. He settled on Oshiage, a ***working-class*** neighborhood in the eastern part of the city where low-slung apartment buildings crouch in the shadow of Skytree, a broadcast tower that pokes out of the landscape.

''The neighborhood for me was very essential,'' said Wenders. ''I need to love a place in order to set up a camera.''

Shortly after the director returned to Berlin, Takasaki joined him, and in just three weeks, they hammered out the script, which is all in Japanese.

Wenders developed the character into a man who pays quiet attention to detail and derives joy from cherished cassette tapes or shadows of leaves on the ground. The director was channeling his idol, Ozu, even naming the toilet cleaner Hirayama after the family in ''Tokyo Story,'' considered one of Ozu's masterpieces.

In conceiving of a daily routine stripped down to a few essentials, Wenders wanted the character to be a ''beautiful sign of reduction.''

''Reduction is one of the great tasks of our contemporary civilization,'' Wenders said. ''And we can only do better with the planet and the climate if we learn how to reduce ourselves.''

Before shooting began in the fall of 2022, the director and Yakusho visited the apartment where they would film the lead character at home, caring for a collection of treasured plants and reading translated works of Faulkner from a neat shelf in his bedroom. Wenders asked the actor to think about how to streamline the props supplied by an art director so that only the items most vital to the character remained.

''I would say -- would I really have such a thing?'' Yakusho recalled during an interview in a rented office late last year. ''And we would get rid of unrealistic things.''

Yakusho spent two days with a toilet cleaner learning his techniques, including how to use some custom-made tools. He said he wanted to perform the role as if Wenders was making a documentary. The director said he had never worked with an actor who ''so totally became that character.'' Yakusho won the best actor prize at Cannes last spring.

When I visited the set in the fall of 2022, Wenders was shooting a scene in a playground at one of the public toilets designed by Shigeru Ban, a rectangular glass building with translucent panels of purple, red and yellow that turn opaque when users bolt the locks on the stall doors.

Yakusho, dressed in a blue jumpsuit, wore a tool belt around his waist along with blue rubber gloves and white sneakers. He consulted briefly with Wenders through an interpreter. The director, wearing a baggy gray-beige linen three-piece suit, darkened glasses and black cloth sneakers, called ''Action!'' and Yakusho entered the center stall with a bucket, two trash bags and a roll of toilet paper, while extras stepped into the flanking stalls.

With the afternoon light fading, the tension of the 15-day shooting schedule began to bear down on the set. Between takes, crew members restuffed the trash cans in the toilet stalls so that Yakusho could clean them out again. Impatient, Wenders yelled ''Go away!'' and the crew skittered to hide behind a row of bicycles.

Wenders said it was the shortest shoot he had ever done, his bare-bones filming technique mirroring the minimalist context of the film.

Writing in Nikkei Asia, Kaori Shoji described the movie as ''like a conversation with a Zen Buddhist priest that leaves the interlocutor full of questions but infused with a strange serenity'' and the main character's devotion to his job as ''something most Japanese take for granted -- the indisputable importance of work is drummed into us from birth.''

Yet some viewers have found the character to represent an unrealistic fantasy. A man who lives an isolated life, satisfied with a low-wage, grimy job is ''the dream of men and Western people'' who valorize what they see as Japanese equanimity, said Kaori Hayashi, a professor of media studies at the University of Tokyo. ''I think those who think this is great are people who are already rich'' and who want an escape from overstuffed executive schedules, Hayashi said.

Yakusho acknowledged that his portrayal of a simply contented man might appear idealistic.

''I think a lot of people, when they get the thing they want, they immediately start to want something else,'' he said. ''You can't ever escape from that kind of thinking.''

But even if the character was ''too ideal and doesn't exist in real life,'' said Yakusho, ''I think there is value in striving to be more like that.''

Hikari Hida contributed reporting from Tokyo

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/01/movies/perfect-days-tokyo-toilets.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/01/movies/perfect-days-tokyo-toilets.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Top, public bathrooms, part of a Tokyo toilet project, factor prominently into the plot of ''Perfect Days,'' a film by Wim Wenders. Above, the actor Koji Yakusho, center, was shooting a scene in front of a toilet designed by Shigeru Ban. Below is Wenders, who began filming the movie in fall 2022. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY HIROKO MASUIKE/THE NEW YORK TIMES

ABOVE AND BELOW, NORIKO HAYASHI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (AR8-AR9) This article appeared in print on page AR8, AR9.

**Load-Date:** February 4, 2024

**End of Document**



[***A More Moderate Era in Cable News? Not Likely.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:684S-RB71-DXY4-X1C9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 2, 2023 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 19; LETTERS

**Length:** 342 words

**Body**

Summary summary summary

To the Editor:

Re ''Cable News Turns Page After Hosts Are Let Go'' (news analysis, Business, April 26):

Jim Rutenberg's article about whether, taken together, the firings of Tucker Carlson at Fox News and Don Lemon at CNN might signal the dawn of a more moderate era in cable news can be answered with a quote by the writer and muckraker Upton Sinclair: ''It's difficult to get a man to understand something, when his salary depends on his not understanding it.''

In the cutthroat, highly competitive cable news cosmos, it's not about principle and what's good for the country; it's about who can garner the highest ratings in the important demographic groups and score the most revenue.

Certainly, both cable-news networks were well aware of what they were getting with each anchor, and let them go on until their actions proved too much.

Bret Stephens's column ''The Tragedy of Fox News'' (April 26) sums up my feelings exactly about that network's missing a golden opportunity of being a reasoned voice for conservative views, instead of the haven for right-wing extremist views and personalities that it has become.

I would extend his musings about what might have been to former President Donald Trump himself. Once in office, he might have parlayed his appeal to the ***working class*** into something special, a political outlier beholden to no particular party or special interests who instead was acting on behalf of people across the socioeconomic and political spectrums.

Greg JosephSun City, Ariz.The writer is a retired journalist and television critic.

To the Editor:

At this moment, there exists a great opportunity for some astute broadcaster.

Tucker Carlson and Don Lemon could co-host a show on which they would have to speak with one another like gentlemen and actually address issues of public concern in a coherent, common-sense manner. There is a possibility that such a show might encourage the citizens of this country to engage in respectful, productive dialogue as well.

Carmine StoffoStaten Island

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/01/opinion/letters/the-dawn-of-a-more-moderate-era-in-cable-news-not-likely.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/01/opinion/letters/the-dawn-of-a-more-moderate-era-in-cable-news-not-likely.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A19.

**Load-Date:** May 2, 2023

**End of Document**



[***How to Stay Sane in Brutalizing Times; David Brooks***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69J4-1NY1-DXY4-X20K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 2, 2023 Thursday 17:01 EST

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**Section:** OPINION; sunday

**Length:** 1876 words

**Byline:** David Brooks

**Highlight:** Ancient wisdom can help keep us from becoming calloused over.

**Body**

We’re living in a brutalizing time: Scenes of mass savagery pervade the media. Americans have become vicious toward one another amid our disagreements. Everywhere I go, people are coping with an avalanche of negative emotions: shock, pain, contempt, anger, anxiety, fear.

The first thing to say is that we in America are the lucky ones. We’re not crouching in a cellar waiting for the next bomb to drop. We’re not currently the targets of terrorists who massacre families in their homes. We should still start every day with gratitude for the blessings we enjoy.

But we’re faced with a subtler set of challenges. How do you stay mentally healthy and spiritually whole in brutalizing times? How do you prevent yourself from becoming embittered, hate-filled, calloused over, suspicious and desensitized?

Ancient wisdom has a formula to help us, which you might call skepticism of the head and audacity of the heart.

The ancient Greeks knew about violent times. They lived with frequent wars between city-states, with massacres and mass rape. In response, they adopted a tragic sensibility. This sensibility begins with the awareness that the crust of civilization is thin. Breakdowns into barbarism are the historical norm. Don’t fool yourself into believing that you’re living in some modern age, too enlightened for hatred to take over.

In these circumstances, everybody has a choice. You can try to avoid thinking about the dark realities of life and naïvely wish that bad things won’t happen. Or you can confront these realities and develop a tragic mentality to help you thrive among them. As Ralph Waldo Emerson would write centuries later, “Great men, great nations have not been boasters and buffoons, but perceivers of the terror of life, and have manned themselves to face it.” And that goes for great women, too.

This tragic sensibility prepares you for the rigors of life in concrete ways. First, it teaches a sense of humility. The tragedies that populated Greek stages sent the message that our accomplishments were tenuous. They remind us that it’s easy to become proud and conceited in moments of peace. We begin to exaggerate our ability to control our own destinies. We begin to assume that the so-called justice of our cause guarantees our success. Humility is not thinking lowly of yourself; it’s an accurate perception of yourself. It is the ability to cast aside illusions and vanities and see life as it really is.

Second, the tragic sensibility nurtures a prudent approach to life. It encourages people to focus on the downsides of their actions and work to head them off. As Hal Brands and Charles Edel write in “The Lessons of Tragedy,” Greek tragedies were part of a wide culture that forced the Greeks to confront their own “frailty and fallibility.” By “shocking, unsettling and disturbing the audience, the tragedies also forced discussions of what was needed to circumvent such a fate.” In this way, people are taught resilience and anti-fragility — to be prepared for the pain that will inevitably come.

Third, this tragic mentality encourages caution. As Thucydides would argue, in politics, the lows are lower than the highs are high. The price we pay for our errors is higher than the benefits we gain from our successes. So be careful of rushing headlong into maximalist action, convinced of your own righteousness. Be incremental and patient and steady. This is advice I wish the Israelis would heed as they wage war on Hamas. This is advice that Matt Gaetz and the burn-it-all-down caucus among the House Republicans will never understand.

Fourth, the tragic mentality teaches people to be suspicious of their own rage. “Rage” is in the first line of “The Iliad.” We immediately see Agamemnon (whom we detest) and Achilles (whom we admire) behaving stupidly because they are filled with anger. The lesson is that rage might feel luxurious because it makes you convinced of your own rightness, but ultimately, it blinds you and turns you into a hate-filled monster. This is advice I wish the hard left would heed, the people who are so consumed by their self-righteous fury that they become cruel — desensitized to the suffering of Israelis, because Israelis are the bad guys in their simple ideological fables.

Over time, I’d add, rage hardens and corrodes the mind of its bearer. It hardens into the sort of cold, amoral, nihilistic attitude that we see in Donald Trump and in many others who inhabit what the political sociologist Larry Diamond has called the “authoritarian zeitgeist.” This attitude says: The enemy is out to destroy us. The ends justify the means. Savagery is necessary. The only thing we worship is power.

Fifth, tragedies thrust the harsh realities of individual suffering in our faces, and in them we find our common humanity. I’ve always been amazed by Aeschylus’ play “The Persians.” It was performed only eight years after the major battle that would eventually secure Athenian victory over the Persians, and it was written by a man who fought in that battle. And yet it is written from the Persian vantage point and elicits sympathy for the Persians, in all their hubris and suffering. It teaches us to be empathetic to all those who suffer, not just those on our own side.

From this sort of work, we learn to have a contempt for sadism, for anything that dehumanizes, and to have compassion for the everyday people who pay the price for the designs of proud and evil men. That compassion is the noble flame that keeps humanity alive, even in times of war and barbarism. That compassion recognizes the infinite dignity of each human soul.

So far, I’ve been describing the cool, prudent and humble mentality we learn from the Athenians. Now I turn to a different mentality, a mentality that emerged among the great Abrahamic faiths, and in their sacred city, Jerusalem. This mentality celebrates an audacious act: the act of leading with love in harsh times.

As much as we need bread and sleep, human beings need recognition. The essence of dehumanization is not to see someone, to render him inconsequential and invisible. For example, over the last few decades, we in the college-educated media and cultural circles have increasingly shut out ***working-class*** voices. Many people look at the national conversation and don’t see themselves represented there, and hence grow bitter and alienated. Members of the ***working class*** are far from the only people who feel invisible these days.

The core counterattack against this kind of dehumanization is to offer others the gift of being seen. What sunlight is to the vampire, recognition is to the dehumanizers. We fight back by opening our hearts and casting a just and loving attention on others, by being curious about strangers, being a little vulnerable with them in the hopes that they might be vulnerable, too. This is the kind of social repair that can happen in our daily encounters, in the way we show up for others.

I recently published a book on the concrete skills you need to do this, called “How to Know a Person.” During a recent Zoom call, someone asked me: Isn’t it dangerous to be vulnerable toward others when there is so much bitterness, betrayal and pain all around? My answer to that good question is: Yes, it is dangerous. But it is also dangerous to be hardened and calloused over by hard times. It is also dangerous, as C.S. Lewis put it, to guard your heart so thoroughly that you make it “unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable.”

The great Black theologian Howard Thurman faced a lot of bigotry in his life, but as he put it in his 1949 book, “Jesus and the Disinherited,” “Jesus rejected hatred because he saw that hatred meant death to the mind, death to the spirit, death to communion with his Father.”

This is not a call to naïveté. Of course there are toxic people in the world. Donald Trump is not going to change just because his opponents start feeling warm and fuzzy toward him. Genocidal fanatics like the leaders of Hamas just need to be defeated by force of arms.

But most people — maybe more than you think — are peace- and love-seeking creatures who are sometimes caught in bad situations. The most practical thing you can do, even in hard times, is to lead with curiosity, lead with respect, work hard to understand the people you might be taught to detest.

That means seeing people with generous eyes, offering trust to others before they trust you. That means adopting a certain posture toward the world. If you look at others with the eyes of fear and judgment, you will find flaws and menace; but if you look out with a respectful attitude, you’ll often find imperfect people enmeshed in uncertainty, doing the best they can.

Will casting this kind of attention change the people you are encountering? Maybe; maybe not. But this is about who you are becoming in corrosive times. Are you becoming more humane or less? Are you a person who obsesses over how unfairly you are treated, or are you a person who is primarily concerned by how you see and treat others? “Virtue is the attempt to pierce the veil of selfish consciousness and join the world as it really is,” Iris Murdoch wrote.

One of my heroes is a woman named Etty Hillesum, a young Jewish woman who lived in Amsterdam in the 1930s and ’40s. Her early diaries reveal her to be immature and self-centered. But as the Nazi occupation lasted and the horrors of the Holocaust mounted, she became more generous, kind, warm and ultimately heroic toward those who were being sent off to the death camps. She volunteered to work at a labor camp called Westerbork, where Dutch Jews were held before being transferred to the death camps in the east. There she cared for the ill, tended to those confined to the punishment barracks and became known in the camp for her sparkling compassion, her selfless love. Her biographer wrote that “it was her practice of paying deep attention which transformed her.” It was her ability to really observe others — their anxieties, their cares and their attachments — that enabled her to enter into their lives and serve them.

It did not save her. In 1943, she herself was sent to Auschwitz and was murdered. But she left a legacy: what it looks like to shine and grow and be a beacon of humanity, even in the worst imaginable circumstances.

I’m trying to describe a dual sensibility — becoming a person who learns humility and prudence from the Athenian tradition, but also audacity, emotional openness and care from the Jerusalem tradition. Can a single person possess both traits? This was the question Max Weber asked in his classic essay “Politics as a Vocation”: “How can warm passion and a cool sense of proportion be forged together in one and the same soul?”

It’s a hard challenge that most of us will fail at most of the time. But I think it’s the only practical and effective way to proceed in times like these.

Source photographs by Getty Images.

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PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY GETTY IMAGES) (SR7) This article appeared in print on page SR6, SR7.

**Load-Date:** November 4, 2023

**End of Document**



[***How Toilets Got a Starring Role in a Wim Wenders Movie***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B83-57R1-DXY4-X003-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 4, 2024 Sunday 15:46 EST

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**Section:** MOVIES

**Length:** 1531 words

**Highlight:** A behind-the-scenes look at “Perfect Days,” which features Koji Yakusho as a cleaner of public bathrooms in Tokyo.

**Body**

A behind-the-scenes look at “Perfect Days,” which features Koji Yakusho as a cleaner of public bathrooms in Tokyo.

As artistic inspiration goes, public toilets don’t usually stir the spirit.

Then again, most toilets aren’t like the public bathrooms in Tokyo.

So when Wim Wenders, the German film director of art-house favorites like “Paris, Texas” and “Wings of Desire,” first toured more than a dozen public toilet buildings around the Japanese capital city in the spring of 2022, he was enchanted by what he described as “little jewels” designed by [*Pritzker Prize*](https://www.nytimes.com/topic/subject/pritzker-prize) winners including [*Tadao Ando*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/17/arts/tadao-ando-architect-france.html), [*Shigeru Ban*](https://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/25/arts/design/pritzker-architecture-prize-goes-to-shigeru-ban.html) and [*Kengo Kuma*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/15/t-magazine/kengo-kuma-architect.html). Those stylish commodes provided the creative sparks for his latest movie, [*“Perfect Days,”*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QzZBbX5A1FA) which has been [*nominated in the international feature*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/23/movies/2024-oscar-nominees-list.html) category for an Academy Award and opens in theaters in the United States on Feb. 7.

The movie — a poignant character study of a public-toilet cleaner with a mysterious past who lives a spartan existence and works with the care of a master craftsman — actually had its roots in a bit of propaganda. Wenders had been invited to Japan as the guest of a prominent Japanese businessman who hoped that the director might want to make a series of short films featuring the toilets, which had been conceived as showcases for Japanese artistry and hygienic mastery.

Koji Yanai, the son of the founder of Fast Retailing (the sprawling clothing giant best known for its Uniqlo brand) and a senior executive officer there, had spearheaded the public toilet project to be an architectural display of “Japanese pride.”

“If I say Japanese toilets are world number one, no one will disagree,” Yanai said in an interview late last year. He had recruited the architects to design the public buildings with a distinctive aesthetic that would make them as much art as public utility.

Originally built to welcome the world to Japan for the summer Olympic Games scheduled for 2020, the toilets did not get their moment because the pandemic forced the [*postponement*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/21/sports/olympics/bach-olympics-tokyo-covid.html?searchResultPosition=4lympics/bach-olympics-tokyo-covid.html?searchResultPosition=4) of the Games to 2021, which were then staged without [*spectators*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/20/world/asia/tokyo-olympics-spectators.html?searchResultPosition=1).

After the quashed Olympic debut, Yanai was seeking another path to promotion. He reached out to Takuma Takasaki, a screenwriter and creative director at Dentsu, Japan’s largest advertising firm, to help hatch a plan to champion the toilets internationally.

Takasaki suggested recruiting a filmmaker — Quentin Tarantino, perhaps, or someone like Martin Scorsese or Steven Spielberg. The wish list also included Wenders, and Yanai, a fan since seeing [*“Paris, Texas”*](https://www.nytimes.com/1984/10/14/movies/paris-texas-from-wim-wenders.html) in college, recalled that the director already had an abiding interest in Japan, having made a documentary, [*“Tokyo-Ga,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/1985/04/26/movies/the-screen-tokyo-ga.html) a visual diary and homage to the great Japanese director [*Yasujiro*](https://www.nytimes.com/1994/01/21/arts/the-visual-poetry-of-a-japanese-master.html) [*Ozu*](https://www.nytimes.com/1982/09/26/arts/the-appeal-of-ozu-the-most-japanese-of-filmmakers.html).

When the invitation arrived, it was the middle of the pandemic and Wenders was feeling nostalgia for Japan, which he had not visited in eight years. “I always felt strangely at home in Tokyo,” Wenders said, as he peeled the wrappers off chocolates his staff had laid in front of him in a bare conference room during the [*Tokyo International Film Festival*](https://2023.tiff-jp.net/en/tiff/jury.html) last fall, where Wenders was serving as president of the jury.

Having come from Berlin, Wenders was dismayed by the deterioration of civic spirit during the pandemic as residents had trashed a park near his home. In Tokyo — and in the designer toilets in particular — he believed he saw the embodiment of purer impulses like cleanliness and community cooperation.

“I have never seen any toilet anywhere in the world that was done with so much care for detail,” Wenders said. He may have attributed to civic spirit what was accomplished by sanitary workers: Yanai funds cleaners to tend to the architectural toilets two to three times daily, whereas standard public toilets are cleaned once a day.

Before he left Tokyo, Wenders decided he wanted to make a feature-length film where the central character would be a toilet cleaner. Yanai had suggested Koji Yakusho, one of Japan’s most well-known actors, who had gained an international following after he starred in the 1996 romantic drama [*“Shall We Dance?”*](https://www.nytimes.com/1997/04/05/movies/it-takes-two-plus-spirit-to-tango.html)

To begin crafting a story, Wenders felt like he needed to know where the main character would live. He spent his last days on that Tokyo reconnaissance trip visiting locations. He settled on Oshiage, a ***working-class*** neighborhood in the eastern part of the city where low-slung apartment buildings crouch in the shadow of Skytree, a broadcast tower that pokes out of the landscape.

“The neighborhood for me was very essential,” said Wenders. “I need to love a place in order to set up a camera.”

Shortly after the director returned to Berlin, Takasaki joined him, and in just three weeks, they hammered out the script, which is all in Japanese.

Wenders developed the character into a man who pays quiet attention to detail and derives joy from cherished cassette tapes or shadows of leaves on the ground. The director was channeling his idol, Ozu, even naming the toilet cleaner Hirayama after the family in “[*Tokyo Story,*](https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1972/03/14/91323360.html?pageNumber=50)” considered one of Ozu’s masterpieces.

In conceiving of a daily routine stripped down to a few essentials, Wenders wanted the character to be a “beautiful sign of reduction.”

“Reduction is one of the great tasks of our contemporary civilization,” Wenders said. “And we can only do better with the planet and the climate if we learn how to reduce ourselves.”

Before shooting began in the fall of 2022, the director and Yakusho visited the apartment where they would film the lead character at home, caring for a collection of treasured plants and reading translated works of Faulkner from a neat shelf in his bedroom. Wenders asked the actor to think about how to streamline the props supplied by an art director so that only the items most vital to the character remained.

“I would say — would I really have such a thing?” Yakusho recalled during an interview in a rented office late last year. “And we would get rid of unrealistic things.”

Yakusho spent two days with a toilet cleaner learning his techniques, including how to use some custom-made tools. He said he wanted to perform the role as if Wenders was making a documentary. The director said he had never worked with an actor who “so totally became that character.” Yakusho won the [*best actor prize at Cannes*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/27/movies/cannes-palme-dor-winner-anatomy-of-a-fall.html) last spring.

When I visited the set in the fall of 2022, Wenders was shooting a scene in a playground at one of the [*public toilets designed by Shigeru Ban*](https://tokyotoilet.jp/en/yoyogifukamachi_mini_park/), a rectangular glass building with translucent panels of purple, red and yellow that turn opaque when users bolt the locks on the stall doors.

Yakusho, dressed in a blue jumpsuit, wore a tool belt around his waist along with blue rubber gloves and white sneakers. He consulted briefly with Wenders through an interpreter. The director, wearing a baggy gray-beige linen three-piece suit, darkened glasses and black cloth sneakers, called “Action!” and Yakusho entered the center stall with a bucket, two trash bags and a roll of toilet paper, while extras stepped into the flanking stalls.

With the afternoon light fading, the tension of the 15-day shooting schedule began to bear down on the set. Between takes, crew members restuffed the trash cans in the toilet stalls so that Yakusho could clean them out again. Impatient, Wenders yelled “Go away!” and the crew skittered to hide behind a row of bicycles.

Wenders said it was the shortest shoot he had ever done, his bare-bones filming technique mirroring the minimalist context of the film.

Writing in [*Nikkei Asia*](https://asia.nikkei.com/Life-Arts/Arts/Wim-Wenders-elevates-Tokyo-toilets-into-a-movie-masterpiece), Kaori Shoji described the movie as “like a conversation with a Zen Buddhist priest that leaves the interlocutor full of questions but infused with a strange serenity” and the main character’s devotion to his job as “something most Japanese take for granted — the indisputable importance of work is drummed into us from birth.”

Yet some viewers have found the character to represent an unrealistic fantasy. A man who lives an isolated life, satisfied with a low-wage, grimy job is “the dream of men and Western people” who valorize what they see as Japanese equanimity, said Kaori Hayashi, a professor of media studies at the University of Tokyo. “I think those who think this is great are people who are already rich” and who want an escape from overstuffed executive schedules, Hayashi said.

Yakusho acknowledged that his portrayal of a simply contented man might appear idealistic.

“I think a lot of people, when they get the thing they want, they immediately start to want something else,” he said. “You can’t ever escape from that kind of thinking.”

But even if the character was “too ideal and doesn’t exist in real life,” said Yakusho, “I think there is value in striving to be more like that.”

Hikari Hida contributed reporting from Tokyo

PHOTOS: Top, public bathrooms, part of a Tokyo toilet project, factor prominently into the plot of “Perfect Days,” a film by Wim Wenders. Above, the actor Koji Yakusho, center, was shooting a scene in front of a toilet designed by Shigeru Ban. Below is Wenders, who began filming the movie in fall 2022. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY HIROKO MASUIKE/THE NEW YORK TIMES; ABOVE AND BELOW, NORIKO HAYASHI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (AR8-AR9) This article appeared in print on page AR8, AR9.

**Load-Date:** February 4, 2024

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[***The 25 Best Restaurants in Austin Right Now; Where to Eat***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BVP-R141-DXY4-X35S-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 22, 2024 Monday 17:03 EST

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**Section:** DINING

**Length:** 3264 words

**Byline:** Priya Krishna and Brett Anderson, Priya Krishna is a reporter in the Food section of The Times.

**Highlight:** There’s plenty of barbecue and Mexican — as you’d expect — but also world-class Japanese, Korean and more. Comments welcome, as always.

**Body**

In the Where to Eat: 25 Best series, we’re highlighting [*our favorite restaurants*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html) in cities across the United States. These lists will be updated as restaurants close and open, and as we find new gems to recommend. As always, we pay for all of our meals and don’t accept free items.

[*Birdie’s*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

East Austin | Wine bar

Birdie’s is not just another wine bar. Chalk that up to the partnership of Tracy Malechek-Ezekiel and her husband, [*Arjav Ezekiel*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html) — she’s a highly skilled chef, and he has the energy and affability of the dancing tableware in “Beauty and the Beast.” Birdie’s is the place to be whether you just want to drink something interesting or you’re planning the big night out. In Ms. Malechek-Ezekiel’s hands, simple food — a creamy vegetable soup, roasted carrots with pesto — feels anything but simple. Add to that an electric atmosphere and wine glasses that seem to magically refill themselves — you’ll want to return just to see what the couple might cook or pour next. PRIYA KRISHNA

[*2944 East 12th Street, Unit A, Austin*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html); no phone; [*birdiesaustin.com*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

[*Canje*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

East Austin | Caribbean

The chef Tavel Bristol-Joseph made a name for himself in Austin with the pastries at [*Emmer &amp; Rye*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html) and [*Hestia*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html), which he co-owns. Here at Canje — an ode to his Guyanese roots, with a menu that also stretches across the Caribbean — he has switched gears, with brilliant results. The food is a tangy, spicy, coconutty dreamscape. Tilefish soaked in tamarind and rum butter. Prawns brushed with a verdant green seasoning and smoked chiles. A tres leches cake drenched in coconut milk. What makes the jerk chicken so supercharged with flavor? Mr. Bristol-Joseph ferments his seasoning. And plan on at least one order of the buttery Guyanese-style roti per person. PRIYA KRISHNA

[*1914 East Sixth Street, Suite C, Austin*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html); 512-706-9119; [*canjeatx.com*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

[*Comadre Panadería*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

East Austin | Bakery

Hidden in an unassuming building in a residential neighborhood is the concha-meets-funfetti-pastry fever dream that is Comadre Panadería. Here, conchas dusted with Barbie-pink strawberry jamaica powder share space with a sheet cake topped with prickly-pear buttercream and a black-bean honey bun. Every creation from the baker Mariela Camacho feels simultaneously innovative and nostalgic — as if a panadería took a trip through the snack aisle of an American grocery store. PRIYA KRISHNA

[*1204 Cedar Avenue, Austin*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html); no phone; [*comadre-panaderia.square.site*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

[*Cuantos Tacos*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

East Austin | Mexican, Tacos

In a city of superlative tacos, the ones that Luis “Beto” Robledo (above) makes at Cuantos stand out. It’s the choricera — a round pot with deep sides and a shallow center, commonly used for cooking the meats in their own fat — that makes the difference in these Mexico City-style tacos. The standout is the suadero, in which brisket is plucked from the pot, still dripping with juices, sliced into thick slabs and then loaded into fresh, two-bite tortillas with plenty of cilantro and onion. These tacos demand to be eaten immediately, messily and with the understanding that you’ll be ordering three more. PRIYA KRISHNA

[*1108 East 12th Street, Austin*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html); 512-905-0533; [*cuantostacosaustin.com*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

[*Dai Due*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

Cherrywood/East Austin | Modern Texas

Locavore restaurant iconography tends toward still-life-worthy artichokes, tomatoes and gourds. Dai Due is different. Its commitment to Texas ingredients, extending from produce to its wine list, is all but unrivaled, yet the image that best captures the restaurant’s ethos is meat sizzling over live fire. The chef and owner, Jesse Griffiths, channeled his passion for Texas’ great outdoors — and more specifically the animals he hunts there — into this lusty, idiosyncratic butcher shop and chophouse. The seasonal vegetables are often very good, in no small part because they’re often cooked in tallow (as are the seasonal fried crawfish hand-pies, which are wonderful). But you’re here for what the chef de cuisine, Janie Ramirez, is grilling over Texas post oak: coffee-cured antelope leg fillets, aoudad meatballs, memorably flavorful pork chops, and quail stuffed with boudin and plated with pickled blueberries. BRETT ANDERSON

[*2406 Manor Road, Austin*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html); 512-524-0688; [*daidue.com*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

[*Dee Dee*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

South Lamar | Thai

If the chef Lakana Sopajan-Trubiana’s zippy, herbaceous and deeply comforting northeastern Thai food tastes farm-fresh, that’s because it is. Ms. Sopajan-Trubiana, who was raised on a farm in Isaan, grows many of the vegetables and herbs used in her restaurant, and her green thumb makes the Thai flavors sing. Dishes you’ve seen at other Thai restaurants, like laab or red curry, seem far more interesting here. The om gai, a chicken soup heady with lemongrass and dill, is comfort in a takeout container. PRIYA KRISHNA

[*4204 Menchaca Road, Austin*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html); no phone; [*deedeeatx.com*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

[*Discada*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

East Austin | Mexican, Tacos

Discada serves one type of taco, and it’s unforgettable. The restaurant uses the discada method, also known as “cowboy wok” cooking, that’s popular in Mexico City. In this style, various chopped meats and aromatics are cooked in a plow disc from a tractor and added in layers, to build on the rendered fat and flavor from each one. The tacos, brought to Austin by the high-school friends and co-owners Anthony Pratto and Xose Velasco, are dainty but pack a big punch. Even in a taco-saturated city, there’s truly nothing else like Discada. PRIYA KRISHNA

[*1319 Rosewood Avenue, Austin*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html); 512-920-5473; [*discadatx.com*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

[*El Naranjo*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

South Lamar| Oaxacan

El Naranjo’s story — from food truck to brick-and-mortar restaurant to its current incarnation inside a slick, window-lined space on South Lamar Boulevard — mirrors that of Austin’s restaurant scene over the past dozen years. But the restaurant’s roots are in Mexico. Iliana de la Vega and Ernesto Terrealba opened the first El Naranjo in Oaxaca City in 1997, and the Austin restaurant’s food, now overseen by their daughter Ana Torrealba, still reflect those origins. The daily-changing ceviches, huitlacoche-queso empanadas and blistered octopus will make you fall in love with the cooking. But it would be a mistake to miss the moles: the dark, raspy, 30-plus ingredient mole negro; or the nutty, relatively lean mole blanco, sparked with a drizzle of habanero oil. Either pairs well with a refreshing mezcal cocktail. BRETT ANDERSON

[*2717 South Lamar Boulevard, Suite 1085, Austin*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html); 512-520-5750; [*elnaranjorestaurant.com*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

[*Este*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

East Austin | Coastal Mexican

Este is inspired by the seafood dishes of the Mexican coast, but it’s not strictly limited to them. The menu isn’t filled with faithful recreations of the aguachiles and tostadas found in cities like Ensenada or Veracruz. Instead, the chef Fermín Núñez isn’t afraid to go off-road in the name of uncovering something delicious. Grilled turbot with salsa verde shines even brighter with a rich slick of hummus on the bottom. Hazelnuts and brown butter enliven the salsa macha in the grilled squid. “You wouldn’t find it in Mexico,” Mr. Nuñez said of his cooking. “But it is Mexican.” PRIYA KRISHNA

[*2113 Manor Road, Austin*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html); 512-522-4047; [*esteatx.com*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

[*Ezov*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

Holly | Israeli Texan

Ezov’s food features Texas ingredients in dishes that are colorful, sprightly spiced and inspired by the chef Berty Richter’s upbringing in Tel Aviv. There are audibly crisp falafel riding a swirl of tahini, amba and schug; cubes of pomegranate-stained raw snapper, scattered with chopped pistachios; and juicy, skewered kofta riding a bed of fire roasted eggplant and topped with charred, oil-slicked pine nuts. If you’re interested in wines from the Eastern Mediterranean, especially Lebanon, ask to see the bottle list. That said, if you dare to order the everything bagel martini, consider yourself warned. BRETT ANDERSON

[*2708 East Cesar Chavez*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html); 512-305-1118; [*ezovatx.com*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

[*Franklin BBQ*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

East Austin | Barbecue

Why wait hours for barbecue in a city where there are excellent alternatives? Fair question. The answer is that Franklin’s barbecue is as good, if not better, today than it was when Aaron and Stacy Franklin graduated in 2011 from a food truck to this cinder block building. Mr. Franklin has since become one of the country’s most recognizable pitmasters. His buttery-tender brisket, juicy sausage and weekend-only beef ribs remain consistently exceptional. And the hospitality, extended even in the pre-opening hours to customers waiting on the sidewalk, bears none of the entitlement or cynicism typically found at restaurants where the demand for seats so vastly exceeds the supply. All of which makes Franklin a rare breed: a restaurant that has become a tourist attraction, while upholding the standards that made it famous in the first place. BRETT ANDERSON

[*900 East 11th Street, Austin*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html); 512-653-1187; [*franklinbbq.com*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

[*InterStellar BBQ*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

Anderson Mill | Barbecue

Texas barbecue has always been great. [*It has also never been better*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html). Get yourself to this northwest Austin joint for a taste of how both things can be true. The brisket and pork spare ribs are as good as any you’ll find, traditionally prepared and reminiscent of what Texans have been eating for generations. But the owner and co-pitmaster John Bates also applies the techniques and creative license of fine dining to expand the Texas barbecue repertoire, which here includes pulled lamb shoulder, pork belly glazed with peach tea and turkey breast marinated in hefeweizen. The sides are so delicious — smoked scalloped potatoes, a citrusy beet salad topped with pumpkin seeds — you could even post a sign once unthinkable near Texas barbecue: vegetarians welcome. BRETT ANDERSON

[*12233 Ranch Road 620 North, Suite 105, Austin*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html); 512-382-6248; [*theinterstellarbbq.com*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

[*Joe’s Bakery &amp; Coffee Shop*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

Holly| Tex-Mex

Are you the type of person who finds outsize comfort in short-order cafes and diners, preferably with a bit of age on them? Perhaps you feel the same about Mexican restaurants where you can get a pork chop with your huevos, the taco selection runs to nearly 20 and refried beans are effectively unavoidable? You’ll love Joe’s, which also happens to be a time capsule from the era when East Austin was a ***working-class*** Mexican American stronghold. The breakfast-and-lunch restaurant has been run by the women of the Avila family for most of the years since Joe Avila opened it in 1962. You’ll undoubtedly want more of the fluffy, housemade flour tortillas; extras are 50 cents apiece. BRETT ANDERSON

[*2305 East Seventh Street, Austin*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html); 512-472-0017; [*joesbakery.com*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

[*Kemuri Tatsu-Ya*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

Holly | Barbecue Izakaya

Kemuri is arguably (along with [*Blood Bros. BBQ*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html), outside Houston) the state’s most fully realized Asian-influenced barbecue place. What the chef-owners Tatsu Aikawa and Takuya Matsumoto call a Texas izakaya is also a full-service restaurant that imagines what a Japanese chef might have been cooking at a Texas roadhouse 100 years ago. The answer covers a lot of ground, from smoked eel, hamachi collar and brisket to rayfin jerky, karaage with egg salad and a daily-changing sashimi. Mr. Aikawa and Mr. Matsumoto are innovative tastemakers who operate a number of popular Texas-inspired Japanese restaurants in Austin. This restaurant and bar, first opened in 2017 and decorated with Texas flags, taxidermy and vintage signs in Japanese, is their crowning achievement, at least thus far. BRETT ANDERSON

[*2713 East Second Street, Austin*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html); 512-803-2224; [*kemuri-tatsuya.com*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

[*LeRoy and Lewis*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

South Manchaca | Barbecue

The pitmaster Evan LeRoy has been building a following for his open-minded take on Texas barbecue since 2017, when he opened the first LeRoy and Lewis as a food truck with his wife, Lindsey, and partners Sawyer and Nathan Lewis. So it’s no surprise to find crowds at the brick-and-mortar location that opened this winter. Established favorites (Citra hop pork sausage, brisket burger, cauliflower “burnt ends”) are on a menu that also expands on L and L’s freewheeling style. Lamb kofta tacos and smoked Italian beef sandwiches are among the new additions that will leave diners grateful to live in the age when Texas barbecue is so open to experimentation. (Note: The original LeRoy and Lewis is still parked outside the South Austin [*Cosmic Coffee + Beer Garden*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html).) BRETT ANDERSON

[*5621 Emerald Forest Drive, Austin*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html); 512-962-7805; [*leroyandlewisbbq.com*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

[*Micklethwait*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

East Austin | Barbecue

For those who come to Austin for great barbecue but don’t want to wait in [*a certain hourslong line*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html), Micklethwait remains reliably great. The owner, Tom Micklethwait, specializes in the oak-fired Central Texas-style, and unlike many Texas pitmasters who have expanded into multiple locations, he has kept his operation lean — you can taste the attention and care that goes into the meats. The bright, balanced sides and dreamy oatmeal cream pie are a bonus. PRIYA KRISHNA

[*1309 Rosewood Avenue, Austin*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html); 512-791-5961; [*craftmeatsaustin.com*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

[*Mum Foods*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

Windsor Park/East Austin | Barbecue, Deli

Giving Jewish deli food the barbecue treatment is one of those ideas that feels obvious as soon as you chow down on peppery, smoky slabs of pastrami between two thick pieces of toast with a big smear of mustard. But you didn’t think of it. The chef Geoffrey Ellis did. Mum Foods — which operates as a brick-and-mortar as well as a farmers’ market stall — is a sandwich lover’s dream, a place where the ratio of meat to bread to condiments feels obsessively considered. PRIYA KRISHNA

[*5811 Manor Road, Austin*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html); 512-270-8021; [*mumfoodsatx.com*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

[*Nixta Taqueria*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

East Austin | Mexican

At Nixta, Edgar Rico and Sara Mardanbigi are throwing a big backyard party, and you’re invited. Mr. Rico, the chef, uses heirloom varieties of corn that he grinds himself to make the outstanding tortillas, and his arsenal of vibrant salsas and sauces can make even a plate of raw vegetables feel cutting-edge. Ms. Mardanbigi’s warm service makes the place seem more like a friend’s house than a restaurant, and her Iranian heritage occasionally finds its way into dishes like sholeh zard, a marriage between the Persian rice pudding and arroz con leche. PRIYA KRISHNA

[*2512 East 12th Street, Austin*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html); no phone; [*nixtataqueria.square.site*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

[*Olamaie*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

North Side | Southern

Many people consider Texas part of the Deep South. Olamaie embraces this, with buttermilk biscuits that are the stuff of county-fair blue ribbons (albeit offered with sturgeon caviar), oysters Rockefeller and gumbo z’herbes that would bring nods of approval in New Orleans. Nevertheless, Olamaie, housed in a renovated bungalow, is not defined by its exacting takes on traditional dishes. Amanda Turner, the chef de cuisine, nimbly stretches the boundaries of Southern cuisine. The smoked amberjack crudo sparkles with leche de tigre and chile crunch. The grilled pork chop is redolent of jerk spices. This is expansive Southern cooking, befitting a native Texan who was raised in the diverse kitchens of its capital city. BRETT ANDERSON

[*1610 San Antonio Street, Austin*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html); 512-474-2796; [*olamaieaustin.com*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

[*Ramen Del Barrio*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

North Austin | Mexican Japanese

The chef Christopher Krinsky probably isn’t the first person to put taco toppings on ramen, but he certainly won’t be the last. In his tiny shop tucked inside a grocery store, the bowls of ramen are flavor bombs whose blending of Mexican and Japanese tradition works brilliantly — mole serves as the dipping sauce for tsukemen, while carnitas and charred chiles swim in the tonkotsu. And no, the restaurant doesn’t serve birria ramen, so don’t even think about asking. PRIYA KRISHNA

[*1700 West Parmer Lane, Suite 100, Austin*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html); no phone; [*ramendelbarrio.com*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

[*Suerte*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

East Austin | Mexican

What, exactly, did they put in this snapper to make it taste this good? And the cabbage? And the beans? At this Mexican-inspired restaurant, practically every dish inspires that level of wonder. Only a chef as wildly creative as Fermín Núñez could think to give beans the aligot treatment and slather them on a tlayuda, or reinvent the Choco Taco with cinnamon semifreddo and peanut caramel. Mr. Núñez is charting a distinctive path for himself in Mexican cooking. PRIYA KRISHNA

[*1800 East Sixth Street, Austin*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html); 512-522-3031; [*suerteatx.com*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

[*Uchi*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

Bouldin Creek | Japanese

In 1995, Tyson Cole, a white, Florida-born sushi novice, was hired by Takehiko Fuse, a revered Japanese chef working in Austin, on the condition that he learn to speak, read and write Japanese. That discipline is still evident in the food at Uchi, the restaurant Mr. Cole opened eight years later. This sequence of events helps explain how Austin, a landlocked city where people of Japanese descent make up only 0.2 percent of the population, became home to one of the country’s most dynamic Japanese restaurant scenes. Dishes that partner raw or lightly cooked seafood with non-Japanese marinades and sauces, fruits and even goat cheese are emblematic of Uchi’s locally influential cross-culture style — now found at Uchi locations around the country. Nevertheless, dinner here is a uniquely Austin experience. BRETT ANDERSON

[*801 South Lamar Boulevard, Austin*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html); 512-916-4808; [*uchi.uchirestaurants.com*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

[*Underdog*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

Bouldin Creek | Korean

Underdog is a wine bar and shop combined with a Korean American restaurant. The appeal of eating here is as simple and direct as the concept. The menu is filled with successfully playful takes on Korean cuisine, including a steamy egg soufflé covered in bonito flakes, Korean fried chicken with shiso ranch, and thick-cut galbi that showcases Texas beef. The worldly wine list is smartly curated and offers glasses (and even half-glasses) of wines (like a 2010 Il Poggione Brunello di Montalcino) that are normally only available by the bottle. The co-owners, Claudia Lee and Richard Hargreave, a sommelier, bring a personal touch to their fashionable place. The business is named after their dog, Squid, in case you’re wondering. BRETT ANDERSON

[*1600 South First Street, Austin*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html), Suite 100; 512-367-2441; [*underdog-atx.com*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

Veracruz All Natural

Various locations | Mexican

In the Texas breakfast-taco wars, Veracruz All Natural remains one of Austin’s stalwart champions. And it’s not just because of the restaurant’s beloved migas taco, a delightful mess of tortilla chips, scrambled eggs and pico de gallo wrapped in a fresh corn tortilla. The sisters and owners Maritza and Reyna Vazquez have created a mini-chain of taquerias, inspired by their coastal Mexican hometown, that helped move the city beyond Tex-Mex, toward Mexican fare that emphasizes fresh produce, bright flavors and pressed juices. Austin is a better food town for it. PRIYA KRISHNA

[*Various locations*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html); [*veracruzallnatural.com*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

[*Wee’s Cozy Kitchen*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

Downtown | Malaysian

In Texas, it’s not unusual to find exceptional food in a gas station or convenience store. Wee’s Cozy Kitchen, which recently located from a Shell station to the downtown corner store Royal Blue Grocery is the perfect example. The food by owner Wee Fong Ehlers is as good as ever, and the scene is still the same: satisfied locals digging into bowls of curry laksa that are heady with herbs and chiles. From her tiny kitchen, Ms. Ehlers cooks every dish to order, even freshly chopping the lemongrass. Wee’s provides all the warmth of home cooking, and yes, you can pick up a six pack of beer, too. PRIYA KRISHNA

[*609 Congress Avenue, Austin*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html); 512-577-8626; [*wees-cozy-kitchen.square.site*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html)

Follow [*New York Times Cooking on Instagram*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html), [*Facebook*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html), [*YouTube*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html), [*TikTok*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html) and [*Pinterest*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html). [*Get regular updates from New York Times Cooking, with recipe suggestions, cooking tips and shopping advice*](https://www.nola.com/news/business/article_2b0d2515-ea21-5afd-92c1-5717ef7b81a8.html).

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**Load-Date:** January 31, 2025

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[***Fact-Checking Trump and Haley’s War of Words; Fact Check***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BDB-K0S1-DXY4-X008-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 24, 2024 Saturday 13:39 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1764 words

**Byline:** Angelo Fichera

**Highlight:** Nikki Haley and her onetime boss, former President Donald J. Trump, have used false and misleading claims about polls and tax proposals while exchanging jabs on the campaign trail.

**Body**

Nikki Haley and her onetime boss, former President Donald J. Trump, have used false and misleading claims about polls and tax proposals while exchanging jabs on the campaign trail.

Follow for live updates on the [*2024 presidential election*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates).

As voters in South Carolina prepare to take to the polls on Saturday, Nikki Haley has [*vowed to continue*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates) challenging former President Donald J. Trump for the Republican nomination — to the dismay of her onetime boss.

In recent weeks, Mr. Trump and Ms. Haley, former governor of South Carolina and U.N. ambassador in the Trump administration, have dialed up their attacks on each other.

Mr. Trump has [*mocked*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates) the absence of Ms. Haley’s husband, [*Maj. Michael Haley*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates), a National Guardsman who is deployed to Africa. His campaign suggested that her staying in the race, despite being well behind Mr. Trump in delegates, was “like any wailing loser hellbent on an alternative reality.” Ms. Haley [*has said*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates) that her rival has “gotten more unstable and unhinged” and [*that*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates) he has “mental deficiencies.”

But while attacking each other’s record and policies, both have turned to false and misleading claims.

Here’s a fact check.

“Every poll shows that he can’t beat Biden. Some are down by five, some are down by seven. On his best day, it’s margin of error.”

— Ms. Haley, referring to Mr. Trump [*during a Fox News town hall*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates) this month

False. National [*general election polls*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates) do show a tight race in a potential Trump-Biden rematch and Ms. Haley has emphasized [*select*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates) [*polls*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates) that show her beating Mr. Biden by double digits. But Mr. Trump comes in slightly higher than his successor in many — though not all — surveys.

For example, Morning Consult [*recently found*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates) Mr. Trump leading Mr. Biden by four points, outside the survey’s margin of error.

Other polls show Mr. Trump leading Mr. Biden, albeit within the margin of error: an [*NBC News poll*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates) in January surveying registered voters found that 47 percent said they would vote for Mr. Trump, compared with Mr. Biden’s 42 percent. (However, [*the results shifted*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates) in Mr. Biden’s favor when the respondents were asked to consider the same matchup if Mr. Trump were to be convicted of a felony.) In yet [*other polls*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates), Mr. Biden holds a slight lead over Mr. Trump.

As of Friday, the [*Real Clear Politics average*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates), which incorporates multiple polls, showed Mr. Trump ahead of Mr. Biden by 1.9 percentage points. The [*average*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates) in a hypothetical Haley-Biden matchup showed Ms. Haley ahead by 4.9 percentage points.

“The polls at this point aren’t very useful for predicting the eventual winner, but they do indicate that it’s likely to be a close election,” Alan Abramowitz, a political scientist at Emory University, said of a Trump-Biden contest.

“Nikki Haley wants to charge the ***working class*** a 23 percent national sales tax.”

— Mr. Trump during a [*January rally*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates)

This is misleading. Ms. Haley has not called for such a policy as she campaigns for president. Instead, Mr. Trump’s campaign has [*cited*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates) a 2012 post from Ms. Haley supporting a “Fair Tax.”

“Yes, I support the Fair Tax and any reform that would eliminate income tax,” Ms. Haley [*wrote in the 2012 post on Facebook*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates).

Ms. Haley’s campaign did not say what she was referring to in that post, but she could have been referencing the Fair Tax Act, a proposal that has been [*repeatedly*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates) put forward in Congress to no avail. The [*legislation*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates) [*seeks to*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates) eliminate federal taxes — including income, payroll, estate and gift taxes — and instead impose a national sales tax of 23 percent. It also calls for abolishing the Internal Revenue Service.

Many prominent Republicans, including [*Ron DeSantis*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates), now governor of Florida, and former [*Vice President Mike Pence*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates), have supported the proposal at some point over the years. Critics of the legislation [*have said*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates) the bill would raise the tax burden of many Americans but spare the wealthy.

However, Ms. Haley also could have been referring to [*state-level “fair tax” legislation*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates) that lawmakers in South Carolina — and [*elsewhere*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates) — were proposing around that time, calling for the elimination of specific state taxes, including the income tax, in favor of a higher state sales tax. (South Carolina’s proposal would have [*reportedly*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates) raised the sales tax to an estimated 6 to 7 percent from 5 percent.) In a [*2015 Facebook comment*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates), Ms. Haley clearly indicated she supported the state proposal, saying that “the legislature knows that if they send it to me, I will sign it.”

“Donald Trump needs to answer to the fact that why did he propose an 18 cent per gallon gas tax increase in 2018 when he was president?”

— Ms. Haley this month [*during a Fox News town hall*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates)

False. Mr. Trump never formally proposed a gas tax increase, as Ms. Haley suggested. Instead, some lawmakers said that Mr. Trump had entertained the idea of increasing the gas tax by 25 cents — not 18 cents — during a private, bipartisan meeting.

After that meeting in February 2018, Senator Thomas R. Carper, a Democrat, [*said*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates) Mr. Trump had endorsed the idea to pay for an [*infrastructure plan*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates) released by the White House. Some critics [*quickly denounced*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates) the notion.

It was not the first time Mr. Trump had signaled openness to a gas tax hike. In 2017, he [*told Bloomberg News*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates) that he would consider such an increase. And in January 2018, The Washington Post, citing an unnamed person familiar with the deliberations, [*reported*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates) that Mr. Trump had privately “mused about a gas tax increase to 50 cents per gallon.”

Nevertheless, Mr. Trump never formally put forward such proposals.

The Trump campaign has also repurposed a [*misleading claim*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates) about Ms. Haley’s record on gas taxes. A [*recent ad*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates) suggests Ms. Haley called for raising the gas tax in South Carolina as governor but has since lied about it. In fact, Ms. Haley rebuffed calls to increase the state gas tax as a stand-alone measure and [*proposed*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates) raising it by 10 cents over three years only if the state reduced the income tax rate to 5 percent, from 7 percent, and made changes to the state’s Transportation Department.

Nikki Haley “actually dropped Romney for a little while for Obama.”

— Mr. Trump [*during a rally*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates) this month

False. There is no record of Ms. Haley politically backing former President Barack Obama. The Trump campaign did not respond to requests for evidence of such support.

Mr. Trump [*similarly claimed*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates) on Truth Social that Ms. Haley “was also a Barack Hussein Obama supporter as seen here.” The post included a video clip from a [*2012 campaign event*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates) for Mitt Romney, then a Republican presidential candidate, showing Ms. Haley accidentally using Mr. Obama’s name when she meant to reference Mr. Romney.

Ms. Haley said: “Obama wants to strengthen our military and will never apologize for America.” But Mr. Romney quickly corrected her, as the clip shows, and the two laughed as Ms. Haley recognized the slip.

“What is Trump saying he’ll actually do in office? A 10 percent across-the-board tax increase.”

— Haley campaign [*in an ad*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates) this month

This is misleading. Mr. Trump hasn’t proposed a “10 percent across-the-board tax increase” on Americans, but he did float a proposal to impose a 10 percent tariff on imported goods — which economists say would affect prices for U.S. companies and consumers.

The ad cites a January [*CNBC article*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates) about comments Mr. Trump made in an [*August interview*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates) with Fox Business.

“I think when companies come in and they dump their products in the United States, they should pay automatically, let’s say, a 10 percent tax,” Mr. Trump told Larry Kudlow, who served as director of the National Economic Council during the Trump administration. “That money would be used to pay off debt.”

“A 10 percent tariff on all imports is a 10 percent across-the-board tax on imports,” Katheryn N. Russ, an economics professor at the University of California, Davis, said in an email. “It is not an across-the-board tax on all goods.”

There are elements of Mr. Trump’s vision that remain unclear, including whether the new tariff would apply to imports from countries with which the United States has [*free trade deals*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates), as The New York Times has [*reported*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates).

Experts have said Mr. Trump’s proposal would result in higher prices for Americans and most [*likely cause*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates) trading partners to retaliate. An economist at the right-leaning Tax Foundation [*said*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates) such a 10 percent tariff would effectively “raise taxes on American consumers by more than $300 billion a year” and slightly reduce the size of the U.S. economy.

Tariffs are paid by the U.S.-based importer. While exporters could absorb some of the cost by lowering prices, [*research*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates) on tariffs put in place under the Trump administration suggests the costs largely fell on U.S. firms and consumers.

How much of a new tariff would get shouldered by consumers remains an open question, Ms. Russ said, noting that importing firms could reduce profit margins instead of passing the cost to consumers. But tariffs can also result in higher prices for domestic products — if a firm raises prices strategically, given more expensive imported products on the market, or if the manufacturer relies on imported inputs.

Imported goods and services were equivalent to about 14 percent of the United States gross domestic product last year, according to [*federal data*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates).

“Nikki Haley joined Biden in opposing President Trump’s border wall.”

— Trump campaign in [*an ad*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates) this month

False. Ms. Haley did not oppose Mr. Trump’s border wall. She said in 2015, when Mr. Trump launched his first bid for the presidency, that a wall was not the sole answer.

To support its claim about the border wall, the ad cites a [*2023 Time article*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates). But that article doesn’t offer evidence that Ms. Haley opposed the wall. Instead, it quotes comments Ms. Haley made during a National Press Club event, linking to a [*Washington Post opinion piece*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates) from September 2015 describing the event.

The Time article quoted Ms. Haley telling Republicans “to remember that the fabric of America came from these legal immigrants,” and drawing a distinction between them and immigrants who enter the country illegally.

Ms. Haley’s full comments made clear that she did not reject the idea of a border wall, as long as it was part of a broader plan.

“Don’t say you’re just going to build a wall, because a wall’s not going to do it,” she [*said at the time*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates). “You’ve got to have commitment of ground troops, equipment, money — all of that, to bring it together.”

During her campaign for president, Ms. Haley has also [*supported*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/02/25/us/trump-haley-election-updates) the idea of expanding the wall.

Curious about the accuracy of a claim? Email [*factcheck@nytimes.com*](mailto:factcheck@nytimes.com)

PHOTO: Competing campaign signs along a road in South Carolina. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BRIAN SNYDER/REUTERS) This article appeared in print on page A19.

**Load-Date:** April 2, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Why the Red Wave Didn’t Materialize; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66TX-9G81-DXY4-X1T6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 10, 2022 Thursday 11:44 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1206 words

**Byline:** Sohrab Ahmari

**Highlight:** When it came down to it, the Republican Party offered ordinary American workers little that might have bolstered their power or leveled the playing field.

**Body**

A week before the midterms, a video circulated online of a Starbucks barista crying while explaining the need for a union: “I’m a full-time student. I get scheduled for 25 hours a week, and on weekends they schedule me the entire day — open to close.” The manager is bad, the staffing is inadequate and the stress is overwhelming.

The video should have elicited sympathy from anyone familiar with the lousy wages and grinding conditions that characterize today’s service economy. That was not, though, the response of the full spectrum of conservative media and personalities, from Fox News to The Daily Wire to Sebastian Gorka.

“Boo Hoo!” replied Media Research Center TV, a conservative media site. “This ‘person’” — the barista happens to be transgender, hence, I suppose, the scare quotes around “person” — “was in tears because they had to work eight hours a day on the weekend.”

Episodes like this may be one reason the red wave didn’t materialize, why Republicans failed to usher in a new dawn of prosperity for the multiracial ***working class*** that Republican leaders from Senator Ted Cruz to the House policy honcho Jim Banks say they want to champion. When it came down to it, the Republican Party offered ordinary American workers little that might have bolstered their power or leveled the economic playing field. That failure helped dash conservative hopes for a clean Republican sweep.

Mutual recriminations will ping-pong around right-wing circles in the coming days and weeks. Most will likely center on “messaging,” candidate choices and other such tactical failures. It’s true that local circumstances shape any midterm election — we live in a vast and variegated country, and each race has its own contours. Still, in an era when national politics exerts such a strong gravitational pull on local elections, the most important question is: What sort of national vision did the Republican Party offer working Americans in 2022?

It’s hard to say, really. The best I can come up with is something like this: Hand us the keys to government, but don’t expect us to give you anything in return. And in that indifference lies the central problem bedeviling Republicans up and down the ballot.

Ever since Donald Trump’s rise, there has been much talk, and some evidence, of a realignment in American politics. Breaking with longstanding G.O.P. orthodoxies on free trade, entitlements and health care, Mr. [*Trump coaxed*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/15/upshot/the-obama-trump-voters-are-real-heres-what-they-think.html) huge numbers of white voters without college degrees away from the Democrats. Once in office, he delivered on tariffs. But other pieces of his populist agenda fell away, as his aides forged ahead with the old Chamber of Commerce conservatism (tax cuts, deregulation and a profoundly anti-union labor policy).

Yes, Trumpy populism was halting and self-contradictory, but the variety that emerged in Republican circles after Mr. Trump left office was downright fake. Correctly perceiving working- and middle-class discontent with corporate power and economic insecurity, Republicans in 2022 tried to channel it into cultural grievances, ginning up outrage over “woke” sensitivity trainings in the workplace, for instance. A much more effective way to check corporate power would actually be to empower workers — which is what unions do best. Instead, the right continued to pursue its old program of undermining the New Deal.

Fake G.O.P. populism challenged “woke capital” — companies that it believed had become overly politically correct — but didn’t dare touch the power of corporate America to coerce workers and consumers, or the power of private equity and hedge funds to hollow out the real economy, which employs workers for useful products and services — or used to, anyway. The Republican Party remained as hostile as ever to collective bargaining as a new wave of labor militancy swept the private economy.

Kevin Roberts, for instance, the president of the Heritage Foundation, which to a large degree still shapes the policy thinking of conventional Republican lawmakers and candidates, started out pitching himself as a populist in Washington. But as recently as August, he was tweeting standard Reaganite fare: “Government is not the solution, but the obstacle, to our flourishing.”

Other conservative “populists” embraced similar talking points. Search the “issues” statements of any number of 2022 Republican hopefuls who struggled to win, and you will most likely find some variation on: I will “always promote capitalism” (an [*actual statement*](https://www.mayrafloresforcongress.com/issues/) from one of the Republicans who lost her re-election bid Tuesday, Mayra Flores in South Texas).

In 2022, “defending capitalism” without reservation means upholding the very forces these populists claim to oppose: Big Tech and “woke” capital and deindustrialization.

Think about it: If you’re a member of the downwardly mobile middle class, someone with a college degree but without a secure job, even as student-loan payments bear down on you, all this rhetoric telegraphs: You aren’t getting any help.

That was, for example, the response of Mehmet Oz, who lost his campaign for a U.S. Senate seat from Pennsylvania, to the Biden administration’s student-debt relief plan. Mr. Oz — who describes himself as a “small-government Republican” — said he [*couldn’t support*](https://twitter.com/droz/status/1562551021033115655?s=46&amp;t=5ienUyhjWCUj94S4UJrbIg) such a measure, which he suggested would hurt the ***working class***. But who exactly was the celebrity physician talking about?

The right often misunderstands what the “***working class***” actually is — imagining, say, a burly Teamster or a roofing contractor, not the adjunct professor scraping by on $25,000 a year, or even that barista working at Starbucks to pay for college.

Republican economic policy remains overwhelmingly beholden to a donor class of plutocrats and high corporate managers. Seen from that perspective, it makes sense for the party to talk about adjuncts and baristas as though they were members of the ruling class. In doing so, these faux populists can remain indifferent to issues like wages and workplace power, health care and the depredations of speculative finance. Take the organizing efforts at Amazon over the last two years. Republican lawmakers with the honorable exception of Senator Marco Rubio largely stayed silent. Ditto for similar labor actions among dock workers, hospital workers, tractor-factory hands, retail clerks and, yes, Starbucks baristas.

On Tuesday, it seems enough members of the “the multiracial ***working class***” may have decided to repay that hostility and help deny Republicans their red wave: either by staying home or casting their ballots for the party that, despite its other failings, keeps entitlements inviolate, supports collective bargaining and has sought to ease the student-loan burden. Boo Hoo!

Sohrab Ahmari ([*@SohrabAhmari*](https://twitter.com/SohrabAhmari)) is one of the founders and editors of Compact: A Radical American Journal. His book on the tyranny of the private sector will be out next year.

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

**Load-Date:** November 11, 2022

**End of Document**



[***‘Apes Together Strong’ Review: Rooting for the Small Investors***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68D2-F2Y1-DXY4-X26G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 5, 2023 Monday 17:18 EST

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**Section:** MOVIES

**Length:** 401 words

**Byline:** Glenn Kenny

**Highlight:** The 2021 “short squeeze” of GameStop was a rare victory for the little guy. This documentary explains why the house — Wall Street wealth, that is — almost always wins.

**Body**

The 2021 “short squeeze” of GameStop was a rare victory for the little guy. This documentary explains why the house — Wall Street wealth, that is — almost always wins.

If we accept the proposition that having money is sexy, we should also be able to admit that the most aggressive ways of making lots of money — the banking schemes and strategies that compound the wealth of the already rich — are not. Are they unfair to the ***working class***? Certainly. Possibly criminal? Sure. But sexy, no. Among the more nefarious activities known to capitalism, big investing is particularly dry.

In “The Big Short,” a 2015 fictionalized account of the mid-aughts mortgage-market collapse, the director Adam McKay attempted to skirt this dynamic by having attractive performers including Margot Robbie and Selena Gomez explain the details of market manipulation. In the new documentary “Apes Together Strong,” the filmmakers (and twin brothers) Finley Mulligan and Quinn Mulligan, working with a microbudget and no access to movie stars, detail how to short-sell a stock with a rough-hewed sketch involving a bag of sugar that is borrowed, sold and re-bought at a profit — or not.

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](http://youtube.com/embed/TwNzVWDDb6s)]

The title of the movie is the motto of the talking simians in the latter-day “Planet of the Apes” film franchise; it was adopted by the retail investors who led the GameStop [*“short squeeze” of 2021*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/29/business/gamestop-stock.html). At that time, small investors succeeded in significantly raising the price of stock in GameStop, a store chain targeted by hedge funds for market assassination.

In a fast-paced style derived from Michael Moore or Morgen Spurlock, the Mulligans interview retail-investor comrades and banking pros sympathetic to the small investors’ cause. The villains, both past and present — the Reagan White House with its push to deregulate banking; big finance honchos; hedge fund vultures — are seen in archival footage, mostly.

The lessons here are old, and at one point, the filmmakers use the phrase “the house always wins.” But there’s hope, because there’s always hope in such tales. While Dennis M. Kelleher, the chief executive of the nonprofit investor’s advocacy group Better Markets, says, “Wall Street wins largely because they are unopposed,” the movie closes on a rallying cry.

Apes Together Strong

Not rated. Running time: 1 hour 29 minutes. [*Available to rent or buy on Amazon.*](https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/amzn1.dv.gti.9c7f68d5-2370-4963-825c-09573596d201?ref_=imdbref_tt_wbr_pvt_aiv&amp;tag=imdbtag_tt_wbr_pvt_aiv-20)

This article appeared in print on page C5.

**Load-Date:** June 8, 2023

**End of Document**



[***White Building***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:688D-7FP1-DXY4-X4S7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 19, 2023 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; Movies, Performing Arts/Weekend Desk; Pg. 8

**Length:** 352 words

**Byline:** By Austin Considine

**Body**

Kavich Neang's lush feature tells a largely autobiographical tale of growing up in a building whose often painful history is a microcosm of his country's.

The title of Kavich Neang's richly observed feature, ''White Building,'' is, first of all, an exaggeration: The dilapidated apartment bloc it describes is so chipped and black with soot that it's barely white; indeed, it is so falling apart that it's barely a building.

But for Samnang (Piseth Chhun), the young protagonist of this sensitive and largely autobiographical coming-of-age portrayal, it is home, as the real-life White Building it is based on was for Neang.

Located in central Phnom Penh, the building is an apt symbol of the often excruciating changes Cambodia has endured over the last 60 years. It was built in the 1960s to house civil servants, then emptied during the Khmer Rouge's forced relocations of the 1970s. In the '80s, it became home to ***working class*** people like Samnang's diabetic father (Sithan Hout), who, like Neang's, is a sculptor. Now its inhabitants are being pushed to take a lousy deal so it can be demolished for new development, in a city they can no longer afford.

[Video: Watch on YouTube.]

Unlike his parents, Samnang has no memories of the Khmer Rouge. He and his friends grew up with cellphones and hip-hop, and they dream of becoming a famous dance troupe. They want what other boys of their generation want: girlfriends, Nikes, a chance to prove themselves.

Neang excels at that Tarkovskian trick of rendering the small details of decay -- a cracked tile, a leaking ceiling -- with such lived-in precision that they feel somehow specific and surreal at once; like the title, images strain their own semantic boundaries. The film's loose plotting and secondary character development can leave a few too many hanging threads, but its sense of place is so palpable you can almost smell the smoky city markets, the sweat, the hormones.

White BuildingNot rated. In Khmer, with subtitles. Running time: 1 hour 30 minutes. In theaters.Not rated. In Khmer, with subtitles. Running time: 1 hour 30 minutes. In theaters.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/18/movies/white-building-review.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/18/movies/white-building-review.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Piseth Chhun, left, and Chinnaro Soem in the film ''White Building.'' (PHOTOGRAPH BY KIMSTIM) This article appeared in print on page C8.

**Load-Date:** May 19, 2023

**End of Document**



[***A ‘Lucky Child’ Writes His Way From Nigeria to the Global Stage***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68D3-8261-JBG3-61K8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 5, 2023 Monday 00:11 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS

**Length:** 938 words

**Byline:** Elizabeth A. Harris

**Highlight:** With a first novel that chronicles a love affair between two young men, 23-year-old Ani Kayode Somtochukwu asserts a commitment to “queer resistance.”

**Body**

With a first novel that chronicles a love affair between two young men, 23-year-old Ani Kayode Somtochukwu asserts a commitment to “queer resistance.”

Ani Kayode Somtochukwu wrote his first novel without the benefit of the internet or even a computer. He scratched it out by hand on large white notepads, then transferred it, tap by tap, onto his cellphone.

Then he sold it to a major publisher.

That novel, “And Then He Sang a Lullaby,” a love story about two young men in Nigeria, will be published June 6 by a new imprint at Grove Atlantic, launched by the writer and social commentator [*Roxane Gay*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/roxane-gay). Gay has said she plans to elevate writers from outside the usual publishing pipelines, and Ani (in Nigeria, the family name often comes first) is the imprint’s first author: a queer Nigerian man from a ***working-class*** background, whose manuscript, submitted without an agent, came from the slush pile.

Ani is also 23, quick to smile, quick to laugh, and he apologizes for making the rest of us feel bad about ourselves.

“He is both wise beyond his years and also charmingly 23,” Gay said. “You can tell that even though he is living in Nigeria, where it is challenging to be gay, he is living a vibrant life.”

Ani grew up in Enugu, the second of five children born to a schoolteacher and a storekeeper who sold stationery and gift cards at a market stall. He has always been a writer, scribbling stories and poems that he shared with his siblings and friends, but he never considered it a possible career, instead studying applied biology and biotechnology in school. Today, he lives in Lagos, where he moved for a job at the [*Nigerian Institute of Medical Research*](https://nimr.gov.ng/).

“There are certain class backgrounds you grow up in where, when you think of your career, you have to stick with what’s very practical,” he said. “Being a musician, for instance, or being a dancer, being a writer — those are things you are allowed to enjoy, but you don’t really think of them as a career.”

As it’s turned out, however, “writing has taken me out of poverty,” he said. Today it’s his full-time job.

“And Then He Sang a Lullaby” centers on two very different young men who meet and fall in love in college. August is wealthy, athletic and passes for straight, while Segun is flamboyant, political, ***working-class*** and frequently targeted — same-sex relationships are illegal in Nigeria. The novel explores how people respond differently to homophobia, and how love is possible even under such difficult circumstances.

“It is a novel about queer love and about queer pain,” Ani said. “But maybe most importantly, it’s about queer resistance.”

Ani considers himself an activist first, and says his writing is in service of that work. He describes organizing campaigns in support of L.G.B.T.Q. rights and helping to raise money to buy the freedom of friends and strangers who have been kidnapped and held for ransom because they are gay or trans.

He has also been targeted: assaulted twice, he said, detained by the police and threatened many times. After a protest in Nigeria’s capital against legislation that would have sent people to jail for wearing clothing that didn’t traditionally align with the gender assigned to them at birth, Ani said he had to leave the city suddenly when commenters on social media said he and others involved should be killed.

“He came out so early in a very dangerous country, and I must say, it’s really a miracle that he got to this point,” said one of his sisters, Ani Uzoamaka Chinedu. “Kayode is one lucky child.”

While studying biology in college, he also joined a writers’ club. Later he learned on its group chat that Gay’s imprint was accepting submissions, and sent in a few chapters.

Gay said she was drawn not only by the book’s message but by the strength of Ani’s voice. By the time he reached out to Emma Shercliff, the woman who would become his agent, Ani already had an offer.

Most traditional publishing houses require that submissions come from agents, rather than directly from authors to editors, and it’s rare for a book deal to get done any other way. It is a practical consideration, because submissions from agents have already been vetted. But getting an agent is itself a steep hill to climb, so this setup means that many authors, even if their work is excellent, may not be able to get a manuscript in front of an editor.

When Gay first opened her imprint, with an announcement that she would accept unagented submissions, she was receiving 200 or 300 of those manuscripts each month.

“Does it require a lot of effort? Yes it does, and I’ve had to hire people to help me get through the queue,” she said. “But I’m happy to do it if it means providing that opportunity.”

The advance from selling the book allowed Ani to move into an apartment by himself for the first time, with a quiet place to write. His sister said he also gave some money to his father to support the family. Ani kept the African rights so the book could be published in Nigeria by a local publisher, making it less expensive for readers.

This month Ani will visit the United States for book-related events, his first trip outside of Africa. With his profile elevated, he said he doesn’t fear becoming more of a target in Nigeria, maintaining that his visibility offers him some protection, which he plans to use to push harder on what he believes.

“What I want people to know about me,” he said, “is that I am an African queer liberation activist who believes that Africa is my home, that it is a home for queer people. I truly believe that.”

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY STEPHEN TAYO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page C3.

**Load-Date:** June 7, 2023

**End of Document**



[***‘White Building’ Review: Coming of Age in Cambodia***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6886-YRB1-JBG3-63D1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 18, 2023 Thursday 17:02 EST

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**Section:** MOVIES

**Length:** 373 words

**Byline:** Austin Considine

**Highlight:** Kavich Neang’s lush feature tells a largely autobiographical tale of growing up in a building whose often painful history is a microcosm of his country’s.

**Body**

Kavich Neang’s lush feature tells a largely autobiographical tale of growing up in a building whose often painful history is a microcosm of his country’s.

The title of Kavich Neang’s richly observed feature, “White Building,” is, first of all, an exaggeration: The dilapidated apartment bloc it describes is so chipped and black with soot that it’s barely white; indeed, it is so falling apart that it’s barely a building.

But for Samnang (Piseth Chhun), the young protagonist of this sensitive and largely autobiographical coming-of-age portrayal, it is home, as the real-life White Building it is based on was for Neang.

Located in central Phnom Penh, the building is an apt symbol of the often excruciating changes Cambodia has endured over the last 60 years. It was built in the 1960s to house civil servants, then emptied during the Khmer Rouge’s forced relocations of the 1970s. In the ’80s, it became home to ***working class*** people like Samnang’s diabetic father (Sithan Hout), who, like Neang’s, is a sculptor. Now its inhabitants are being pushed to take a lousy deal so it can be demolished for new development, in a city they can no longer afford.

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](http://youtube.com/embed/jtAUltfvadI)]

Unlike his parents, Samnang has no memories of the Khmer Rouge. He and his friends grew up with cellphones and hip-hop, and they dream of becoming a famous dance troupe. They want what other boys of their generation want: girlfriends, Nikes, a chance to prove themselves.

Neang excels at that Tarkovskian trick of rendering the small details of decay — a cracked tile, a leaking ceiling — with such lived-in precision that they feel somehow specific and surreal at once; like the title, images strain their own semantic boundaries. The film’s loose plotting and secondary character development can leave a few too many hanging threads, but its sense of place is so palpable you can almost smell the smoky city markets, the sweat, the hormones.

White Building

Not rated. In Khmer, with subtitles. Running time: 1 hour 30 minutes. In theaters.

Not rated. In Khmer, with subtitles. Running time: 1 hour 30 minutes. In theaters.

PHOTO: Piseth Chhun, left, and Chinnaro Soem in the film “White Building.” (PHOTOGRAPH BY KIMSTIM) This article appeared in print on page C8.

**Load-Date:** May 18, 2023

**End of Document**



[***What’s the Matter With Scarsdale?; The Morning Newsletter***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:640T-5HC1-JBG3-63HJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 4, 2021 Thursday 08:29 EST

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1847 words

**Byline:** David Leonhardt

**Highlight:** Democrats’ struggles with ***working-class*** voters seem to be getting worse.

**Body**

Democrats’ struggles with ***working-class*** voters seem to be getting worse.

They are among the most affluent places in America: Arlington, Fairfax and Loudoun Counties, in Northern Virginia; Upper Montclair, N.J.; Scarsdale, N.Y.; Wilmette, Ill.; Palo Alto and Malibu, Calif; and Mercer Island, Wash.

In each, six-figure incomes are the norm, and seven-figure incomes are not rare, which means that many residents would pay higher taxes if Democratic proposals were to become law.

And yet these places vote overwhelmingly for Democrats. Even this week, which did not go well for Democrats, many affluent suburbs were [*colored blue*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/11/02/us/elections/results-virginia.html) on election maps. In Arlington, Va., Terry McAuliffe, the Democratic candidate for governor, won about 77 percent of the vote. Last year, President Biden won a similarly large share in Scarsdale and some other high-income towns — and about 90 percent in several California and New England suburbs. ([*Look up your town*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/upshot/2020-election-map.html).)

Democrats [*often lament*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/31/books/review/the-system-robert-reich-break-em-up-zephyr-teachout.html) that so many ***working-class*** Americans vote against their own economic interests, by supporting Republicans who try to cut health care programs, school funding and more. A 2004 book summarized the liberal frustration with the title, “What’s the Matter With Kansas?”

But ***working-class*** conservatives are hardly the only voters who prioritize issues other than their financial situation. The residents of the affluent towns I mentioned above — and I could have listed dozens more — also do. Which raises a different question: What’s the matter with Scarsdale?

The answer, of course, is nothing. Pocketbook issues aren’t the only reasonable ones to decide a person’s vote. Other subjects, like climate change, civil rights, religious rights, abortion, immigration, crime, education and Covid-19, are important, too.

As Democrats [*try to make sense of this week’s disappointments*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/03/us/politics/democrat-losses-2022.html) and look anxiously ahead to next year’s midterms, one problem looms over others: the party’s struggles with ***working-class*** voters. Defined as people without a four-year college degree, these voters make up a majority of the electorate. And they tend to be more religious, more outwardly patriotic and more culturally conservative than college graduates.

A Virginia trouncing

For much of the 20th century, Democrats were the party of the ***working class***, while Republicans were the party of suburban professionals. In recent decades, however, politics has changed.

People vote based less on their income and more on their cultural attitudes, [*as my colleague Nate Cohn has explained*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/08/us/politics/how-college-graduates-vote.html). Sometimes, these attitudes are related to specific matters of policy, like immigration or abortion. Other times, they involve more personal subjects, like religion or patriotism.

“As they’ve grown in numbers, college graduates have instilled increasingly liberal cultural norms while gaining the power to nudge the Democratic Party to the left,” Nate wrote. “Partly as a result, large portions of the party’s traditional ***working-class*** base have defected to the Republicans.”

The defections have increased over the past decade. Barack Obama [*won voters without a bachelor’s degree*](https://www.nytimes.com/elections/2012/results/president/exit-polls.html) in both of his presidential victories. Biden [*lost them*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/11/03/us/elections/exit-polls-president.html) narrowly last year. In Virginia this week, McAuliffe was trounced — by between 10 and 20 percentage points, depending on the exit poll — among voters without a bachelor’s degree. He particularly lost ground with white ***working-class*** women, [*according to CNN*](https://www.cnn.com/election/2021/november/exit-polls/virginia/governor).

Race plays an important role here. Republicans — including Donald Trump, but not limited to him — have won more ***working-class*** votes partly by appealing to white identity. In Virginia, Glenn Youngkin, the Republican governor-elect, [*used a version of this strategy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/03/us/politics/schools-republican-campaign-issues.html). He went so far as to release an ad in which a white mother complained about her son’s high school class reading a classic novel by Toni Morrison.

But many Democrats have made the mistake of believing that the ***working-class*** shift is all about racism. [*It’s not*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/23/opinion/trump-supporters-economy-racism.html). Consider that the contemporary Democrat who fared best with the white ***working class*** was Obama. Or that some divisive cultural debates, like those involving religion, don’t map neatly onto race.

The clearest sign that the shift involves both racial and other causes comes from recent election results: Democrats are no longer doing as well as they once did in Asian, Black and Latino communities. Trump fared better with voters of color [*in 2020 than in 2016*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/07/briefing/democratic-party-covid-georgia.html). In Virginia, some of McAuliffe’s most disappointing totals came in heavily Hispanic precincts, [*according to Nate’s analysis*](https://twitter.com/Nate_Cohn/status/1455884142520975363).

This year’s mayoral election in New York offered a similar lesson. Eric Adams beat more liberal Democratic candidates with an anti-crime message [*that appealed to a multiracial coalition of* ***working-class*** *voters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/29/briefing/new-york-mayors-race-ranked-choice-democrats.html) across the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island. The only borough Adams lost in the primary was affluent, highly educated Manhattan.

Values, not white papers

I don’t mean to suggest that there are easy answers for the Democratic Party. The rightward drift of workers has been [*an international phenomenon*](https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2020/07/david-shor-cancel-culture-2020-election-theory-polls.html). Yet unless Democrats try to address their ***working-class*** slide — which has room to become worse — they [*may struggle to hold power*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/08/opinion/democrats-david-shor-education-polarization.html) in coming years, especially in the Senate.

What are their options? Democrats can’t win over the ***working class*** by talking about only economic issues, any more than Republicans can win Scarsdale simply by saying “Tax cuts now!” Policy proposals, of any kind, may not even be the full answer: Some political scientists [*believe*](https://twitter.com/MattGrossmann/status/1446611213073461258) that Democrats talk too much about policy and not enough about values. Regardless, Democrats likely do need to write off some voters because of their racial attitudes.

Still, that would leave tens of millions of ***working-class*** Americans who are open to voting for Democrats without being loyal to the party. These voters span racial groups. They tend to be worried about crime and political correctness, however they define it. They have mixed feelings about immigration and abortion laws. They favor many progressive positions on economic policy. They are skeptical of experts. Most believe in God and in a strong America.

If Democrats are going to win more of these voters, they will probably need to listen to them and make some changes, rather than telling them that they’re irrational for voting Republican. Over the past generation, Democrats have won over more college graduates by listening to them — and then creating a party that reflects their views on almost every issue. Politics is hard, but it is not always mysterious.

More on the elections:

* Gov. Phil Murphy of New Jersey [*won a surprisingly close race*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/03/nyregion/murphy-wins-nj-governor.html).

1. Republicans, rallying around [*what they’re calling “parental rights,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/03/us/politics/school-republican-campaign-issue.html) are pouncing on schools as a wedge issue to unite the party.
2. Democrats, disappointed by election losses, are pushing forward on Biden’s social policy and climate bill. Speaker Nancy Pelosi said she [*hoped for a Friday vote*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/03/us/politics/democrats-virginia-biden-congress.html) and [*added four weeks of paid leave*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/03/us/politics/pelosi-paid-leave.html) to the bill.

THE LATEST NEWS

The Virus

* “We’re doing this to protect you, bud.” The U.S. [*campaign to vaccinate young children*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/03/us/children-covid-vaccines.html) has begun.

1. The W.H.O. [*granted emergency authorization to Covaxin*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/03/world/asia/covaxin-covid-vaccine-who.html), a Covid vaccine developed in India.

* Tyson Foods mandated vaccinations. Here’s how more than [*96 percent of its work force*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/04/business/tyson-vaccine-mandate.html) got shots.

Politics

* During a Supreme Court argument, questions from justices suggested that a New York gun control law [*was unlikely to survive*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/03/us/politics/supreme-court-guns-second-amendment.html).

1. Biden rejected [*a proposal for monetary compensation*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/03/us/politics/biden-rejects-payments-migrants.html) for migrants separated from their families at the border.
2. Inflation worries led the Federal Reserve to slow a bond-buying program that [*helped buoy the economy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/03/business/economy/fed-taper-bond-buying.html) during the pandemic.

Other Big Stories

* The Taliban said their takeover would end war in Afghanistan, but [*attacks by ISIS*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/03/world/asia/isis-afghanistan-taliban.html) have thrown that into doubt.

1. New York will offer financial aid to [*indebted taxi drivers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/03/nyregion/nyc-taxi-drivers-hunger-strike.html) after a hunger strike.
2. Damon Galgut won the [*Booker Prize for “The Promise,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/03/books/booker-prize-winner-damon-galgut-the-promise.html) a satirical novel about a white family in post-apartheid South Africa.

Opinions

Gail Collins on Election Day’s [*silver linings for Democrats*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/03/opinion/election-results.html).

Elon Musk has misread science fiction. It’s driving [*his approach to the future*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/04/opinion/elon-musk-capitalism.html), argues Jill Lepore.

MORNING READS

Dance: A new kind of Native American dance troupe. [*Watch the moves*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/03/arts/dance/indigenous-enterprise-joyce-theater.html).

Trash talk: Scottie Pippen’s new memoir [*takes aim at Michael Jordan*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/03/sports/basketball/scottie-pippen-unguarded-book-michael-jordan.html).

Zzz: People had strange dreams during the pandemic. [*What did they teach us*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/03/magazine/pandemic-dreams.html)

Advice from Wirecutter: [*Clean your sofa*](https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/guides/how-to-clean-a-sofa/).

Lives Lived: Sunao Tsuboi survived the bombing of Hiroshima and used his experience to warn the world about the dangers of nuclear weapons. He [*died at 96*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/03/world/asia/sunao-tsuboi-dead.html).

ARTS AND IDEAS

Like it’s the 1930s

This movie season, black-and-white films are everywhere. Kyle Buchanan spoke with the cinematographers behind [*three major monochromatic features*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/03/movies/passing-macbeth-belfast.html) to examine the trend.

A new spin on Shakespeare, “[*The Tragedy of Macbeth*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HM3hsVrBMA4),” is not only leached of color, but also shot in a claustrophobic aspect ratio rarely used since the 1950s. “It’s meant to bring theatricality, and to lose temporality,” the cinematographer Bruno Delbonnel said.

The technique can also have a narrative purpose, as it does in [*“Passing,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/20/magazine/rebecca-hall-passing.html) which follows two light-skinned Black women, one who has been passing for white. In a scene where the friends are reunited, the movie’s cinematographer, Eduard Grau, flooded the shots with light. “We didn’t want to clearly show to the audience at first whether our characters were white or Black or mixed race,” Grau said. “Everything is so bright that it’s difficult to tell.”

One of the strengths of black-and-white “is not to tell you how a person or place looks, but how they feel,” said Haris Zambarloukos, the cinematographer for “[*Belfast*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/11/01/magazine/kenneth-branagh-interview.html),” a film about a boy in Northern Ireland during the 1960s. “It has a transcendental quality to be of the past and the present. It’s realistic, but it has a certain magical sense to it as well.” — Sanam Yar, a Morning writer

PLAY, WATCH, EAT

What to Cook

This [*savory couscous cake is versatile*](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1021548-giant-couscous-cake-with-roasted-pepper-sauce) — use whatever herbs, cheeses or spices you have.

What to Watch

“Dr. Brain,” a Korean sci-fi mystery series on Apple TV+, is “classy and absorbing entertainment,” Mike Hale [*writes in a review*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/03/arts/television/review-dr-brain-south-korea.html).

Green Thumb

Appreciate [*the beauty of lichen*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/03/realestate/gardening-lichen-fall.html).

Late Night

The hosts [*recapped the election*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/04/arts/television/colbert-democrats-election-results.html).

Now Time to Play

The pangram from yesterday’s Spelling Bee was toughen. Here is today’s puzzle — or you can [*play online*](https://www.nytimes.com/puzzles/spelling-bee).

Here’s [*today’s Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/crosswords/game/mini), and a clue: Way too energetic (five letters).

If you’re in the mood to play more, find [*all our games here*](https://www.nytimes.com/games).

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

P.S. The Times surpassed more than one million overseas subscribers. Our international correspondents [*explain how they get the big stories*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/11/03/world/international-news-1-million-subscribers.html).

Here’s [*today’s print front page*](https://static01.nyt.com/images/2021/11/04/nytfrontpage/scan.pdf).

“[*The Daily*](https://www.nytimes.com/thedaily)” is about the elections. “[*Sway*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/04/opinion/sway-kara-swisher-casey-newton.html)” features the tech reporter Casey Newton.

Claire Moses, Ian Prasad Philbrick, Tom Wright-Piersanti, Ashley Wu and Sanam Yar contributed to The Morning. You can reach the team at [*themorning@nytimes.com*](mailto:themorning@nytimes.com).

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

PHOTO: Youngkin supporters at a campaign event. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Carlos Bernate for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** November 4, 2021

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[***The Politics of Betrayal Are at Work in Michigan; Farah Stockman***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BB0-WYH1-JBG3-60RR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 13, 2024 Tuesday 22:31 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1560 words

**Byline:** Farah Stockman Farah Stockman joined the Times editorial board in 2020. For four years, she was a reporter for The Times, covering politics, social movements and race. She previously worked at The Boston Globe, where she won a Pulitzer Prize for commentary in 2016.

**Highlight:** Union members and Arab voters in the state are crucial to the Democrats’ coalition.

**Body**

Betrayal is a powerful emotion, especially at the ballot box. Voters who feel betrayed tend to act like spurned lovers, punishing the offending party even if it means electing somebody who will actually be worse.

That’s how America got Donald Trump as president. Many blue-collar workers in [*factory towns*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/opinion/editorialboard.html) in battleground states like [*Michigan*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/opinion/editorialboard.html), [*Ohio*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/opinion/editorialboard.html) and Pennsylvania — who were once pillars of the Democratic Party — voted for a man who promised to rip up free trade agreements, which they blamed for the loss of manufacturing jobs. It didn’t seem to matter to them that Mr. Trump had no track record of standing up for workers or that employees at his hotels [*faced union-busting*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/opinion/editorialboard.html) tactics when they tried to organize.

More important was using their votes to punish Democrats for abandoning the ***working class***.

Joe Biden understood that, and in 2020 he set out to atone for the sins of the Democratic Party by promising to be the most pro-union president ever — [*a promise he has kept*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/opinion/editorialboard.html). It’s not just that he became [*the first sitting president*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/opinion/editorialboard.html) to join a picket line. It’s not just that he appointed the most pro-union National Labor Relations Board since the 1930s, as the labor historian Jeff Schuhrke told me. It’s all the things his appointees are doing behind the scenes.

Mr. Biden’s National Labor Relations Board, for example, handed down the [*Cemex decision*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/opinion/editorialboard.html), which makes it easier for workers to win collective bargaining rights against employers. Thanks to that ruling, companies must act in a timely manner to either recognize a union or allow workers to vote on whether to form one. Companies that delay — a common tactic used to crush organizing — will be ordered to recognize the union and start bargaining with it as if it had won a vote. That requirement will be invaluable to the United Auto Workers as it pursues an audacious plan to unionize 150,000 autoworkers at [*Hyundai*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/opinion/editorialboard.html), [*Mercedes-Benz*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/opinion/editorialboard.html) and other factories [*around the country*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/opinion/editorialboard.html).

The Biden administration even fights for the rights of workers abroad when they are violated by American companies. Just this month, the Labor Department successfully pushed Goodyear Tire &amp; Rubber to pay [*$4.2 million in back pay to more than 1,300 workers*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/opinion/editorialboard.html) in Mexico. Instead of asking American workers to accept less to compete in the global economy, the Biden administration is trying to make sure workers abroad get more. That’s not easy, but it’s an inspiring use of American power.

Union leaders [*are obviously paying attention*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/opinion/editorialboard.html).

Will it make a difference to the rank and file? I asked that question in Michigan, a must-win state where unions hold tremendous sway, and got conflicting answers.

Antoine McKay, an actor who is appearing in an August Wilson play at the Detroit Repertory Theater, told me that it “absolutely matters” to him that Mr. Biden supports unions and joined workers on the picket line. Mr. McKay is a member of the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, which conducted a [*successful strike*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/opinion/editorialboard.html) last year. “I think workers in our society are encouraged on every level because of the strikes that have happened and the outcomes of those strikes,” he said.

But other interviews suggested that Mr. Biden is not going to be rewarded.

Brooke Davis, who works at the MGM Grand Detroit casino and participated in her first strike this year — she’s a U.A.W. member — told me she’s not sure whom she would vote for in the fall. People had to stand in the cold during the strike, she said, sometimes with their children, and live on $500 a week of strike pay, a small fraction of what they usually made. She said she appreciated the benefits they won but didn’t relish doing it all over again in 2028, in a [*general strike*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/opinion/editorialboard.html) that the U.A.W. is planning.

She said that the G.O.P. seemed more practical and more forward-looking. “You might not always like what they’re saying,” she said of the Republicans, “but you know where they stand.” Democrats “are always trying to sell us hopes, sell us dreams” about solving health care and student debt, she said. It sounded good, she said, but they seemed to promise more than they could deliver. Ms. Davis is a Black woman and a union member — two constituencies that Democrats leaned on heavily [*to win the state in 2020*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/opinion/editorialboard.html). It’s not a good sign that she’s undecided.

The most devastating assessment came from Merwan Beydoun, a former crane operator at a steel mill in Dearborn who once served as vice president of bargaining for his local unit. As a former U.A.W. representative, he said, he knew how important Mr. Biden’s policies were to unions. “I loved it,” he told me, when the president showed up at the picket line [*in September*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/opinion/editorialboard.html).

The following month, Hamas brutally attacked Israel, and Israel began its assault on Gaza. Mr. Beydoun, who is of Lebanese descent, is furious at Mr. Biden for his unwavering support of Israel’s government as it flattens neighborhoods, killing thousands of children, in what he called “genocide” and collective punishment. He and [*his Arab American community voted for Mr. Biden in 2020*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/opinion/editorialboard.html). Now, he said, they felt deeply betrayed.

Mr. Beydoun used to encourage his conservative co-workers to cast their ballots for Democrats, arguing that however they felt about abortion, gun rights or gay marriage, their first allegiance should be to the union. But he has stopped telling people that. In fact, he’s planning to not vote for either candidate in November. He even canceled his contribution to the U.A.W.’s political action committee after the union [*endorsed*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/opinion/editorialboard.html) Mr. Biden. If Mr. Trump would win as a result, he said, “so be it.”

I pressed him on it. Wouldn’t Mr. Trump be worse for Palestinians? Didn’t Benjamin Netanyahu want his buddy Mr. Trump re-elected? Mr. Beydoun paused.

“There’s something to be said for that,” he said. But he stood firm.

Voting makes sense only if there’s a chance that your vote will matter, and he had no hope that either party would change American policy on Israel. “Whether it’s a Republican or Democrat, I know they’re going to stand by Israel 100 percent,” he told me.

The biggest way to make his voice heard, he insisted, was to withhold his vote. “We need to make a statement to say, ‘Hey, we can do this to you.’”

That’s the politics of betrayal. There are lots of voters like Mr. Beydoun in the metro Detroit area, which is crucial to any path to victory for Mr. Biden in the state. Wayne County, the most populous in Michigan, is home to both the United Auto Workers International headquarters and the largest Arab American community in the U.S. Thousands of Arabs [*settled here*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/opinion/editorialboard.html) in the 1960s and ’70s and got jobs in the Ford plants, including Mr. Beydoun’s father, who came from Lebanon in 1968, beginning a decades-long tradition of political activism through their unions.

Today [*there are 190,000 Arabic speakers in Wayne County alone*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/opinion/editorialboard.html), out of about 1.8 million people. [*Dozens of elected leaders*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/opinion/editorialboard.html) in the area have signed a pledge to vote uncommitted in the Feb. 27 primary in Michigan as a signal of their willingness to [*abandon Mr. Biden*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/opinion/editorialboard.html) unless the administration changes course.

Now the White House is scrambling to show that it values Palestinian lives after [*initially questioning*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/opinion/editorialboard.html) the Palestinian death toll in Gaza and calling demands for a cease-fire “[*repugnant*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/opinion/editorialboard.html).” Last week, senior administration officials traveled to Dearborn and expressed regret, according to [*a leaked recording*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/opinion/editorialboard.html) of the meeting. And the president called Israel’s operation in Gaza “over the top.” But those words will be seen as empty unless they are accompanied by policy changes, especially a call for a permanent end to hostilities.

In an interview, James Zogby, a founder of the Arab American Institute, said that it was difficult to motivate Arab Americans to vote for Hillary Clinton in 2016 because her supporters had rejected [*efforts to add language to the Democratic Party platform*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/opinion/editorialboard.html) calling for an end to “occupations and illegal settlements.” She still won Wayne County by about 290,000 votes — but that margin wasn’t enough to make up for losses elsewhere. She lost Michigan by fewer than [*12,000 votes*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/opinion/editorialboard.html). (Her campaign also suffered from her association with free trade, which Bill Clinton championed in office.)

In 2020 the insults of Mr. Trump’s Muslim ban and his State Department’s neglect of the problem of stateless Palestinians were fresh in the minds of Arab American voters. The Biden campaign wooed them by issuing its [*Arab American Agenda*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/opinion/editorialboard.html), which said that the president “opposes annexation and settlement expansion.” Mr. Biden won Wayne County by more than 332,000 votes, a margin that helped him carry Michigan by 154,000 votes.

“I hear this from people in the White House — ‘They’ll come around in November,’” Mr. Zogby told me. “It’s demeaning, and it’s dangerous. It ignores the depth of their feelings.”

Can new positive energy from unions make up for the feelings of betrayal over Gaza? I’m skeptical.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/opinion/editorialboard.html) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/opinion/editorialboard.html). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/opinion/editorialboard.html).

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PHOTOS: Merwan Beydoun is a former vice president of the U.A.W. Local 600 Steel Unit in Dearborn, Mich. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY CYDNI ELLEDGE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A23.

**Load-Date:** February 18, 2024

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[***Sanders, Fearing Weak Democratic Turnout in Midterms, Plans 8-State Blitz***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66ND-CM41-JBG3-63V1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 20, 2022 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 18

**Length:** 769 words

**Byline:** By Shane Goldmacher and Katie Glueck

**Body**

Mr. Sanders said he thought the Democratic Party was ''doing rather poorly'' at selling itself to ***working-class*** voters.

Senator Bernie Sanders is planning an eight-state blitz with at least 19 events over the final two weekends before the midterm elections, looking to rally young voters and progressives as Democrats confront daunting national headwinds.

Mr. Sanders, the Vermont senator who in many ways is the face of the American left, is beginning his push in Oregon on Oct. 27.

''It is about energizing our base and increasing voter turnout up and down the ballot,'' Mr. Sanders said in an interview. ''I am a little bit concerned that the energy level for young people, ***working-class*** people,'' is not as high as it should be, he said. ''And I want to see what I can do about that.''

The first swing will include stops in Oregon, California, Nevada (with events in both Reno and Las Vegas), Texas (including one in McAllen), and Orlando, Fla. The second weekend will focus on Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania.

And while Mr. Sanders will appear in battleground states where some of the most hotly contested Senate and governor's races are playing out -- Nevada, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania -- it is unclear which if any of the statewide Democratic candidates that Mr. Sanders is rallying voters to support will actually appear alongside him.

Mr. Sanders maintains an impassioned core following and is one of the biggest draws on the stump for Democrats nationwide. But Republicans have used Mr. Sanders as a boogeyman in television ads in many races across the country and even some moderate Democrats have concerns that his campaigning in swing states could backfire.

Mr. Sanders brushed off a question about whether his presence on the trail might be used to attack Democratic candidates.

''They've already done it,'' Mr. Sanders said. ''They're going to have to respond to why they don't want to raise the minimum wage, why they want to give tax breaks to billionaires, why they want to cut Social Security. Those are the questions that I think these guys do not want to answer. And those are the questions I'm going to be raising.''

Throughout the tour, he plans to hold events with a mix of House candidates, a mayoral contender and liberal organizations in an effort to turn out core Democratic constituencies.

He plans to appear with the congressional candidates Val Hoyle of Oregon, Greg Casar and Michelle Vallejo of Texas, Maxwell Alejandro Frost of Florida and Summer Lee of Pennsylvania. He is also expected to appear with Representative Karen Bass of California, who is running for mayor of Los Angeles, according to a Sanders aide.

As part of the tour, Mr. Sanders will headline rallies organized by the progressive groups NextGen and MoveOn. He is an invited speaker at the events and it's not clear if Democrats who are running this year will also appear.

Mr. Sanders said he planned to focus on an economic message in pitching Democrats in 2022. Asked to assess how his party was doing in selling itself to ***working-class*** voters, he replied, ''I think they're doing rather poorly.''

''It is rather amazing to me that we are in a situation right now, which I hope to change, where according to poll after poll, the American people look more favorably upon the Republicans in terms of economic issues than they do Democrats,'' he said. ''That is absurd.''

A top priority for Mr. Sanders this year has been electing Mandela Barnes, the Democratic Senate nominee in Wisconsin. Mr. Sanders has allowed the Barnes campaign to use his name to send out fund-raising emails, reaping at least $500,000, according to a Sanders adviser.

It is not clear if Mr. Barnes will appear alongside Mr. Sanders, who is planning at least three events in the state the weekend before the election, in Eau Claire, LaCrosse and Madison, the state capital and heart of Wisconsin's progressive movement. A spokeswoman for Mr. Barnes declined to comment on his plans.

But when Politico reported this month that Wisconsin Democrats were planning possible events with Mr. Sanders, Matt Bennett, the co-founder of Third Way, a centrist group, wrote on Twitter: ''I desperately want Barnes to win, so I ask again of his campaign: Why would you do this? Why????''

Despite the political challenges facing Democrats this year, Mr. Sanders said he was buoyed by the next generation of liberal leaders poised to come to Capitol Hill.

''When Congress convenes in January,'' he said in the interview, ''there are going to be more strong progressives in the Democratic caucus than in the modern history of this country.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/19/us/politics/bernie-sanders-midterms-stops.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/19/us/politics/bernie-sanders-midterms-stops.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Senator Bernie Sanders will begin his campaign swing in Oregon on Oct. 27 and visit seven other states before Election Day. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HAIYUN JIANG/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A18.

**Load-Date:** October 20, 2022

**End of Document**



[***What Role Does Religion Play in Your Life?; student opinion***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:653G-R3X1-JBG3-60B4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 28, 2022 Monday 05:00 EST

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**Section:** LEARNING

**Length:** 768 words

**Byline:** Nicole Daniels and Michael Gonchar

**Highlight:** Did you attend religious services or observe religious traditions as a child? How has religion shaped who you are today?

**Body**

Did you attend religious services or observe religious traditions as a child? How has religion shaped who you are today?

When you were younger, did you attend religious services or participate in religious observations with your family? Did you belong to any kind of religious community? What about now, as a teenager?

Has religion played an important role in your life? If so, in what ways?

In her recent Opinion essay, “[*I Followed the Lives of 3,290 Teenagers. This Is What I Learned About Religion and Education*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/15/opinion/religion-school-success.html),” Ilana M. Horwitz discusses the effects of a religious upbringing on academic success:

American men are [*dropping out of college*](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2021/10/08/the-male-college-crisis-is-not-just-in-enrollment-but-completion/) in alarming numbers. A slew of articles over the past year depict a generation of men who feel [*lost*](https://www.wsj.com/articles/college-university-fall-higher-education-men-women-enrollment-admissions-back-to-school-11630948233), [*detached*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/02/08/andrew-yang-boys-are-not-all-right/) and [*lacking in male role models*](https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2021/09/young-men-college-decline-gender-gap-higher-education/620066/). This sense of despair is especially acute among ***working-class*** men, [*fewer than one in five*](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d20/tables/dt20_104.91.asp) of whom completes college.

Yet one group is defying the odds: boys from ***working-class*** families who grow up religious.

As a sociologist of education and religion, I followed the lives of 3,290 teenagers from 2003 to 2012 using survey and interview data from the [*National Study of Youth and Religion*](https://youthandreligion.nd.edu/), and then linking those data to the [*National Student Clearinghouse*](https://www.studentclearinghouse.org/) in 2016. I studied the relationship between teenagers’ religious upbringing and its influence on their education: their school grades, which colleges they attend and how much higher education they complete. My research focused on Christian denominations because they are the [*most prevalent*](https://www.pewforum.org/2021/12/14/about-three-in-ten-u-s-adults-are-now-religiously-unaffiliated/) in the United States.

I found that what religion offers teenagers varies by social class. Those raised by professional-class parents, for example, do not experience much in the way of an educational advantage from being religious. In some ways, religion even constrains teenagers’ educational opportunities (especially girls’) by shaping their academic ambitions after graduation; they are less likely to consider a selective college as they prioritize life goals such as parenthood, altruism and service to God rather than a prestigious career.

However, teenage boys from ***working-class*** families, regardless of race, who were regularly involved in their church and strongly believed in God were twice as likely to earn bachelor’s degrees as moderately religious or nonreligious boys.

[*Religious boys are not any smarter*](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0146167219879122), so why are they doing better in school? The answer lies in how religious belief and religious involvement can buffer ***working-class*** Americans — males in particular — from despair.

Students, [*read the entire article*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/15/opinion/religion-school-success.html), then tell us:

* What role, if any, did religion play in your childhood? Do you consider religion and religious faith to be important parts of your life? Why or why not?

1. According to Dr. Horwitz’s research, religious belief and religious involvement help ***working-class*** teenage boys achieve academic success. Do you think religion has helped you succeed in the classroom? Why or why not?
2. Dr. Horwitz discusses some of the social benefits — including a sense of community, a shared outlook on life and the presence of trusting relationships and adult role models — that religion can have for young people. Has religion provided any of these benefits to you? Has it provided other benefits?
3. Not every person sees religion as beneficial. Are you one of those people? If so, why?
4. The author explains the importance of “social capital” — the social ties that provide a web of support for families and young people. Do you feel that you are surrounded by a web of support? Does it include family, friends, neighbors, teachers, coaches, religious leaders or others? In what ways do these people — or the communities in which they operate — support you and your family? Do you wish that you had more social capital or a larger web of support? Why or why not?
5. Dr. Horwitz has found that social class and gender can affect what religion offers teenagers. Do those findings surprise you? Is there anything else from her research that strikes you as unexpected? How so?
6. What else do you think people should know about teenagers and religion that was not discussed in the essay?

Want more writing prompts? You can find all of our questions in our [*Student Opinion column*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/learning-student-opinion). Teachers, [*check out this guide*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/11/learning/a-teachers-guide-to-using-our-student-opinion-questions.html) to learn how you can incorporate them into your classroom.

Students 13 and older in the United States and Britain, and 16 and older elsewhere, are invited to comment. All comments are moderated by the Learning Network staff, but please keep in mind that once your comment is accepted, it will be made public.

PHOTO:    (PHOTOGRAPH BY Arne Bellstorf FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[***Why 2023 Was Such a Busy Year for Labor in California; California Today***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69X3-61J1-JBG3-64VX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 19, 2023 Tuesday 09:00 EST

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 1181 words

**Highlight:** A conversation with Jill Cowan, a Los Angeles-based reporter for The New York Times.

**Body**

A conversation with Jill Cowan, a Los Angeles-based reporter for The New York Times.

This year was a [*strong one*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/06/briefing/labors-very-good-year.html) for labor in the United States.

Public support for labor nationwide ran high, and workers in many industries — health care, hospitality, Hollywood and more — who went on strike came away with big gains.

Much of that labor activity was concentrated in California. Cornell University’s School of Industrial and Labor Relations reported that [*392 labor actions nationwide began in 2023*](https://striketracker.ilr.cornell.edu/), with 171 of them in the Golden State. The state’s high cost of living and broad support for organized labor made it prime ground for action.

Most of the state’s strike activity took place in the Los Angeles area, where the gap between the very poor and the very rich is especially large.

I spoke with my colleague Jill Cowan, a New York Times reporter based in Los Angeles, about the state’s “[*hot labor summer.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/01/us/workers-labor-unions-los-angeles-california.html)”

Here’s our conversation, lightly edited.

Refresh my memory about labor actions that took place in L.A. this year.

In March, the Los Angeles Unified School District support staff held a [*three-day strike*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/21/us/lausd-strike-los-angeles-schools.html), which sort of felt like the beginning of a moment, at least in L.A. Our colleague Kurtis Lee and I reported on the idea that many parents, who you’d think might be frustrated or annoyed that the schools shut down, were [*actually really sympathetic*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/22/us/la-schools-strike.html), because they understand how hard it is to afford to live in L.A.

Then you get the Hollywood strikes. The writers’ strike, for the first time, brought together in solidarity more traditionally unionized blue-collar industries and writers, who are theoretically knowledge workers but were also feeling squeezed and worried that their jobs were not sustainable. That really kicked things into higher gear.

Why has L.A. in particular been such a hot spot for labor action?

Elsewhere in the country, labor support seems renewed because it’s set against a longer-term decline in union membership. But California and L.A., specifically, had been able to buck that larger trend, and the reasons go back to the organization of largely immigrant workforces in L.A. in the ’80s and ’90s.

That era transformed California’s politics: Almost every powerful politician in L.A. has some kind of community organizing history. Many of the most powerful leaders in L.A. are labor leaders, because they come up through those channels. So labor here is already really strong.

The other piece of it is that L.A. is just a place where inequality is really, really visible. San Francisco is also that way, but San Francisco is not as big as L.A. And there are a lot of ***working-class*** Angelenos who work in service jobs or warehouses or manufacturing. All of those people feel how hard it is to get by in L.A.

The strikes have definitely brought attention to that issue, but have they gotten workers better contracts?

I think the sense is that they are effective. Employers, companies are seeing that these labor actions go on a long time and they can really disrupt operations.

What do you think is going to happen in 2024? Are we going to have even more labor actions, even more strikes?

I think it just depends on which contracts are coming up. I think the new solidarity we’ve seen among workers across industries — like how nurses and teachers showed up to the writers’ strike picket lines — is definitely going to be a lasting thing.

The rest of the news

* Many Californians are losing their Medicaid coverage because of [*missing or incomplete paperwork*](https://calmatters.org/health/2023/12/medi-cal-renewal-health-insurance/) for eligibility reviews, CalMatters reports.

Southern California

* Jonathan Majors, who was one of Hollywood’s fastest-rising stars, [*was found guilty of assault and harassment*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/18/nyregion/jonathan-majors-trial-verdict.html) for attacking his girlfriend in a car in Manhattan. Marvel Studios, which had plans to feature him in several films, parted ways with him after the verdict.

1. Two local nonprofit leaders are praising members of Congress for introducing a bipartisan bill that would authorize [*$60 million annually to protect coastal wetlands*](https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/communities/north-county/story/2023-12-18/coastal-lagoons-to-benefit-from-60-million-federal-program), The San Diego Union-Tribune reports.
2. U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers found almost two tons of methamphetamine and cocaine [*buried within vats of jalapeño paste*](https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2023-12-18/jalapeno-paste-search-leads-to-narcotics-bust), The Los Angeles Times reports.

Central California

* Nearly [*18,000 people are licensed to carry concealed weapons*](https://www.fresnobee.com/news/local/article282925053.html) in Fresno County, and a new law presents hurdles for new applicants, The Fresno Bee reports.

Northern California

* San Francisco prosecutors began charging 80 protesters who [*blocked traffic for hours last month on the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge*](https://apnews.com/article/san-francisco-protesters-charged-israel-gaza-war-4b653bef28be2c82e4c8291210fd1a92) while demanding a cease-fire in Gaza, The Associated Press reports.

1. The vacancy rate for office space in San Francisco has reached the [*highest level on record*](https://www.sfchronicle.com/realestate/article/s-f-office-vacancy-record-high-could-change-2024-18561543.php), The San Francisco Chronicle reports.

Where we’re traveling

Today’s tip comes from Margret Caruso, who lives in Redwood City. She recommends a Central Coast vacation:

“A September trip to Pajaro Dunes, with its starry night sky and shorebird-filled beaches, was the perfect launchpad for magical scuba diving in Monterey Bay; a boat tour of the Elkhorn Slough, where we were astonished by the numbers of sea otters and seals, along with sea lions, cormorants and a peregrine falcon; whale watching from Moss Landing; and the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk. A walk along the cliffs of Wilder Ranch near Santa Cruz, where we spotted whales along with seals and sea otters, was the highlight of a day of beach bird watching along Highway 1 and tide pooling in Half Moon Bay (and a perfect birthday excursion)."

Tell us about your favorite places to visit in California. Email your suggestions to [*CAtoday@nytimes.com*](mailto:CAtoday@nytimes.com). We’ll be sharing more in upcoming editions of the newsletter.

Tell us

As 2023 comes to a close, tell us what the best part of your year was. Did you have a big birthday, start a new job or adopt a pet? Email us at [*CAtoday@nytimes.com*](mailto:CAtoday@nytimes.com). Please include your name and the city in which you live.

And before you go, some good news

After exhaustive research, New York Times Cooking and The Times’s food writers and editors have compiled their list of the year’s best cookbooks, with a sizable cohort of California chefs and recipe developers represented.

In “Love Is a Pink Cake,” Claire Ptak, a baker born in California, puts a West Coast spin on traditional British sweets with delightful results. “Rintaro,” the first cookbook from Sylvan Mishima Brackett, the chef and owner of Izakaya Rintaro in San Francisco, mines the Japanese-California fusion cuisine he has popularized at his restaurant.

The full list of 18 cookbooks runs the gamut, including intricate recipes and meditations on the basics. Each has creativity, memorable visuals and, above all, many, many delicious dishes. [*Read the list here*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/12/dining/best-cookbooks-2023.html).

Thanks for reading. I’ll be back tomorrow. — Soumya

P.S. Here’s [*today’s Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/crosswords/game/mini).

Maia Coleman and Briana Scalia contributed to California Today. You can reach the team at [*CAtoday@nytimes.com*](mailto:CAtoday@nytimes.com).

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

PHOTO: A Service Employees International Union Local 99 rally in downtown Los Angeles in May. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Francine Orr/Los Angeles Times, via Associated Press FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** December 19, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Still Subversive, but Taking a Joyful Turn***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67KM-YPS1-JBG3-63JP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 20, 2023 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. 3

**Length:** 1121 words

**Byline:** By Alex Marshall

**Body**

The Scottish trio has been making political, genre-blending songs for a decade. On a new album, the group embraces the elation of community.

When the Scottish band Young Fathers were partway through writing their new album, ''Heavy Heavy,'' Graham Hastings, known as G, played his brother-in-law a song called ''Rice.'' The track features cascading drums and bouncy, booming bass as the three-piece chant lyrics including ''These hands can heal'' and ''See the turning tide.''

''What are you doing?'' Hastings, who sings and plays keys, percussion and synths, recalled his brother-in-law asking. ''That's far too happy for Young Fathers.''

For years, the group's music had been labeled abrasive or forbidding. Being told it was too upbeat, Hastings, 35, said, was ''another surprise, another sense that we were doing something we hadn't before.''

Over the past decade, Young Fathers -- which also includes Alloysious Massaquoi and Kayus Bankole, who both sing, rap and play percussion -- have made music that juxtaposes gospel, hip-hop, electronic music and even the swagger of punk. Despite winning the prestigious Mercury Prize in 2014, their songs have a habit, Bankole said, of ''falling between the cracks,'' and rarely get played on pop radio stations.

The director Danny Boyle, who used Young Fathers' music for his 2017 movie ''T2 Trainspotting,'' said in an interview that they ''are like a boy band, except no other boy band you've ever heard in your life before.'' Their music, with oblique lyrics that touch on topics including masculinity and attitudes to immigrants, sums up the loneliness of urban Britain, Boyle added, but he said the group sings with such ''white and Black soul,'' it lifts listeners up.

That uplift is the focus of ''Heavy Heavy,'' Young Fathers' fourth studio album and first in five years, though not necessarily by design. In a recent interview at its messy studio -- a squat building wedged between a graveyard and a furniture upholsterer in a ***working class*** district of Edinburgh -- the trio said it hadn't taken an intentional direction on the LP. It was just trying to ''expel all we needed to expel,'' Massaquoi, 35, said.

At the end of 2019, the group started working on ''Heavy Heavy'' following a rare year off, so when the three men finally met up to write, they could really ''appreciate what we have: the arguments, the fallouts, the joy, the happy moments,'' Bankole, 35, said.

The trio has been having those ups and downs for over 20 years, after meeting when they were 14 at an underage club in Edinburgh. They each had very different backgrounds: Massaquoi arrived in Edinburgh as a refugee from Liberia's civil war; Hastings grew up in a ***working class*** home in the city; and Bankole lived in a Nigerian household where he was expected to become a doctor or a lawyer. But Massaquoi said that on the club's dance floor, surrounded by tipsy teenagers, their connection was immediate.

Soon, they were making tracks in Hastings's bedroom, crowded around a microphone hanging in a closet. As teenagers, they initially tried to be a ''psychedelic boy band,'' Hastings said, performing upbeat rap songs, complete with dance routines, at the club where they had met. They secured a manager, but got stuck in limbo, spending a decade writing songs that were never released. Frustrated, their music took a darker turn, which unlocked a new level of their creativity. Once they started putting those new tracks online in 2013, they once again had the industry's attention.

When Young Fathers reconvened for the ''Heavy Heavy'' sessions in 2019, it was the first time they'd written music alone since those early days in the bedroom. Massaquoi said going back to their childhood connection simply ''made the most sense.'' Sometimes writing felt like ''toil,'' Hastings added, but he said the trio were addicted to ''the moments of ecstasy'' they create together. It was only once the album was finished that they realized many of its songs had a real ''communal aspect,'' Massaquoi said.

The album includes ''Ululation,'' in which the band hands vocal duties to Tapiwa Mambo, a friend who ululates joyfully in Shona, a southern African language; and ''Drum'' in which the group urges listeners to ''hear the beat of the drums and go numb, have fun.''

''Sometimes the most radical thing you can do is create a sense of community,'' Hastings said, ''to get people together and to dance.''

In the past, Young Fathers were known for taking a disruptive approach to their art. In 2015, they released an album titled ''White Men Are Black Men Too'' hoping to encourage discussion around issues of race and identity (Massaquoi and Bankole are Black, Hastings is white.)

Two years later, the group made a video for Scotland's National Portrait Gallery. As Bankole danced in front of the gallery's paintings of white aristocrats from centuries ago, Massaquoi pointed out that there was no one like him ''framed in gold'' in the museum.

''Am I meant to admire the brushwork and the colors and the historical context without considering how you came to be here, and the people who look like me aren't?'' Massaquoi intones in the track. ''Am I meant to just accept this?''

Today, discussions about Britain's legacy of colonialism are commonplace, even in the country's museums. But in 2017, some social media users posted racist responses to the video.

''Sometimes we're consciously subverting things,'' Hastings said. But as a multiracial group working across genres, ''we're accidentally subverting things by just being.''

At a recent album release show, a handful of fans in the 900-strong crowd said the group's racial mix and politics were a vital part of its appeal. Greg Shaw, 40, a personal trainer who'd driven two hours to the gig at Chalk, a club in Brighton, southern England, said he loved that the band ''sing about Black issues, about ***working class*** issues, about being together as one.''

For most of the 40-minute set, the band seemed lost in its own experience of the music: Bankole prowled and danced around the stage, dreadlocks flying; Massaquoi crooned soulfully into a mic with his eyes closed; and Hastings glared intensely at the crowd as he sung gruffly.

But just before Young Fathers began a final number, an old fan favorite called ''Toy,'' Bankole beamed at the crowd.

''What a beautiful family we have here,'' he said. Soon, much of the audience was dancing and jittering just like him. As the track ended, Hastings twisted knobs and hit buttons on a bank of electronic equipment to fill the venue with noise. Then he turned and grinned at everyone.

There's nothing wrong with happiness, Hastings had said in Edinburgh: ''There is a lot of power in joy.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/10/arts/music/young-fathers-heavy-heavy.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/10/arts/music/young-fathers-heavy-heavy.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: From left, Kayus Bankole, Graham Hastings and Alloysious Massaquoi, better known as Young Fathers, in concert in Brighton, England. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JEREMIE SOUTEYRAT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page C3.

**Load-Date:** February 20, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Steps in the Left Direction; The Shortlist***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66SN-H3M1-JBG3-64HJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 4, 2022 Friday 09:04 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS

**Length:** 1187 words

**Byline:** James Goodman

**Highlight:** Playbooks for political change from Robert Kuttner and Eric Holder, and a historian’s warning about the heart of the resistance.

**Body**

“I am a child of the New Deal,” Robert Kuttner writes in GOING BIG: FDR’s Legacy, Biden’s New Deal, and the Struggle to Save Democracy (240 pp., The New Press, $23.99), a lively mélange of history, politics and progressive playbook. He doesn’t have to say it. His reverence for Franklin Roosevelt’s response to the Great Depression and his hope that President Biden learns the right lesson from it is evident on every page.

For Kuttner, a founder of [*The American Prospect,*](https://prospect.org/) that lesson is clear: America has prospered when the federal government has gone “big,” acting to tame the market and temper “the economic and political power of capital.” Roosevelt regulated banks, created jobs through infrastructure projects, provided unemployment relief, established the minimum wage and Social Security, backed organized labor, guaranteed home and farm loans, and taxed the rich.

The gains were fragile, Kuttner writes, “built on circumstances and luck more than enduring structural change.” They came only with compromise, most consequentially with segregationists and other enemies of racial equality, North and South. Many gains were reversed when presidents, including Democrats, beginning with Jimmy Carter, advocated a smaller government and a less regulated market.

In the 2020 presidential primaries, the New Deal Democrats were Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders. Kuttner assumed Biden would continue Barack Obama’s combination of social liberalism and economic conservatism, which during the Great Recession included the no-fault bailout of the big banks and the preference for deficit reduction over additional economic stimulus. That combination, Kuttner believes, slowed the recovery and contributed to Donald Trump’s appeal among white ***working-class*** voters.

Yet as president, Biden surprised him, first with the Rescue Act, then infrastructure, [*$550 billion in new funding*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/10/us/politics/infrastructure-bill-passes.html) for roads, rails, bridges and broadband. Build Back Better was boldest of all, but by the time “Going Big” went to press in late 2021, the plan was dead. Its opponents blamed government largess for inflation. Well into 2022, it appeared that the only “big” new spending ahead was aid to Ukraine. Then in August, Democrats in Congress surprised everyone by passing legislation intended to reduce prescription drug prices, expand access to health care, increase corporate taxes and fight climate change.

Kuttner considers the bill [*“a huge step in the right direction.”*](https://prospect.org/economy/our-bewildering-economy/)The coming years, he writes, will be either a “pivot back to New Deal economics and forward to energized democracy, or a heartbreaking interregnum between two bouts of deepening American fascism.”

The Democratic Party coalition that put Roosevelt and his heirs in office included ***working-class*** Americans, Black and white. That coalition broke down during the upheavals of the 1950s and 1960s, beginning with the civil rights movement, as white ***working-class*** voters began to drift away. Progressives dream of rebuilding it, appealing to shared economic interests across racial lines. WHY WHITE LIBERALS FAIL: Race and Southern Politics from FDR to Trump (256 pp., Harvard University Press, $27.95), Anthony J. Badger’s analysis of liberal white Southerners since the 1930s, suggests how difficult it is going to be to bring the white ***working class*** back into the fold.

Badger, a British historian, writes about several dozen educators, journalists and elected officials who saw economic development as the way out of the hole the South was in. Men like Frank Graham, William Winter, Albert Gore Sr., Fritz Hollings and Terry Sanford embraced the New Deal, the Fair Deal, the War on Poverty and every iteration of the “New South.” Badger identifies promising moments in several decades, including (after the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965) successful biracial electoral coalitions. Yet today there are [*fewer white Democrats in the South than ever.*](https://scholar.princeton.edu/sites/default/files/kuziemko/files/southern_dems_aer.pdf)

Why? The historical literature is rich, and the answer is usually race. White liberals failed because they championed, or were associated with, civil rights. But in this volume, based on the Huggins lectures he delivered at Harvard in 2018, Badger finds that explanation unsatisfying. His subjects downplayed race. They championed infrastructure, education and social services they believed would benefit all.

They failed nonetheless, for many different reasons. One is that before the 1960s any Southerner who was not a rabid segregationist was considered a racial radical. Another is that in the half-century since, significant numbers of white Southerners have opposed government programs that would have improved their lives — universal health care, for example — if they thought liberals designed those programs with Black people in mind.

Badger runs from race, and racism, as explanations, but as he himself concedes, he never gets far.

The scariest part of the former Attorney General Eric Holder’s OUR UNFINISHED MARCH: The Violent Past and Imperiled Future of the Vote — A History, A Crisis, A Plan (304 pp., One World, $28) is not his description of the Supreme Court’s evisceration of the Voting Rights Act in Shelby County v. Holder (2013). Nor is it his description of the machinations of numerous state legislatures since Shelby to make it harder for people, especially Black and Latino people, to vote. Nor is it his recounting of the unsuccessful efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election. All of that has been continually reported, leaving many of us numb.

The scariest part of Holder’s book is the “note” inserted between the introduction and Chapter 1, a five-page “case for democracy.” If Americans need to be convinced, it may well be too late.

Holder (writing with Sam Koppelman) begins his history in 2015, with the 50th anniversary of the Selma march. He then takes us back to colonial America, surveying the successive stages of the struggle for the ballot: white men, Black men (for a while), women and finally, after 1965, almost everyone. This history will be familiar to readers of[*Alexander Keyssar*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/02/opinion/sunday/who-gets-to-vote.html?searchResultPosition=14), [*Ari Berman,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/30/books/review/give-us-the-ballot-by-ari-berman.html?searchResultPosition=3) [*Carol Anderson*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/12/books/review-one-person-no-vote-carol-anderson.html) and [*Martha Jones,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/22/podcasts/transcript-ezra-klein-interviews-martha-jones.html?searchResultPosition=11) just some of the scholars and journalists who in recent years have written about voting rights, past and present.

What distinguishes “Our Unfinished March” is Holder’s ambitious plan for “a more perfect future,” reforms intended not just to make it easier to vote (and harder to suppress the vote) but also to make Congress, the presidency and the Supreme Court better expressions of majority will. Holder proposes to end the filibuster, prohibit partisan redistricting, eliminate the Electoral College, allow every president to appoint two Supreme Court justices and limit each Supreme Court justice’s tenure to 18 years.

To enact even one of Holder’s proposals, the [*John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/17/us/politics/senate-voting-rights-bill.html) Democrats will have to win big in November. Wise historians say only one thing about the future: We’ll see.

James Goodman, a professor of history and creative writing at Rutgers University, Newark, is the author of “Stories of Scottsboro,” “Blackout” and “But Where Is the Lamb?”

PHOTOS This article appeared in print on page BR26.

**Load-Date:** November 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[***Former Filmmaker Offers Up a Feast***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B9K-G6S1-JBG3-601S-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 11, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section ST; Column 0; Style Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1460 words

**Byline:** By Alex Vadukul

**Body**

Hundreds of moviegoers went to rare screenings of a 1990 film directed by the New York restaurateur Keith McNally. Afterward, he treated them to half-price dinners at Balthazar.

On Thursday night at the Roxy Cinema in Lower Manhattan, a throng of scarf-bundled cinephiles attended the sold-out screening of a black-and-white psychological thriller, ''End of the Night,'' that was being shown for the first time in more than 30 years.

The film's obscurity wasn't what drew the crowd: They were there because of its unlikely writer and director, Keith McNally, the downtown restaurateur who runs Balthazar, Minetta Tavern, Pastis and Morandi.

Before he shaped New York's nightlife with his brasseries, Mr. McNally had serious filmmaking ambitions. His first full-length feature, ''End of the Night,'' premiered at the Directors' Fortnight showcase during the 1990 Cannes Film Festival, appearing alongside Whit Stillman's ''Metropolitan.'' It went on to be a minor hit in Europe before it became a cinematic footnote.

In advance of the screenings at the Roxy, an 118-seat art house cinema located in a hotel in TriBeCa, Mr. McNally drummed up interest with a post on his popular Instagram account: ''ANYONE WATCHING THIS FILM AT THE ROXY CAN EAT AT BALTHAZAR OR MINETTA TAVERN THAT SAME NIGHT FOR HALF-PRICE,'' he wrote in his typical all-caps style.

The post also quoted from a Cahiers du Cinéma review that described ''End of the Night'' as a ''noirish tale of self-destruction'' that provides an ''unsettling look at a man whose life is turned upside down during his wife's pregnancy.''

Soon after the credits rolled at the Thursday night showing, three friends lingered in the lobby, channeling their inner Pauline Kael.

''It's giving Wim Wenders,'' said Frankie Galassi, an actress and waitress who was carrying a Vanity Fair tote bag.

''It felt like a mix of 'After Hours' and 'Eyes Wide Shut,''' said Zac Zellers, a bespectacled writer and bartender with sideburns. ''I detected early Cronenberg and Jarmusch in there, too.''

''I think McNally showed promise,'' added Ben Booth, a filmmaker and waiter.

Then they discussed dinner at Balthazar, because they planned to take advantage of the discount Mr. McNally had offered to anyone who could produce a Roxy ticket. The deal was good through Sunday night, when the film would have the last of its four screenings.

Mr. Zellers placed an unlit cigarette to his lips as he and his two friends prepared to march through the cold to Balthazar. ''I think some just came for the ticket deal, because I saw a couple people leaving early during the film,'' he said. ''I'm thinking we'll do the seafood tower when we get there.''

When the trio arrived at the SoHo brasserie, the maître d' examined their tickets before seating them in the grand hall. They ordered the seafood tower, moules frites, steak tartare, frisée aux lardons, fries and profiteroles. They continued analyzing the film as they downed cocktails and concluded that it also contained echoes of the Coen brothers. When they were hit with the bill, they calculated that they had saved $199.

Ms. Galassi sipped her martini.

''I heard that McNally thought he wasn't good at making films, so that's why he stopped directing them, but I don't know,'' she said. ''I feel maybe he had more movies in him.''

Mr. McNally, 72, was seated nearby in a red booth, keeping an eye on things. A few fans nervously approached his table to compliment him on the film, including one who gave him a bouquet of flowers. Mr. McNally, who suffered a stroke several years ago, thanked them in his soft-spoken English accent.

The next afternoon, he reminisced about his filmmaking past in an interview at his cottage-like SoHo apartment as classical music played from a sound system.

''I never really liked the film, to be honest,'' Mr. McNally said of ''End of the Night.'' ''I hated when I saw it in the cinema, even at Cannes. It was difficult for me, because I noticed all the things I didn't like.''

''Now everyone is calling me and telling me they loved it,'' he continued, ''and I don't know if they're just being polite. I look back and can't believe I had the audacity to make a film, though I don't miss it, because I think my talent as a filmmaker was minimal.''

But as a teenager in London's ***working class*** East End in the 1960s, he dreamed of making movies.

At 16, while working as a hotel bellhop, he met a producer who needed to fill a role for a boy in ''Mr. Dickens of London,'' a 1967 television movie about Charles Dickens's ghost starring Michael Redgrave. Mr. McNally received the part and later acted in a West End production of Alan Bennett's ''Forty Years On.'' He went on to work as a lighting technician for ''The Rocky Horror Picture Show.''

''That's why my places are so well lit,'' he said. ''Because I used to work lighting boards.''

When he arrived in New York in the 1970s, he was committed to becoming a director. While waiting tables to pay the rent, he studied the works of Michelangelo Antonioni, Billy Wilder and Woody Allen, and he made noirish short films of his own. One of them, he said, starred a then little-known Ellen Barkin.

But after Mr. McNally opened the Odeon in 1980 with his brother, Brian, and his first wife, Lynn Wagenknecht, he was dragged under by its success. ''As Odeon and then Cafe Luxembourg and Nell's became enormously successful, my ambitions to make films got further and further away from me,'' he said.

It wasn't until he was almost 40 that he tore away from his all-consuming occupation to direct his first feature, ''End of the Night,'' which chronicles the midlife crisis of Joe Belinksy, a Manhattan insurance man who loses his job while his wife is pregnant.

The protagonist, who is suffering from a brain tumor, has a one-night stand with a Frenchwoman and goes on to pursue others who look like her in nightclubs. Mr. McNally, who was growing into fatherhood when he wrote the script, described the film as an exploration of male parental anxiety.

He followed it up in 1992 with an existential thriller, ''Far from Berlin,'' which flopped. By the time he opened Balthazar in 1997, his cinematic ambitions had faded to black.

In recent years, the young New Yorkers who have become fans of his brasseries and his often provocative Instagram account -- where he has offered support for Mr. Allen and skewered James Corden -- have also taken an interest in his cultural taste. That led the Roxy Cinema's programming director, Illyse Singer, to approach him last year about putting together a lineup of his favorite films. His film series, which played at the Roxy in September, included ''Sexy Beast,'' ''Klute,'' ''Husbands and Wives'' and ''The Third Man.''

Ms. Singer also asked him about his forgotten 1990 movie.

''I didn't even know where the film cans were,'' Mr. McNally said. ''But Illyse was persistent, so I found them for her. They were in the basement of my house in Martha's Vineyard. Two big film cans that had been sitting there for years.''

He said he had no plans to see ''End of the Night'' at the Roxy.

''I'm not going to any screenings, because I can't bear to see it myself,'' he said. ''But I'm hearing that lots of young people are coming to the film, and that makes me happy. I'm not quite sure why they like it, but I'm glad they do.''

As to the 50 percent discount he was offering, Mr. McNally said: ''I don't want to subject anybody to having to see my film without getting something in return. I lose money on the deal, but I don't care.''

By the end of Sunday's dinner service, Balthazar and Minetta Tavern had given half-price meals to some 300 movie nerds from the Roxy. The four screenings had all sold out.

Padma Lakshmi sat among the filmgoers on Friday night. After the showing, she offered a quick review as she hailed a cab outside: ''I thought the cinematography was beautiful, and it reminded me of an older New York that I miss.''

Over a shrimp cocktail at Balthazar later that evening was Megan Griffith, an actor. ''It was an interesting yet infuriating exploration of the private life of a married man,'' she said. ''But I think any film that makes you feel a raw, visceral feeling is a success, and he did that.''

At the end of another screening, Hannah Wyatt and Sean Bentley prepared to take their tickets to Minetta Tavern to dine on roasted bone marrow and the black label burger. Ms. Wyatt, a photographer, said the movie had deepened her understanding of Mr. McNally.

''I guess his film career didn't work out for him,'' she said. ''But I admire him for having at least tried to follow his dream. It's hard to be professionally successful at doing the things we're passionate about. So most people don't even try.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/06/style/keith-mcnally-balthazar-filmmaking-past.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/06/style/keith-mcnally-balthazar-filmmaking-past.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: The restaurateur Keith McNally, at home in SoHo, made two movies in the 1990s. (PHOTOGRAPH BY LANNA APISUKH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (ST1)

Above from left, James Chrisman, Sam Eichner, Joshuwa Riggs and Joe Eichner, among those seeing Keith McNally's 1990 movie ''End of the Night'' at the Roxy Cinema. Right from top: dinner at Mr. McNally's restaurant Balthazar, where audience members dined half-price

the film's poster in Mr. McNally's apartment

he found the canisters containing the film's reels in the basement of his house on Martha's Vineyard. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY LANNA APISUKH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (ST3) This article appeared in print on page ST1, ST3.

**Load-Date:** February 11, 2024

**End of Document**



[***President Biden’s Economic Optimism***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BH4-GCD1-JBG3-63F7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 8, 2024 Friday 06:49 EST

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 2013 words

**Byline:** German Lopez German Lopez is a writer for The Morning, The Times&amp;#8217;s flagship daily newsletter, where he covers major world events and how they affect people.

**Highlight:** The economy has rebounded. But to win re-election, Biden must help voters believe the good news.

**Body**

The economy has rebounded. But to win re-election, Biden must help voters believe the good news.

A year ago, few economists believed that President Biden could come before Congress and make the boast that he did last night: “I inherited an economy on the brink,” he said. “Now our economy is literally the envy of the world.”

Back then, many experts [*expected a recession*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html). They worried that America’s central bank, the Federal Reserve, would have to crush the economy to reduce inflation. Instead, unemployment is near its lowest point in half a century. Wages have risen faster than prices. Inflation has come down to more manageable levels.

Before the biggest audience he’ll address until his nomination convention this summer, Biden was able to argue he had saved America from economic ruin. Today’s newsletter will look at the surprisingly strong state of the economy — and Biden’s role in its rebound. (Below, we also cover other highlights from last night’s speech.)

Yes, Biden may claim too much credit. Presidents don’t control the U.S. economy. But they also tend to receive too much blame when it struggles. And Biden’s approval ratings are weak partly because Americans have been unhappy with the high inflation of the past few years. Central to his campaign for re-election is an effort to persuade voters that the economy has turned a corner.

Biden’s contribution

Here is the case in favor of Biden’s handling of the economy: Compare it with the slow recovery that followed the 2007-8 financial crisis.

In response to that recession, the federal government underreacted. Congress passed stimulus measures that many economists now say were too small. Inflation didn’t rise, but the unemployment rate remained above 5 percent for nearly seven years after the downturn ended.

With Covid, the government avoided the same mistake. Congress passed multiple stimulus measures under Donald Trump and then another, the American Rescue Plan, after Biden took office. All of this was more than triple the size of the measures for the previous recession, according to the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget.

It worked: Unemployment fell below 5 percent after less than a year and a half. Millions of Americans got jobs years earlier than they would have if the federal government had reacted as meagerly as it did before. And the U.S. has grown faster than its peers, as this chart by my colleague Ashley Wu shows:

“America is rising,” Biden said last night. “We have the best economy in the world.”

Biden’s critics counter that the government actually overreacted to the Covid recession — and helped spur inflation as a result. The stimulus efforts flooded Americans and businesses with cash. That led to higher demand for a finite supply of goods and services, and prices rose. The Federal Reserve then had to step in and raise interest rates to lower inflation. In the past, similar moves led to recessions.

But the central bank has so far succeeded in executing what it called a “soft landing”: It has cooled the economy just enough to tame prices but not enough to cause a downturn. Year-over-year inflation is now around 3 percent, down from a peak of 9 percent in 2022. And unemployment has not increased. Americans have barely felt a landing, let alone a hard one.

For Biden’s supporters, this is vindication. Yes, the couple of years of higher inflation were painful. But the economy has moved back on track much faster than it did after the financial crisis.

Will it help Biden?

Politically, the economy’s strength should be good for Biden. Solid growth historically carries presidents to re-election.

Yet many Americans [*do not feel the good news*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html). Biden’s approval rating is low. Consumer sentiment has improved in the past year, but it’s below historical averages, surveys show. Americans remain upset about higher prices, particularly for food and housing, even if they have subsided. And many people are focused on other issues: chaos at the U.S.-Mexico border, Israel’s war in Gaza and Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

“It doesn’t make news, but in a thousand cities and towns, the American people are writing the greatest comeback story never told,” Biden said yesterday.

Biden’s advantage is time. There are still eight months until the election. Before then, Americans may come to appreciate the strong economy. Inflation could fall further. Perhaps new federal investments in American-made computer chips, infrastructure and clean energy will start to have a bigger effect on voters’ livelihoods. Biden’s ability to win a second term may depend on it.

More from the speech

* On 2024: Biden criticized Trump (whom he referred to as “my predecessor”) throughout the speech, including for praising Vladimir Putin, for lying about the 2020 election and for trying to “pull America back to the past.”
* On help for Gaza: Biden announced that the U.S. military would [*build a floating pier*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html) off the enclave’s coast to let ships deliver aid.

1. On Israel’s military: Biden said Israel had a “fundamental responsibility” to protect civilians. But, he added, “Israel has an added burden because Hamas hides and operates among the civilian population like cowards.”
2. On his age: Biden addressed concerns with a joke. “I know I may not look like it, but I’ve been around a while,” he said. Then he added, “The issue facing our nation isn’t how old we are, it’s how old are our ideas.”
3. On a second term: He discussed policies he would pursue, such as giving first-time home buyers a tax credit, capping all prescription drug costs and restoring abortion rights nationwide.
4. On junk fees: Biden touted his administration’s plan to cap most credit card late fees at $8 a month. Trade groups [*sued to block it*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html) yesterday.
5. Read [*more takeaways from the speech*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html) and [*a fact check*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html).

More on the crowd

* The speech exemplified the raucous nature of modern American politics, [*The Times’s Peter Baker wrote*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html): “Republicans jeered and booed. Democrats chanted, ‘Four more years,’ as if it were a campaign rally.”

1. Biden addressed the recent killing of a Georgia nursing student after Marjorie Taylor Greene, a Trump ally, taunted him to do so. He held up a pin with the student’s name, Laken Riley.
2. Biden also referred to the Venezuelan migrant charged in the killing as “an illegal.” Some Democrats [*criticized him for using that word*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html).

* Despite the interruption, Speaker Mike Johnson was largely successful at keeping Republicans from intervening. [*See his silent facial expressions*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html).

1. George Santos, the New York Republican expelled from Congress last year, attended the speech. As a former member, [*he has lifetime floor privileges*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html).

Commentary on the speech

* “The most important thing about this State of the Union was not the content but the delivery,” Jamelle Bouie writes in Times Opinion. “Biden was combative, energized and feisty — and partisan.” (Opinion writers [*tallied Biden’s best and worst moments*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html).)

1. His speech was “more like something one would hear at the D.N.C.,” The Cook Political Report’s [*Amy Walter writes*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html).
2. “Democrats will be pleased,” Matthew Continetti [*writes in The Washington Free Beacon*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html). “But I am also skeptical it will persuade independents and ***working-class*** men and women of all races that Biden has the answers to America’s problems.”
3. State of the Union addresses are often fleeting. But in rare cases they make a lasting impact, [*G. Elliott Morris of 538 notes*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html). “Biden may get a real boost.”
4. Stephen Colbert [*recapped Biden’s performance*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html) on “The Late Show.”

THE LATEST NEWS

New York City

* Some New Yorkers criticized Gov. Kathy Hochul after she [*deployed the National Guard*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html) and the State Police in the subway.

1. You can say no if the National Guard asks to search your bag. [*Here are your rights*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html).
2. The Manhattan district attorney accused some public workers of being involved in a scheme to [*steal the personal information of homeless people*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html) to file for fraudulent benefits.
3. A man who became a champion of rehabilitation after leaving prison was [*charged with murder*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html).

International

* Sweden [*formally joined NATO*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html). Its membership is a blow to Putin.

1. Russia-linked websites disguised as U.S. news pages — with names like the New York News Daily — [*spread misinformation about Ukraine*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html).

* In Haiti, gangs control access to the main airport and seaports. [*Read more about the violence there*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html).

Education

* Brown University, joining other colleges, [*will again require applicants to submit standardized test scores*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html), ending a Covid-era “test optional” policy.

1. High school students will take a [*fully digital SAT*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html) this weekend for the first time. The new test, an hour shorter than before, is meant to reduce stress. ([*Try some sample questions*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html).)

Business

* Mira Murati, OpenAI’s chief technology officer, played a significant role in her boss Sam Altman’s temporary ouster. [*Read more about the internal conflict*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html).

1. Rivian, a struggling electric vehicle company, will [*halt construction of a $5 billion factory*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html) in Georgia.

Weather

* Strong winds [*moved a lake in Death Valley*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html) two miles north.

1. Forecasters are concerned that [*coming rain could flood cities including Atlanta*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html).

Other Big Stories

* Lawmakers proposed a bill that would require TikTok’s Chinese parent to sell it or face a U.S. ban. TikTok [*encouraged users to call Congress and complain*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html).

1. The Senate passed bipartisan legislation to expand compensation [*for victims of nuclear contamination*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html) caused by the government. It heads to the House.
2. A year after breaking off an engagement, Rupert Murdoch, 92, is engaged again — [*to someone else*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html). It would be his fifth marriage.

Opinions

To [*end a sentence with a preposition*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html) is natural to English, so why aren’t we supposed to? Rules against it have always been elitist, John McWhorter writes.

Here are columns by Michelle Goldberg on the [*antisemitism of the Republican candidate*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html) for North Carolina governor and David Brooks on the confidence of [*Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html).

MORNING READS

Planes, cranes and automobiles: Orphaned manatees were returned to the wild after three years. [*Follow their journey*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html).

Malaysia Airlines: Flight MH370 disappeared a decade ago. [*Here’s what we know today*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html).

House over spouse: The Times spoke with 88 people about [*how they divided their homes*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html) after a divorce.

Lives Lived: Buddy Duress, a small-time heroin dealer living on the streets of the Upper West Side, became a sensation in the New York film scene in the 2010s, helping to start the careers of Josh and Benny Safdie. He [*died at 38*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html).

SPORTS

N.H.L.: The Pittsburgh Penguins [*traded the winger Jake Guentzel*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html) to the Carolina Hurricanes hours before today’s deadline.

N.B.A.: The Minnesota Timberwolves star Karl-Anthony Towns [*is out indefinitely*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html) with a meniscus tear in his left knee.

Dog sledding: Dallas Seavey, a five-time Iditarod champion, killed a moose that had become entangled with his team. Race officials penalized him for [*not gutting the moose*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html) well enough.

ARTS AND IDEAS

Hidden passages: Whether the goal is to foil burglars, tuck away extra storage or simply add some whimsy, [*secret doors are having a moment*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html). When building her new home in Dallas, Tabitha Kane, co-host of a true-crime podcast, added a faux fireplace that spins to reveal a secret room whenever a family member touches a biometric scanner. “It makes the house more fun,” she said.

More on culture

* Akira Toriyama, who was one of Japan’s leading authors of comics and most famous for the highly successful manga and anime franchise “Dragon Ball,” [*died at 68*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html).

1. [*Mike Tyson, 57, will fight Jake Paul*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html), the 27-year-old YouTuber turned boxer. The bout will air on Netflix in July.

THE MORNING RECOMMENDS …

Bake [*homemade Pop-Tarts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html) with an easy cream-cheese dough.

Follow these [*tips to feel rested*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html) when the clocks spring forward on Sunday.

Forget to turn off the lights? [*It’s OK*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html).

Take [*our news quiz*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html).

GAMES

Here is [*today’s Spelling Bee*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html). Yesterday’s pangram was untucked.

And here are [*today’s Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html), [*Wordle*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html), [*Sudoku*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html) and [*Connections*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html).

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

[*Sign up here to get this newsletter in your inbox*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html). Reach our team at [*themorning@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html).

PHOTO: President Biden (PHOTOGRAPH BY Doug Mills/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 8, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Floorboards (Possibly) Trodden by Shakespeare Are Found in England***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69B4-6691-DXY4-X03G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 5, 2023 Thursday 21:22 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; europe

**Length:** 788 words

**Byline:** Derrick Bryson Taylor

**Highlight:** Boards dating to the 15th century were found during renovations at St. George’s Guildhall. However, some Shakespeare experts are not certain the playwright touched them.

**Body**

Boards dating to the 15th century were found during renovations at St. George’s Guildhall. However, some Shakespeare experts are not certain the playwright touched them.

How important is the wooden stage on which William Shakespeare might have played?

That depends.

During the early stages of a renovation project at St. George’s Guildhall in King’s Lynn, England, more than 100 miles northeast of London, experts discovered that timber boards found beneath layers of flooring in part of the hall date to the early 15th century.

“We’ve got the actual boards on which Shakespeare was playing, which is really, really exciting and pretty mind-blowing,” Tim FitzHigham, the creative director of St. George’s Guildhall, said on Thursday.

But some Shakespeare experts cast doubt on the significance of the discovery, noting that it was not certain that Shakespeare had touched the boards.

Most people know of Shakespeare. He rose from ***working-class*** obscurity to become one of the most revered playwrights of the last 400 years. His acclaimed works, such as “Hamlet,” “Macbeth” and “Romeo and Juliet,” all of which examine the human character, are widely studied and are regularly performed around the world today. He died in April 1616.

St. George’s Guildhall has a rich history. Its first recorded theater performance was in 1445, [*according to the National Trust*](https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/norfolk/st-georges-guildhall/the-history-of-st-georges-guildhall), an organization for heritage conservation in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. By 1585, the Queen’s Players were performing there with some regularity.

Academic research suggests that Shakespeare performed with the Earl of Pembroke’s Men at the guildhall in 1593, when theaters in London were shuttered because of the plague. Robert Armin, one of Shakespeare’s leading actors, who is credited with having an influence on the playwright, was native to King’s Lynn and lived close to the theater.

Mr. FitzHigham said the guildhall had an account book proving that the theater company had been paid to perform at the venue.

Jonathan Clark, a senior archaeologist who was hired to work with the hall, spent the last two months examining the venue and the flooring.

By studying the growth rings in the wood, Dr. Clark was able to determine that the flooring dated to between 1417 and 1430, Mr. FitzHigham said. Dr. Clark then surveyed the building and found pegs — about as wide as wine corks but much longer — that hold the beams into the cross beams.

Using those clues in combination with the method of construction and other elements, Dr. Clark “confirmed that the floor that we found underneath all the other layers of flooring, that has been built up over the hundreds of years, is the original floor,” Mr. FitzHigham said.

“That would have been the floor that was there when William Shakespeare performed there in 1592-93,” he added.

For now, renovation plans at the hall are on hold until officials can answer several questions, including how they plan to keep the flooring safe and how visitors might get to experience it.

Despite the buzz among Shakespeare enthusiasts, some experts have their doubts, including Siobhan Keenan, a professor of Shakespeare and Renaissance literature at De Montfort University in Leicester, England.

“In Shakespeare’s case, we actually don’t know for certain who he was acting with before 1594,” she said, noting there are a number of theories.

What is known for certain is that a group of players called the Earl of Pembroke’s Men played at St. George’s Guildhall and that the group performed some of Shakespeare’s plays, she said. But whether he was in the company at the time, she said, is “speculative.”

Similarly, Michael Dobson, the director of the Shakespeare Institute in Stratford-upon-Avon, England, said the discovery was unlikely to shift what is known about Shakespeare.

“I don’t think it’s hugely important unless you’re a kind of fetishist who really thinks that having a piece of wood that has probably been touched by Shakespeare’s foot is going to make an enormous difference to your understanding of the plays, which I rather doubt,” he said.

Mr. Dobson noted that other — and, perhaps, more important — structures tied to Shakespeare are open to visitors, including [*his birthplace*](https://www.shakespeare.org.uk/visit/shakespeares-birthplace/) in Stratford-upon-Avon and [*his old schoolroom*](https://www.shakespearesschoolroom.org/), where he wrote his first works.

The floorboards in St George’s Guildhall are “not the oldest thing associated with Shakespeare by any means,” Mr. Dobson said. “But it’s amazing how much clutter from the 16th century is still lying around in England.”

PHOTO: Jonathan Clark, left, an archaeologist, and Tim FitzHigham, the creative director of St. George’s Guildhall, with recently discovered flooring that they say dates to between 1417 and 1430. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Zachary Culpin/BNPS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** October 5, 2023

**End of Document**



[***In Nebraska, Putting Labor's Muscle to the Test***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BCG-B2J1-DXY4-X0R4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 20, 2024 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 12

**Length:** 1691 words

**Byline:** By Jonathan Weisman

**Body**

Dan Osborn led a strike in 2021 against the Kellogg's plant in Omaha. Now he is challenging Senator Deb Fischer as an independent in deep-red Nebraska.

In 2021, as the first Halloween decorations were coming out in Omaha, Neb., a mechanic named Dan Osborn led 500 of his fellow union members out of the Kellogg's cereal plant on F Street and onto the picket lines.

The strike, which involved over 1,400 workers across multiple plants, would last for a difficult 77 days, through brutal storms and imported strikebreakers and the threat of summary dismissals, which drew the attention of President Biden. A first contract was soundly rejected by the union, then a second finally ended the walkout, just before Christmas.

Now Mr. Osborn, 48, is trying to do something considerably harder: win a United States Senate seat as an independent in the deep-red state of Nebraska.

Mr. Osborn's long-shot bid to defeat Deb Fischer, Nebraska's Republican senior senator, in November, or even come close, will test whether the rising power of an energized union movement can translate to high elective office during an election year when ***working class*** voters will likely decide the next president, and the direction of the country.

The rail unions of western Nebraska first approached him last year to mount a bid, and a December survey from a left-leaning group called Change Research put Mr. Osborn up on Ms. Fischer, at 40 percent over her 38 percent. It is a questionable result, as even Mr. Osborn's supporters concede, but enough to capture imaginations in a one-party state that has long receded from the national political conversation.

With no Democrat in the race, the Nebraska Democratic Party is likely to endorse Mr. Osborn at a meeting on March 2, the party chairwoman, Jane Kleeb, said, though Mr. Osborn said he was not sure he wants that. The state A.F.L.-C.I.O. will back him at a gathering in late March, and national unions are taking a close look.

But can a union leader with no political experience find an agenda that transcends the two political parties and appeals narrowly to blue-collar wallets? And can that leader find the money to put that message out farther west, beyond the urban centers of Omaha and Lincoln?

''I've gone up against a major American corporation,'' Mr. Osborn said as he cut into a steak Tuesday night. ''I stood up for what I thought was right, and I won.''

The Fischer campaign appears to be treating Mr. Osborn as a nuisance, not as a serious threat to her bid for a third term.

''Deb Fischer has actual, strong and deep support all across the state, including 93 bipartisan county chairs and over 1,000 endorsements,'' Derek Oden, her campaign manager, said. ''She is proud of her longstanding support from members of Nebraska labor unions and is willing to work with any Nebraskan to make life easier for working families across our state.'' The campaign cited three firefighters' unions as well as the carpenters and electricians who backed her six years ago.

Mr. Osborn's attempt to leap from leader of his local to member of the U.S. Senate has little precedent, almost akin to the five failed presidential bids of the celebrated labor leader Eugene V. Debs early last century.

Union members in other states have made the jump to elective office, like Tim Walz, the governor of Minnesota, and Brandon Johnson, the mayor of Chicago. The New Jersey A.F.L.-C.I.O. has trained 1,300 members to run for office over the past 27 years, with a success rate of 76 percent.

Those seeking office receive instruction in campaigning, opposition research, election law, campaign finance, public speaking and handling the press, said Charles Wowkanech, the president of the New Jersey A.F.L.-C.I.O. In a heavily unionized, Democratic state, the program identifies and contacts every union member in a given district, and, often, they account for more than enough votes to win.

That is not the situation in lightly unionized Nebraska, where 9.4 percent of workers are represented. But even in New Jersey, where 17.3 percent are, the highest office sought has been the U.S. House of Representatives, where a union electrician who went through the program, Donald Norcross, holds the First Congressional District.

''We modeled the labor candidate program after apprenticeship programs,'' Mr. Wowkanech said. ''You don't start as a journeyman earning top rate. You work your way up.''

In 2018, Randy Bryce, who is known as ''Iron Stache,'' captured liberal imaginations and a lot of money as an iron worker (and the secretary of the Racine County Labor Council) running for the house seat of retiring Speaker Paul D. Ryan in Wisconsin. He lost by more than 12 percentage points.

''There definitely are ways to reach across the aisle, but it's getting rougher every year, that civil divide,'' Mr. Bryce said. ''We've got to find reasons to talk to each other again, and working people running for office is a start.''

Soft-spoken and earnest, Mr. Osborn is not exactly Norma Rae, the brash protagonist of the 1979 film that dramatized the plight of workers and the struggle to organize in the South. Kellogg's management fired him a year ago, accusing him of watching Netflix while on the job, a charge he and his friends called trumped up. He is now an apprentice with the steamfitters' union, still working on heating and air conditioning systems as he gets his campaign in gear. He's also a father of three children between the ages of 16 and 21. His wife is the general manager of a bar and grill in Omaha.

''He's not pounding his fist on the table,'' said Danny Begley, an Omaha City Council member and vice president of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 1483. ''He's measured. He's calculated.''

Mr. Osborn, who said he was a Democrat until 2016, wants to run on a narrow platform with what he hopes is extremely broad appeal: legalize marijuana (at least for medical use), raise the minimum wage nationally, secure abortion rights, protect gun rights and expand laws to facilitate union organizing. He condemns the inflation of the Biden era, but blames corporate greed and price gouging. He speaks of the U.S. border in distinctly Republican ways.

''Without borders you don't have a country,'' he said, though he added that once the border is closed, Congress should explore ways to legalize some undocumented workers already in the U.S.

Early in Israel's war in Gaza, campaign advisers told him to put out a statement staking a position. He refused, saying that it was not an issue he wants associated with his campaign.

''Dan has to get a message out that transcends political lines and goes to their pocketbooks,'' said Josh Josoff, an ally with the International Union of Elevator Constructors. ''Don't let the wedge issues pull you away.''

On the one issue he most certainly will not be able to escape, the presidential campaign, he seemed genuinely befuddled. Nebraska is overwhelmingly behind Donald J. Trump, as is Ms. Fischer. Mr. Osborn is not, a potential campaign killer this November. But he is not backing President Biden either.

''I think they're both too old; I think they're both incompetent,'' he said, finally settling on a position. ''There's a good chance I won't vote for president.''

Bob Kerrey -- a once-popular Democratic governor and senator in Nebraska who, in 2012, tried and failed at a comeback against Ms. Fischer in her first run for the Senate -- is a fan of Mr. Osborn, but is also a skeptic.

''He's got a hard-core economic agenda, and he has a really unique profile,'' Mr. Kerrey said. ''You can't say, 'Well, what do you know about what we're going through?' because he does. He knows that the rules don't work for working people.''

But Nebraska is stacked against Mr. Osborn. West of Lincoln are some of the largest rail yards in the country, but the freight rail companies, backed by Nebraska Republicans, have manhandled the rail unions, which were the first to ask Mr. Osborn to run after a new contract failed to grant their demand of seven paid sick days a year. Such unions may have limited power to deliver North Platte and points west.

The state's junior senator and former Republican governor, Pete Ricketts, is the other obstacle to Mr. Osborn's bid. He comes from a family of financiers worth billions of dollars, and he is more than willing to spend it.

Just ask Crista Eggers, who has been trying to legalize medical marijuana since 2019 to treat her son, Colton, who suffers daily epileptic seizures that his physicians believe are treatable with cannabis. Only three states still prohibit medical marijuana, though polls suggest 70 percent to 80 percent of Nebraskans support it. One of those people opposed is Mr. Ricketts, who declared as governor, ''If you legalize marijuana, you're going to kill your kids.''

In 2020, Nebraskans for Medical Marijuana got 197,000 signatures, in more than enough counties to get a legalization referendum on the ballot. But the Nebraska Supreme Court struck it from consideration on a technicality. Supporters tried again in 2022 but came up short of signatures. Ms. Eggers and her group are now at it again, hoping for some synergy with a ballot drive to protect abortion rights and with Mr. Osborn's campaign, though the group is prohibited from endorsing him.

A problem for Ms. Eggers, and for Mr. Osborn, is money. Signature drives are costly, and 90 of Nebraska's 93 counties are rural, adding to the challenge. Mr. Osborn himself has little name recognition statewide, and would require an introduction in the form of television ads and a robust campaign schedule, both expensive endeavors. Union supporters are optimistic that Mr. Osborn's message resonates against Ms. Fischer, if he has the cash to get it out.

''We just need to push past the Republican and Democrat thing, these teams we're on,'' said Josh Dredla, a friend of Mr. Osborn's who was on the Kellogg's picket lines.

Mr. Osborn said at a minimum the campaign needs to raise $2 million. So far, he's raised just over $200,000.

Ms. Fischer ended 2023 sitting on a war chest of close to $3.3 million.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/18/us/politics/nebraska-union-senate-race.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/18/us/politics/nebraska-union-senate-race.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Dan Osborn, left, is focusing on pocketbook issues in his independent campaign to unseat Senator Deb Fischer, a Nebraska Republican. Mr. Osborn is expected to be endorsed by the Democratic Party. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID ROBERT ELLIOTT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

SARAHBETH MANEY/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

A strike against the Kellogg's plant in Omaha in 2021. Mr. Osborn led his fellow union members onto the picket lines. The strike lasted for 77 days. (PHOTOGRAPH BY LILY SMITH/OMAHA WORLD-HERALD, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS) This article appeared in print on page A12.

**Load-Date:** February 20, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Two Hopeless Loners Haunt a Bar in the Bronx***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69MT-5141-JBG3-60SW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 15, 2023 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2023 The New York Times Company

**Section:** Section C; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 873 words

**Byline:** By Elisabeth Vincentelli

**Body**

The actress makes her stage debut alongside Christopher Abbott in an Off Broadway revival of John Patrick Shanley's compact and combative play.

Nursing beers and munching on pretzels, Danny and Roberta are sitting at neighboring tables in a Bronx bar as Hall & Oates's slinky hit ''I Can't Go for That (No Can Do)'' booms out of the jukebox. ''Where do you dare me/To draw the line?/You've got the body/Now you want my soul,'' the song goes, as if laying out a playbook for the complicated courtship that they are about to enact.

These two hopeless loners are the only people in the bar in this Off Broadway revival of John Patrick Shanley's ''Danny and the Deep Blue Sea,'' at the Lucille Lortel Theater. Though modest in scale, the show is one of the fall's hottest thanks to its stars, Aubrey Plaza and Christopher Abbott. Plaza, who is making her stage debut, has seen her screen career shift to a higher gear in the past few years, with acclaimed performances in the film ''Emily the Criminal'' and Season 2 of ''The White Lotus.''

It's easy to see why she and Abbott (an in-demand actor since making a name as the boyfriend of Allison Williams's character on ''Girls'') decided to do Shanley's compact piece. Since its premiere, in 1984, the play has become a favorite of actors looking for audition monologues or mettle-testing exercises. Shanley's writing sometimes devolves into hard-boiled mannerisms, but it also has a sharp pugnaciousness. As the story progresses, cracks appear in the barrage of hostilities, as the characters reveal flashes of circumspect vulnerability. Similarly, Abbott and Plaza's performances move beyond histrionics and gain confidence as their characters start letting themselves feel.

When Danny and Roberta finally strike up a conversation, it immediately reveals their combustible approaches to life itself. She is a 31-year-old divorced mother who is unhappily living with her parents. He is 29, and informs Roberta that he plans to kill himself when he turns 30. (He puts it in blunter terms; most of the play's best lines are laced with profanity.)

As quickly as their push-pull attraction is made clear, we realize that the characters' default attack mode is a manifestation of their pain and self-loathing: Danny doesn't know how to express himself without resorting to violence (we learn he recently beat up a man and left him for dead); Roberta is haunted by a traumatic episode that has filled her with soul-sapping guilt. The big question, then, is whether they will stop snarling long enough to realize solace is possible.

This early Shanley work feels like a matrix of some of the playwright's themes: Guilt is also at the heart of his Pulitzer Prize-winning ''Doubt: A Parable'' (a 2004 play that is being revived on Broadway in February), and a romance between two prickly people is central to his screenplay for the 1987 film ''Moonstruck.''

''Danny and the Deep Blue Sea'' also bears quite a few markers of a certain kind of gritty theater from the 1970s and '80s, centering as it does on bruised ***working-class*** characters whose lives are permeated with brutality. The New York Times review of the original production, which starred John Turturro and June Stein, mentions that as Danny, Turturro skillfully elicited laughs from the audience. Mores concerning depictions of and reactions to abuse have considerably shifted since then, and levity is mostly absent from Jeff Ward's production, aside from some isolated line readings.

Tonally, the show struggles most to nail the first scene, which is nearly always at top volume. The characters can't decide if they will throttle or embrace each other. We get it, but we still have to buy their picking the second option, and Abbott and Plaza don't click enough at that point to entirely sell that scenario.

Fortunately their performances deepen in parallel with the accord between Roberta and Danny. Fittingly for a play subtitled ''An Apache Dance,'' after a type of belle epoque ruffians, the production's turning point is a wordless danced transition: they push and pull, fight their attraction and give in to it. They end up in her room, where they have sex. (The movement direction is by Bobbi Jene Smith and Or Schraiber; Scott Pask designed the appropriately dingy set.)

As Roberta and Danny gingerly try to navigate the possibility of trust and emotional intimacy, the actors are more at ease with their roles and with each other. It is a testament to their skill that they are better at listening than at yelling.

Yes, Danny's final turnaround stretches credibility close to its breaking point, and the way he finally pierces Roberta's abscess of shame and fury is rather over the top -- not to mention the idea that a physical remedy would shock a psychic wound into healing. But by then Abbott and Plaza have made us care enough for these two misfits that we are ready to believe that maybe, just maybe, they can get a break.

Danny and the Deep Blue SeaThrough Jan. 7 at the Lucille Lortel Theater, Manhattan; dannyandthedeepbluesea.com. Running time: 1 hour 25 minutes.Danny and the Deep Blue SeaThrough Jan. 7 at the Lucille Lortel Theater in Manhattan; dannyandthedeepbluesea.com. Running time: 1 hour 25 minutes.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/14/theater/danny-and-the-deep-blue-sea-review-aubrey-plaza.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/14/theater/danny-and-the-deep-blue-sea-review-aubrey-plaza.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Christopher Abbott and Aubrey Plaza star in a revival of John Patrick Shanley's 1984 play. (C1)

The characters played by Christopher Abbott and Aubrey Plaza aren't sure that solace is possible. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY SARA KRULWICH/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (C2) This article appeared in print on page C1, C2.

**Load-Date:** November 15, 2023

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[***Trump's Connection With Supporters Has Little Precedent***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B47-9GP1-DXY4-X128-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 17, 2024 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 18; NEWS ANALYSIS

**Length:** 1318 words

**Byline:** By Michael C. Bender and Katie Glueck

**Body**

If Donald Trump's rivals want to stop his rise, they'll need to break his bond with his supporters. They didn't come close in Iowa.

Bill Clinton once explained the nation's two political parties by saying that Democrats want to fall in love while Republicans want to fall in line.

That adage has not withstood the Trump era. Today, it is Republicans who are besotted.

Donald J. Trump's decisive victory in Iowa revealed a new depth to the reservoir of devotion inside his party. For eight years, he has nurtured a relationship with his supporters with little precedent in politics. He validates them, he entertains them, he speaks for them and he uses them for his political and legal advantage.

This connection -- a hard-earned bond for some, a cult of personality to others -- has unleashed one of the most durable forces in American politics.

Iowa Republicans, following the lead of party officials across the country, rallied behind the former president despite a list of reasons to reject him. Republicans lost control of the presidency, the Senate and the House during his four years in office. He failed to deliver the red wave of victories he promised in the 2022 midterms. He has been charged with 91 felonies in four criminal cases this past year.

And they stayed with him even as they were offered viable alternatives: Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida, a popular young governor who embraced Mr. Trump's policies, and Nikki Haley, one of the Deep South's first female governors, who credibly promised she could win back voters Mr. Trump drove away.

Yet in the first chance Americans had to cast judgment on Mr. Trump since he tried to overthrow an election, many Iowa Republicans made clear they don't judge him. They adore him.

''Trump is not a candidate, he's the leader of a national movement,'' said Newt Gingrich, a former House speaker who has advised Mr. Trump. ''No one has come to grips with what's it like to take on the champion of a movement. That's why even as all these legal issues pile up, it just infuriates his movement and increases their anger unbelievably.''

The risks associated with the kind of unusually strong hold Mr. Trump maintains on the party have already emerged.

He has encouraged supporters to view him as above fault or defeat, a mindset that can lead to the kind of political violence that shocked the nation during the Capitol riot on Jan. 6, 2021. Elevating charisma over character can open the door to the kind of authoritarianism that Mr. Trump has promised on the campaign trail this past year.

''A lot of the people that support Donald Trump really are fed up with democracy, representative democracy, they think that an authoritarian-style government would probably be preferable at this point, in order to save the nation or whatever,'' said former Representative Charles Bass, a New Hampshire Republican who previously voted for Mr. Trump, but said he would not do so again. ''I don't think they feel threatened by having somebody who at least has the trappings of being more authoritarian than past presidents.''

Although Mr. Trump's win was resounding, the Iowa results suggest the party remains deeply divided over his return to power. Roughly half of Iowa Republicans voted for one of Mr. Trump's rivals, including about 20 percent who backed Mr. DeSantis, who finished in second, with Ms. Haley close behind.

Republicans who resisted Mr. Trump in Iowa included the party's youngest voters and anti-abortion-rights conservatives who backed Mr. DeSantis, according to entrance polls.

Similarly, Ms. Haley won moderate voters, Republicans who believed Mr. Trump lost the 2020 election, those who support a muscular foreign policy and the segment of the party that prioritized temperament in their choice for a presidential nominee.

Party strategists and officials in other states caution against drawing sweeping conclusions from the votes of a narrow slice of Republicans in a small state. As the Republican nominating contest moves to New Hampshire next week, one poll this month showed Ms. Haley within striking distance of Mr. Trump. The state's voters tend to be more moderate and less religious, suggesting an opening for her.

Mr. DeSantis's ability to threaten Mr. Trump is less clear. He marketed himself to voters as a Trumpian wunderkind, able to deliver America First policies without the drama and chaos that often trail the former president.

But MAGA Nation rivals the Queen's Guard when it comes to standing at the ready to defend their sovereign, and Mr. DeSantis was turned back as Republicans showed they are less interested in policies than they are the man.

''I know that he is picked by God for this hour,'' said Patricia Lage, an Iowa caucusgoer who spoke in support of Mr. Trump on Monday night in Carlisle, outside Des Moines. ''There are things that he has done in the past, but we all have pasts.''

Mr. Trump has spent years tending to his voters -- taking aim at their shared enemies and anticipating their grievances. He has compulsively tried to ensure that he was never out of step.

That preoccupation repeatedly drove his decisions in the White House, from refusing to wear a mask during the initial outbreak of Covid-19 in 2020 to his opposition to striking the names of Confederate generals from U.S. military bases.

More recently, Mr. Trump has attacked Mr. DeSantis for signing a six-week abortion ban and avoided committing to a federal ban on the procedure, betting that his voters will either agree or forgive him for deviating from a core conservative priority.

Perhaps most significantly, he has rallied their support amid unprecedented legal troubles in part by describing the prosecution of him as an attempt to silence them.

''You and I have been in this battle side-by-side, together -- and we have been taking on the entire corrupt system in Washington like no one has ever done before,'' Mr. Trump told Iowa supporters at a rally on Sunday, adding that the political establishment and global elites ''are at war with us -- we have to fight.''

Voter anger at political institutions remains sky-high -- a dynamic that explains what appears, at first glance, to be nothing short of a political magic act: The billionaire son of a multimillionaire has become the voice for ***working-class*** Americans.

''His gift is that the average voter in Iowa, New Hampshire and state after state feels like he connects with them,'' said David Bossie, Mr. Trump's deputy campaign manager in 2016. ''He's a blue-collar billionaire.''

Both Mr. DeSantis and Ms. Haley have tried to weaken Mr. Trump's ties to his supporters without issuing many direct attacks on Mr. Trump. But the race to emerge as the Trump alternative is becoming increasingly urgent, with limited time for the candidates to cement that standing.

Former Senator Judd Gregg of New Hampshire, a Haley supporter, lamented that much of his party had become ''sort of a cult'' around Mr. Trump. He still considers himself a Republican, though, and views Mr. Trump as the interloper.

''I don't think Trump's a Republican,'' Mr. Gregg said. ''He's a demagogue.''

David Kochel, a longtime Iowa Republican operative opposed to Mr. Trump, said the former president's bond with his voters was unlikely to be replicated by other candidates. The party has become more populist and anti-establishment, but Mr. Trump's ability to capitalize on his celebrity status while harnessing the swirling mix of anger at elites, racial grievances and mounting distrust of political, judicial and international institutions was, for now, unique.

''He's a unicorn in our party,'' Mr. Kochel said. ''Republicans have become more populist and anti-establishment, but that doesn't mean the party will nominate Majorie Taylor Greene or Jim Jordan next. There's no going back to the old party.''

Alyce McFadden contributed reporting.Alyce McFadden contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/us/politics/trump-iowa-win-voters.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/us/politics/trump-iowa-win-voters.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Supporters in Indianola, Iowa, on Sunday. Many Iowa Republicans made clear they don't judge Mr. Trump. They adore him. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HAIYUN JIANG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES ) (A18)

Former President Donald J. Trump in Des Moines on Monday. ''He's a unicorn in our party,'' a longtime Iowa Republican said. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A18-A19) This article appeared in print on page A18, A19.

**Load-Date:** January 17, 2024

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[***L'immensità***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:686X-F671-JBG3-60YF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 12, 2023 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; Movies, Performing Arts/Weekend Desk; Pg. 8

**Length:** 374 words

**Byline:** By Beatrice Loayza

**Body**

Loosely based on the transgender director Emanuele Crialese's transition, this Italian period drama is a sun-dappled nostalgia trip bristling with Oedipal tension.

Penélope Cruz is a vision of tragic beauty when she first appears in the Italian period drama ''L'immensità.'' The camera captures her in adoring close-up as it grazes over her eyes, traced with black eyeliner and wet with tears. Her character, Clara, is an ordinary upper middle-class mother of three, but in the mind of her eldest, Andrew (Luana Giuliani), she's a goddess akin to the nation's great stars, like Monica Vitti or Sophia Loren.

Loosely based on the director Emanuele Crialese's transition, ''L'immensità'' is a sun-dappled nostalgia trip marked by young Andrew's hot temper and robust inner fantasy life. He was assigned female at birth, but he knows -- despite resistance from his emotionally distant father (Vincenzo Amato), his siblings and his extended family -- that he is a man.

1970s Rome is no easy place for a transgender person, and though Andrew isn't outright persecuted, his struggles are ignored or trivialized. Clara, a housewife stuck in a deadbeat marriage, understands the feeling all too well.

[Video: Watch on YouTube.]

Unremarkable, naturalistic scenes of youthful adventuring fill out the coming-of-age drama. Andrew takes his younger siblings on excursions through the patch of wild reeds that separate their handsome neighborhood from ***working-class*** encampments, eventually striking up a romance with a local girl unaware of -- or completely indifferent to -- the nature of his identity.

More striking are the Oedipal tensions that flare up between Clara and Andrew. He stands up to his father who forces himself on Clara, as he does the creeps who sexually harass her on the streets. In dreams, he imagines himself and his mother as glamorous figures in a monochrome variety-show spectacle, poignant bouts of movie-magic that underscore both Andrew's innocence and his sharpening intuition: Freedom, for the both of them, will mean upending reality itself.

L'immensitàNot rated. In Italian, with subtitles. Running time: 1 hour 37 minutes. In theaters.Not rated. In Italian, with subtitles. Running time: 1 hour 37 minutes. In theaters.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/11/movies/limmensita-review-roman-holiday.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/11/movies/limmensita-review-roman-holiday.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Penélope Cruz as a mother in 1970s Rome in ''L'immensità,'' a film directed by Emanuele Crialese. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MUSIC BOX FILMS) This article appeared in print on page C8.

**Load-Date:** May 12, 2023

**End of Document**



[***The Second Phase of the Biden Presidency***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:686X-F671-JBG3-60YX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 12, 2023 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 21; DAVID BROOKS

**Length:** 989 words

**Byline:** By David Brooks

**Body**

What is the Biden administration for?

If you had asked me that question in 2021, I would have said the Biden administration's chief purpose is to narrow the economic chasm. America is bitterly divided between highly educated people who live in places that are thriving and less educated people who live in places that are left behind. That economic and social divide threatens our politics, our shared prosperity and the nation's social fabric.

In its first two years, the administration successfully began to tackle this fundamental problem. Through the infrastructure law and many other measures, Team Biden directed huge amounts of money to create ***working-class*** jobs and to increase benefits to ***working-class*** families. That spending contributed to white-hot labor markets that have lifted wages, brought people back into the labor force and turbocharged American capitalism.

Yes, inflation surged. Yes, the nation is still bitterly divided. But things would have been immeasurably worse if the struggling places were left to founder in the same economic mire. The Biden policies were more than worth it.

If you ask me now what the Biden administration is for, my answer would be different. Today, its main purpose is to prepare the nation for a period of accelerating and explosive change.

Writing in Tablet magazine this week, the scholar and columnist Walter Russell Mead notes that there have been three periods of transformational change over the course of human history: the Neolithic period, which brought about settled farming, writing and the birth of cities; the Industrial Revolution, which gave us factories, mass production and cars; and the information age.

Until a few years ago, the information age seemed like the least consequential of the three. Computers and TikTok are nice, but they haven't produced the kind of society-altering transformations we saw during the other two civilizational turning points.

That seems to be changing.

The information age is accelerating and growing more disruptive. The first cause is artificial intelligence. A.I. will produce pervasive breakthroughs and threats that none of us can now predict. Another cause is the emerging cold war with China. This will produce a remorseless technological competition that will turbocharge developments in biotech, energy, chip manufacturing, trade flows, political alliances and many other spheres.

We're living in the first stages of what my colleague Thomas Friedman a few years ago called ''the age of acceleration,'' an age of both stunning advances and horrific dislocations. This is a period of radical uncertainty, a period in which predictions are likely to be wrong and midrange plans are likely to become obsolete. We're going to need governments that are able to pivot quickly and throw tidal waves of money at suddenly emerging problems, from technologically driven mass unemployment to war in the Pacific.

When Covid hit, the United States successfully pivoted and threw trillions of dollars at that problem. But the United States may not be able to mobilize that kind of response in the future. That's because we're now manacled by debt.

During the Trump administration, the debt increased by roughly $7.8 trillion, and during the Biden administration, it has increased by about $3.7 trillion. Over the past 50 years, the annual federal deficit has averaged about 3.5 percent of G.D.P. Over the next 10 years, the Congressional Budget Office expects that deficits will average 6.1 percent of G.D.P.

The United States is projected to spend roughly $640 billion this year merely paying interest on that debt, a figure that is expected to more than double by 2033. That's about the time the Social Security Trust Fund will become insolvent, requiring even more gigantic cash infusions to keep the program going.

Any prudent family saves money as hurricane season approaches, so it can deal with the coming storms. With self-destructive recklessness, the United States is doing the exact opposite.

Seen from this perspective, the debt ceiling fight looks different. Yes, it's insane that Republicans are playing a game of chicken that could send the world economy into turmoil.

But the fact is that the debt ceiling has often been an occasion to put a brake on excessive spending. Of the past 43 debt limit increases or suspensions, 27 were attached to other legislation, according to Maya MacGuineas of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget. Debt ceiling increases were attached to both the 1985 and the 1987 Gramm-Rudman-Hollings bills, which established deficit targets. The budget deals of 1990, 1993 and 1997, which led to balanced budgets, also included debt ceiling increases. Republicans play this game harder, but Democrats have played it too.

Given the historical circumstances, President Biden should absolutely negotiate with Republicans over a debt reduction deal. Yes, Republicans are being reckless. But the central truth remains: We need to bring down deficits so that we have the flexibility and resources to handle the storms that lie ahead.

There are many ways to do this. I would favor a progressive consumption tax that could be raised or lowered as the coming turmoil rages and ebbs.

But first, Biden has to redefine his presidency to keep up with emerging realities. It's not 2021 anymore. We're entering an era of rapid technological transformation and unforeseeable tectonic shifts. In contrast to Donald Trump, who is all about himself, Biden can be the source of security in times of chaos. For that to happen, we need a government that is fiscally sound and ready for anything.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/11/opinion/columnists/biden-debt-ceiling.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/11/opinion/columnists/biden-debt-ceiling.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A21.

**Load-Date:** May 12, 2023

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[***In Real Estate, A Certain Name Is Losing Luster***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BCB-KCP1-JBG3-64M5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 19, 2024 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1773 words

**Byline:** By Rukmini Callimachi

**Body**

When Donald J. Trump became president, condominiums in buildings emblazoned with his name began selling for less, according to an analysis.

In the world of real estate, Donald J. Trump's name has long been synonymous with luxury. At one of his buildings in Manhattan, a five-story waterfall slides down a wall of Breccia Perniche marble. White-gloved doormen, cascading chandeliers and panoramic views of the city's skyline are the hallmarks of another.

It's that image of luxury, which he turned into a brand, that the former president held up as a rebuttal to the recent lawsuit that he lost on Friday after a judge determined that Mr. Trump fraudulently inflated the value of his real estate holdings, ordering him to pay a penalty that will exceed $450 million.

''My client is worth hundreds and hundreds of millions,'' said one of Mr. Trump's lawyers, Alina Habba, during closing arguments at the trial, adding, ''let alone the brand, which is worth billions.''

But up and down the spine of Manhattan, condominiums in high-rise buildings emblazoned with Mr. Trump's name have underperformed, according to sales data from two real estate tracking firms, and an analysis of the data by the Columbia University economist Stijn Van Nieuwerburgh.

The line in the sand is the year 2016, when Mr. Trump was elected president.

In a one-year window, condos in buildings that had the Trump logo went from selling at a 1 percent premium compared with similar units, to selling for 4 percent less, meaning that Trump condos became a ''bargain'' among the city's luxury units, said Mr. Van Nieuwerburgh, a professor of real estate.

Even the Trump Tower on Fifth Avenue, one of the crowning achievements of the Trump brand, whose 80-foot cascade flowing down a wall of peach marble was reportedly built with slabs handpicked at a quarry in Italy by Mr. Trump's ex-wife, saw the average price per square foot of its condominiums tumble 49 percent since 2013, according to Ondel Hylton, the senior director of content and research at CityRealty. The building's age, growing competition from the ultra-luxurious condos on nearby Billionaires' Row and regular protests have all dampened interest, Mr. Hylton said.

By contrast, condominiums in four buildings where the Trump logo was removed at the behest of residents -- sometimes after a legal battle -- have seen their value shoot back up.

''This analysis cleanly identifies that it is the Trump brand that is responsible for the value deterioration,'' Mr. Van Nieuwerburgh said. ''Removing the Trump name from the building removes the loss associated with the name.''

A review of the price per square foot of condominiums in the seven buildings in Manhattan that still carry the Trump name found that the value dropped 23 percent between 2013 and 2023, according to CityRealty, a real estate listing website. An analysis using a slightly different methodology by ATTOM, a property data analytics company, showed that the drop was 17 percent.

By contrast, the four buildings that removed the gold-hued Trump logo ended the decade from 2013 to 2023 up 9 percent, outpacing the Manhattan condominium market, which was up 8 percent over the same time period, according to City Realty.

Mr. Van Nieuwerburgh started with the same data, then combed through the sales figures, making sure that he was comparing apples to apples: a three-bedroom condo in a doorman-serviced Trump building on the Upper West Side, for example, was compared to a three-bedroom unit in the same neighborhood in a building that also had a doorman.

He found that the Trump-branded buildings collapsed in value by 25 percent compared with similar properties from their peak in 2013. ''It's huge,'' he said.

The data that was analyzed is exclusively for Manhattan. It is possible that Mr. Trump's brand is faring better in parts of the country where the former president's politics are more aligned with a majority of voters, including in Florida, which is home to his Mar-a-Lago resort, as well as numerous towers in Sunny Isles Beach and Hollywood, Fla., that are adorned with his name.

In an email, Eric Trump, the former president's son and the de facto chief executive of the Trump Organization, questioned the analyses.

''Data can be manipulated to tell any story you want, but the fact remains that our buildings sell for the highest prices per square foot of any properties in the world. That is undeniable,'' he wrote. ''This year alone, Trump International Hotel & Tower New York closed on a $17 million unit, exceeding the prices at Time Warner, Essex House and the most prestigious properties in the city.''

But the $17 million condo sale at 1 Central Park West, also known as the Trump International Hotel, is a far cry from the top-selling condos in the city, which included a $52 million sale for a West Village penthouse. The Trump condo sold for over $4,600 per square foot; the penthouse sold for more than $11,400 per square foot, according to CityRealty.

A review of the top 100 sales in 2023 found that the best-selling condo in a Trump-branded building placed No. 47 on the list, while the second-best-selling unit placed No. 77, CityRealty found.

''I just crunched the numbers in the past half hour, and I'm still trying to wrap my head around it,'' said Mr. Hylton, CityRealty's senior director of content and research, who expressed surprise at how much value Trump-branded condos had lost.

Defining 'Most Expensive'

Even Mr. Trump's critics say he deserves credit for the way he has parlayed family wealth, boldly expanding his father's empire from a portfolio that included thousands of mostly ***working-class*** apartments in the outer boroughs into the heart of Manhattan.

In the 1970s, when even the Chrysler Building was in foreclosure, Mr. Trump bought the aging Commodore Hotel, turning it into a shiny Grand Hyatt, which in turn revitalized an area that was considered blighted at the time. Mr. Trump bet on the location -- situated next to Grand Central Station, the hotel was at the mouth of one of the main arteries into the city, the point through which commuters were coming from upscale suburbs.

''It was ingenious,'' said Barbara Corcoran, who sold her real estate firm for an estimated $70 million in 2001 and is now a judge on ''Shark Tank.'' ''Forty-second Street was a street that you could not walk down.''

The transformation was palpable.

''He totally rewrote the way people see living in New York,'' Ms. Corcoran said.

Other deals followed, but Mr. Trump's calculations were often rooted more in marketing than in fact.

Ms. Corcoran, who was in her 30s and a newcomer to real estate when she launched her namesake ''Corcoran Report'' in 1981. Written on her typewriter and copied on a Xerox machine, the report ranked the top-selling properties in the city. Four years later, when she launched her ''Top Ten Condominiums Report,'' she discovered that Mr. Trump's assertion that his Trump Tower condos on Fifth Avenue were the most expensive in the world was wrong. (The future president's apartments appeared on her list, she said, just not at the top.)

Before she put out her news release, she set up a meeting so he could respond to her findings. Nervous, she could not sleep the night before and showed up in his office in a power suit, she said.

The meeting did not go well. Mr. Trump objected to her methodology. On the spot, Ms. Corcoran said, she proposed a solution: If she recalculated the value of Mr. Trump's condos based on the price per room, or the price per square foot, rather than the overall sales price, he would come out on top. The rooms in his building were small, and therefore more expensive, she said.

''I didn't want to make an enemy of the man,'' she said. ''I was a young broker.''

By late 1980s, Mr. Trump's newspaper ads cited Ms. Corcoran's report as proof that his units were the city's most expensive.

But Mr. Trump ran into financial and legal challenges, with his companies filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection at least six times in the 1990s and 2000s. As he clawed his way back from financial failure, he hit on something new: He began leasing out his name for a fee, which appeared on buildings he had not built, and only some of which his company managed.

The move, ahead of its time, reversed and modified the usual real estate formula, which stipulates that location plus floor plan equals value, said one longtime Manhattan developer. Now, there was location, floor plan and, also, a brand -- the Trump name, which had an aspirational quality to it, said the developer, one of three major Manhattan developers who discussed Trump's brand, all of whom requested anonymity for fear of retaliation.

'Embarrassed'

In 2012, Linda Gottlieb, the producer of the film ''Dirty Dancing'' didn't think much about having to walk under a Trump sign every time she entered her building. Her high-rise at 160 Riverside Boulevard was part of ''Trump Place,'' a group of six towers -- three of them rentals, and three of them condos -- that stretched over multiple blocks overlooking the Hudson River at 120, 140, 160, 180, 200 and 220 Riverside Boulevard.

In some of the buildings, everything from the doormats to the staff's uniforms was branded with the Trump name.

But as the 2016 presidential election approached, and the crude remarks that Mr. Trump had made about women and immigrants dominated the news cycle, Ms. Gottlieb felt ashamed.

''I was embarrassed,'' she said, describing how she felt when she passed maintenance staff born outside the United States. ''Every time I looked at them, I thought, how can they be working in a building like that, and how can I not try to do something about it?''

She helped draft a petition to remove the Trump name from the building, slipping it under the doors of the more than 450 units. By the fall of 2016, three of the buildings -- all of them rentals -- had removed the Trump name and measured staff members for new uniforms. The condo buildings, including the one that had a legal tussle, removed the name in 2018 and 2019.

These days, Ms. Gottlieb returns to a building that has a sign spelling out 1-6-0, her address on Riverside Boulevard.

''Now, I just enjoy the view of the river when I come home,'' she said, ''and I think, it's so nice to be in a building with just a boring number on it.''

Jonah E. Bromwich and Charles V. Bagli contributed reporting from New York. Susan C. Beachy and Kitty Bennett contributed research.Jonah E. Bromwich and Charles V. Bagli contributed reporting from New York. Susan C. Beachy and Kitty Bennett contributed research.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/18/realestate/trump-condos-prices-nyc.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/18/realestate/trump-condos-prices-nyc.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Some condos that removed the Trump logo at the behest of residents have seen their value spike. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHANG W. LEE/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY PROQUEST HISTORICAL NEWSPAPERS: THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A16) This article appeared in print on page A1, A16.

**Load-Date:** February 19, 2024

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[***Using Contemporary Dance to Explain Mozambique's Past and Present***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69WD-CP61-JBG3-61HP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 16, 2023 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1203 words

**Byline:** By Tavares Cebola and John Eligon

**Body**

Mozambique's most influential contemporary choreographer uses bodies in motion to artfully -- and clearly -- trace the complex recent history of his country.

A soft voice broke into the dark auditorium, lit only by a projection of a globe bearing the outline of Africa on a screen.

''Who said empires don't exist anymore,'' the voice said, as dancers dressed in European colonial-era robes slowly emerged on stage, carrying what looked like crosses or swords. They banged on maps of Africa, as if divvying up the continent to their liking.

Over the course of the next hour, the performance, in Maputo, the capital of Mozambique, grew into a frenetic dance of stomping and jabbing, the movements of warriors in battle, set to the beat of thundering drums.

''You're such a liar that even if you lose, you can still win,'' declared a man standing still at the back of the stage, in what seemed a not-so-veiled reference to allegations that Mozambique's governing party had rigged recent local elections.

That man, Panaíbra Gabriel Canda, is arguably Mozambique's most prolific and influential contemporary dancer and choreographer. And in many ways, this performance last month, at the same venue in Maputo where he launched his first work more than 25 years ago, was the culmination of a career that has traced the complicated political and social struggles of his country.

Born the year after Mozambique gained independence from Portugal in 1975, Mr. Canda, 47, has used his art to offer searing critiques of his nation's evolution through the independence struggle, socialism, civil war, democracy and corruption. He also has taken aim at Western domination and jaded perceptions of Africa.

''My work is intrinsically connected to history -- the archives of this country but in dialogue with the world,'' Mr. Canda said.

Along the way, he started a company that helped to train countless dancers and develop Mozambique's contemporary dance scene to the point where, last month, the country hosted ''Danse L'Afrique, Danse,'' the largest African contemporary dance festival on the continent, for the first time.

That's where Mr. Canda was showcasing his latest production, Cheered Lies, an ambitious work that presented messages both challenging assumptions of African civilization as primitive, and condemning what he believes is a growing disconnect between political leaders' words and their actions, particularly in his home country.

Mr. Canda's career has been defined by a constant reassessing of what it means to be a Mozambican and ''reflecting about our existence globally,'' he said. He has explored the country's search for an identity and its redefinition of values like democracy and justice.

''In Mozambican contemporary dance in general, there's an issue of comprehension,'' said Benilde Matsinhe, a journalism lecturer at Eduardo Mondlane University in Maputo who has covered contemporary dance. ''With Panaíbra, that doubt does not exist. You don't leave Panaíbra's performance without understanding what this piece is about.''

Mr. Canda was born into a country pursuing a socialist project that saw the arts as a critical tool of indoctrination.

Many independence movements across Africa embraced Leninist ideology that advocated ***working-class*** revolution. One way Mozambique's liberation movement, Frelimo, tried to spark such revolution was by promoting a new culture of socialist values, including through art.

Dance was used in Frelimo's military camps during the war for independence that began in the 1960s, with fighters sharing dances from their communities with each other, said Marílio Wane, an anthropologist at the National Institute for Socio-Cultural Research in Maputo.

''We may come from a different territory, but I have to establish connections with that person, and dance was a tool for that,'' Mr. Wane said.

In the early years after independence, former fighters were brought to Maputo to teach dances native to their areas of origin, leading to an inventory of 250 dances across Mozambique.

''There was also the objective of comforting those who fought the war by saying, 'This is the country you fought for, now feel better,''' said Cândida Mata, a former dancer and instructor at the National School of Dance in Maputo.

Mr. Canda may have been born after the country's freedom struggle, but he grew up in its legacy.

In the early 1980s, Mr. Canda said he was caught up in the euphoria of an independent Mozambique. He heeded the pleadings of the first post-colonial president, Samora Machel, for children to be active. He recalled attending events at Heroes Square in Maputo, where children sang revolutionary songs and cheered on their president.

Raised by musicians, Mr. Canda took a liking to dance as a young boy. His father, a locksmith by trade, played guitar in a band, while his mother, a seamstress, was a backup singer. His father's music, he said, celebrated the liberation struggle, ''glorifying the movement to fight for the country.''

At 16, Mr. Canda enrolled in a technical school near one of the cultural houses that developed during the socialist era to promote the arts. He was studying accounting, but that quickly took a back seat to his frequent visits to the cultural venue, Casa Velha, where he took theater lessons and joined a theater company. A traditional dance group formed in the house, and Mr. Canda said he eventually gravitated toward that art form because he saw dance as a more flexible medium to project ideas.

''People were expressing themselves freely,'' he said. ''They'd jump, dance, sweat and were not attached to a character or the script in classic theater.''

The instructors at Casa Velha invited former liberation fighters to come teach traditional dances, introducing several new techniques and traditions from around Mozambique to Mr. Canda.

Early in his career, Mr. Canda focused on traditional cultural dances that Mozambican dancers often practiced during the liberation struggle. But he felt that traditional dance stifled his creativity.

So he began to reflect on his life in Maputo, his present concerns and the burning issues in his nation -- communism, democracy, freedom of expression.

He has a lot of material to work with these days. Many Mozambicans are increasingly concerned that their government is sliding toward authoritarianism. An extremist insurgency in the northern part of the country has led to some instability.

Mr. Canda's work has expressed disillusion with politics, a sentiment that Mozambique's leaders lie to their constituents.

But amid the pressing issues, he has sought to use new aesthetics and rhythms to transform traditional dance. He once mixed xigubo, a traditional Mozambican war dance, with fado, a musical genre of Portugal. It was an experiment, Mr. Canda said, to see what happens when you merge art from a colonial power that imposed its ways on his country with Mozambican tradition.

Through it all, Mr. Canda said, he is trying to understand his era and establish a historical record.

''I wanted to create something inspired in traditional dances but that reflected my time,'' he said. ''I hope future generations can understand our times through my work.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/15/world/africa/mozambique-dance-choreographer-canda.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/15/world/africa/mozambique-dance-choreographer-canda.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Mr. Canda, top and above right, and others performing in ''Cheered Lies.'' It was staged during ''Danse L'Afrique, Danse,'' Africa's largest contemporary dance festival. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY AMILTON NEVES FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A8.

**Load-Date:** December 16, 2023

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[***‘L’immensità’ Review: Roman Holiday***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:686R-X4G1-JBG3-6524-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 11, 2023 Thursday 17:13 EST

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**Section:** MOVIES

**Length:** 400 words

**Byline:** Beatrice Loayza

**Highlight:** Loosely based on the transgender director Emanuele Crialese’s transition, this Italian period drama is a sun-dappled nostalgia trip bristling with Oedipal tension.

**Body**

Loosely based on the transgender director Emanuele Crialese’s transition, this Italian period drama is a sun-dappled nostalgia trip bristling with Oedipal tension.

Penélope Cruz is a vision of tragic beauty when she first appears in the Italian period drama “L’immensità.” The camera captures her in adoring close-up as it grazes over her eyes, traced with black eyeliner and wet with tears. Her character, Clara, is an ordinary upper middle-class mother of three, but in the mind of her eldest, Andrew (Luana Giuliani), she’s a goddess akin to the nation’s great stars, like Monica Vitti or Sophia Loren.

Loosely based on the director Emanuele Crialese’s transition, “L’immensità” is a sun-dappled nostalgia trip marked by young Andrew’s hot temper and robust inner fantasy life. He was assigned female at birth, but he knows — despite resistance from his emotionally distant father (Vincenzo Amato), his siblings and his extended family — that he is a man.

1970s Rome is no easy place for a transgender person, and though Andrew isn’t outright persecuted, his struggles are ignored or trivialized. Clara, a housewife stuck in a deadbeat marriage, understands the feeling all too well.

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](http://youtube.com/embed/blzl7zIZyvw)]

Unremarkable, naturalistic scenes of youthful adventuring fill out the coming-of-age drama. Andrew takes his younger siblings on excursions through the patch of wild reeds that separate their handsome neighborhood from ***working-class*** encampments, eventually striking up a romance with a local girl unaware of — or completely indifferent to — the nature of his identity.

More striking are the Oedipal tensions that flare up between Clara and Andrew. He stands up to his father who forces himself on Clara, as he does the creeps who sexually harass her on the streets. In dreams, he imagines himself and his mother as glamorous figures in a monochrome variety-show spectacle, poignant bouts of movie-magic that underscore both Andrew’s innocence and his sharpening intuition: Freedom, for the both of them, will mean upending reality itself.

L’immensità

Not rated. In Italian, with subtitles. Running time: 1 hour 37 minutes. In theaters.

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PHOTO: Penélope Cruz as a mother in 1970s Rome in “L’immensità,” a film directed by Emanuele Crialese. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MUSIC BOX FILMS) This article appeared in print on page C8.

**Load-Date:** May 11, 2023

**End of Document**



[***The Second Phase of the Biden Presidency; David Brooks***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:686T-4KK1-JBG3-603T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 11, 2023 Thursday 11:19 EST

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**Section:** OPINION; columnists

**Length:** 989 words

**Byline:** David Brooks

**Highlight:** How to survive in the age of acceleration.

**Body**

What is the Biden administration for?

If you had asked me that question in 2021, I would have said the Biden administration’s chief purpose is to narrow the economic chasm. America is bitterly divided between highly educated people who live in places that are thriving and less educated people who live in places that are left behind. That economic and social divide threatens our politics, our shared prosperity and the nation’s social fabric.

In its first two years, the administration successfully began to tackle this fundamental problem. Through the infrastructure law and many other measures, Team Biden directed huge amounts of money to create ***working-class*** jobs and to increase benefits to ***working-class*** families. That spending contributed to white-hot labor markets that have lifted wages, brought people back into the labor force and turbocharged American capitalism.

Yes, inflation surged. Yes, the nation is still bitterly divided. But things would have been immeasurably worse if the struggling places were left to founder in the same economic mire. The Biden policies were more than worth it.

If you ask me now what the Biden administration is for, my answer would be different. Today, its main purpose is to prepare the nation for a period of accelerating and explosive change.

Writing in Tablet magazine this week, the scholar and columnist Walter Russell Mead [*notes*](https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/news/articles/destined-live-quiet-times-progress-walter-russell-mead-via-meadia) that there have been three periods of transformational change over the course of human history: the Neolithic period, which brought about settled farming, writing and the birth of cities; the Industrial Revolution, which gave us factories, mass production and cars; and the information age.

Until a few years ago, the information age seemed like the least consequential of the three. Computers and TikTok are nice, but they haven’t produced the kind of society-altering transformations we saw during the other two civilizational turning points.

That seems to be changing.

The information age is accelerating and growing more disruptive. The first cause is artificial intelligence. A.I. will produce pervasive breakthroughs and threats that none of us can now predict. Another cause is the emerging cold war with China. This will produce a remorseless technological competition that will turbocharge developments in biotech, energy, chip manufacturing, trade flows, political alliances and many other spheres.

We’re living in the first stages of what my colleague Thomas Friedman a few years ago called “the age of acceleration,” an age of both stunning advances and horrific dislocations. This is a period of radical uncertainty, a period in which predictions are likely to be wrong and midrange plans are likely to become obsolete. We’re going to need governments that are able to pivot quickly and throw tidal waves of money at suddenly emerging problems, from technologically driven mass unemployment to war in the Pacific.

When Covid hit, the United States successfully pivoted and threw trillions of dollars at that problem. But the United States may not be able to mobilize that kind of response in the future. That’s because we’re now manacled by debt.

During the Trump administration, the debt increased by [*roughly $7.8 trillion*](https://www.propublica.org/article/national-debt-trump), and during the Biden administration, it has increased by [*about $3.7 trillion*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/02/17/politics/biden-economy-facts-first/index.html). Over the past 50 years, the annual federal deficit has averaged about 3.5 percent of G.D.P. Over the next 10 years, the Congressional Budget Office expects that deficits [*will average*](https://www.cbo.gov/publication/58848) 6.1 percent of G.D.P.

The United States is projected to spend [*roughly $640 billion this year*](https://www.cbo.gov/publication/58946) merely paying interest on that debt, a figure that is expected to more than double by 2033. That’s about the time the Social Security Trust Fund will become insolvent, requiring even more gigantic cash infusions to keep the program going.

Any prudent family saves money as hurricane season approaches, so it can deal with the coming storms. With self-destructive recklessness, the United States is doing the exact opposite.

Seen from this perspective, the debt ceiling fight looks different. Yes, it’s insane that Republicans are playing a game of chicken that could send the world economy into turmoil.

But the fact is that the debt ceiling has often been an occasion to put a brake on excessive spending. Of the past 43 debt limit increases or suspensions, 27 were attached to other legislation, according to Maya MacGuineas of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget. Debt ceiling increases were attached to both the 1985 and the 1987 Gramm-Rudman-Hollings bills, which established deficit targets. The budget deals of 1990, 1993 and 1997, which led to balanced budgets, also included debt ceiling increases. Republicans play this game harder, but Democrats have played it too.

Given the historical circumstances, President Biden should absolutely negotiate with Republicans over a debt reduction deal. Yes, Republicans are being reckless. But the central truth remains: We need to bring down deficits so that we have the flexibility and resources to handle the storms that lie ahead.

There are many ways to do this. I would favor a progressive consumption tax that could be raised or lowered as the coming turmoil rages and ebbs.

But first, Biden has to redefine his presidency to keep up with emerging realities. It’s not 2021 anymore. We’re entering an era of rapid technological transformation and unforeseeable tectonic shifts. In contrast to Donald Trump, who is all about himself, Biden can be the source of security in times of chaos. For that to happen, we need a government that is fiscally sound and ready for anything.

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This article appeared in print on page A21.

**Load-Date:** May 12, 2023

**End of Document**



[***‘Danny and the Deep Blue Sea’ Review: Aubrey Plaza Steps Into the Ring***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69MM-2081-JBG3-650D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 14, 2023 Tuesday 23:25 EST

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**Section:** THEATER

**Length:** 917 words

**Byline:** Elisabeth Vincentelli

**Highlight:** The actress makes her stage debut alongside Christopher Abbott in an Off Broadway revival of John Patrick Shanley’s compact and combative play.

**Body**

The actress makes her stage debut alongside Christopher Abbott in an Off Broadway revival of John Patrick Shanley’s compact and combative play.

Nursing beers and munching on pretzels, Danny and Roberta are sitting at neighboring tables in a Bronx bar as Hall &amp; Oates’s slinky hit “I Can’t Go for That (No Can Do)” booms out of the jukebox. “Where do you dare me/To draw the line?/You’ve got the body/Now you want my soul,” the song goes, as if laying out a playbook for the complicated courtship that they are about to enact.

These two hopeless loners are the only people in the bar in this Off Broadway revival of John Patrick Shanley’s [*“Danny and the Deep Blue Sea,”*](https://www.dannyandthedeepbluesea.com/) at the Lucille Lortel Theater. Though modest in scale, the show is one of the fall’s hottest thanks to its stars, [*Aubrey Plaza and Christopher Abbott*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/13/theater/aubrey-plaza-christopher-abbott-off-broadway.html). Plaza, who is making her stage debut, has seen her screen career shift to a higher gear in the past few years, with acclaimed performances in the film “Emily the Criminal” and Season 2 of “The White Lotus.”

It’s easy to see why she and Abbott (an in-demand actor since making a name as the boyfriend of Allison Williams’s character on “Girls”) decided to do Shanley’s compact piece. Since its premiere, in 1984, the play has become a favorite of actors looking for audition monologues or mettle-testing exercises. Shanley’s writing sometimes devolves into hard-boiled mannerisms, but it also has a sharp pugnaciousness. As the story progresses, cracks appear in the barrage of hostilities, as the characters reveal flashes of circumspect vulnerability. Similarly, Abbott and Plaza’s performances move beyond histrionics and gain confidence as their characters start letting themselves feel.

When Danny and Roberta finally strike up a conversation, it immediately reveals their combustible approaches to life itself. She is a 31-year-old divorced mother who is unhappily living with her parents. He is 29, and informs Roberta that he plans to kill himself when he turns 30. (He puts it in blunter terms; most of the play’s best lines are laced with profanity.)

As quickly as their push-pull attraction is made clear, we realize that the characters’ default attack mode is a manifestation of their pain and self-loathing: Danny doesn’t know how to express himself without resorting to violence (we learn he recently beat up a man and left him for dead); Roberta is haunted by a traumatic episode that has filled her with soul-sapping guilt. The big question, then, is whether they will stop snarling long enough to realize solace is possible.

This early Shanley work feels like a matrix of some of the playwright’s themes: Guilt is also at the heart of his Pulitzer Prize-winning “Doubt: A Parable” (a 2004 play that is [*being revived on Broadway in February*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/01/theater/tyne-daly-liev-schreiber-doubt-broadway.html)), and a romance between two prickly people is central to his screenplay for the 1987 film “Moonstruck.”

“Danny and the Deep Blue Sea” also bears quite a few markers of a certain kind of gritty theater from the 1970s and ’80s, centering as it does on bruised ***working-class*** characters whose lives are permeated with brutality. [*The New York Times review of the original production*](https://www.nytimes.com/1984/06/08/theater/stage-danny-and-the-deep-blue-sea.html), which starred John Turturro and June Stein, mentions that as Danny, Turturro skillfully elicited laughs from the audience. Mores concerning depictions of and reactions to abuse have considerably shifted since then, and levity is mostly absent from Jeff Ward’s production, aside from some isolated line readings.

Tonally, the show struggles most to nail the first scene, which is nearly always at top volume. The characters can’t decide if they will throttle or embrace each other. We get it, but we still have to buy their picking the second option, and Abbott and Plaza don’t click enough at that point to entirely sell that scenario.

Fortunately their performances deepen in parallel with the accord between Roberta and Danny. Fittingly for a play subtitled “An Apache Dance,” after a type of belle epoque ruffians, the production’s turning point is a wordless danced transition: they push and pull, fight their attraction and give in to it. They end up in her room, where they have sex. (The movement direction is by Bobbi Jene Smith and Or Schraiber; Scott Pask designed the appropriately dingy set.)

As Roberta and Danny gingerly try to navigate the possibility of trust and emotional intimacy, the actors are more at ease with their roles and with each other. It is a testament to their skill that they are better at listening than at yelling.

Yes, Danny’s final turnaround stretches credibility close to its breaking point, and the way he finally pierces Roberta’s abscess of shame and fury is rather over the top — not to mention the idea that a physical remedy would shock a psychic wound into healing. But by then Abbott and Plaza have made us care enough for these two misfits that we are ready to believe that maybe, just maybe, they can get a break.

Danny and the Deep Blue Sea

Through Jan. 7 at the Lucille Lortel Theater, Manhattan; [*dannyandthedeepbluesea.com*](https://www.dannyandthedeepbluesea.com/). Running time: 1 hour 25 minutes.

Danny and the Deep Blue Sea Through Jan. 7 at the Lucille Lortel Theater in Manhattan; dannyandthedeepbluesea.com. Running time: 1 hour 25 minutes.

PHOTOS: Christopher Abbott and Aubrey Plaza star in a revival of John Patrick Shanley’s 1984 play. (C1); The characters played by Christopher Abbott and Aubrey Plaza aren’t sure that solace is possible. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY SARA KRULWICH/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (C2) This article appeared in print on page C1, C2.

**Load-Date:** November 14, 2023

**End of Document**



[***The Most Durable Force in American Politics: Trump’s Ties to His Voters; News ANALYSIS***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B41-17P1-DXY4-X05G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 16, 2024 Tuesday 23:35 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1371 words

**Highlight:** If Donald Trump’s rivals want to stop his rise, they’ll need to break his bond with his supporters. They didn’t come close in Iowa.

**Body**

If Donald Trump’s rivals want to stop his rise, they’ll need to break his bond with his supporters. They didn’t come close in Iowa.

Bill Clinton once explained the nation’s two political parties by saying that Democrats want to fall in love while Republicans want to fall in line.

That adage has not withstood the Trump era. Today, it is Republicans who are besotted.

Donald J. Trump’s decisive victory in Iowa revealed a new depth to the reservoir of devotion inside his party. For eight years, he has nurtured a relationship with his supporters with little precedent in politics. He validates them, he entertains them, he speaks for them and he uses them for his political and legal advantage.

This connection — a hard-earned bond for some, a cult of personality to others — has unleashed one of the most durable forces in American politics.

Iowa Republicans, following the lead of party officials across the country, rallied behind the former president despite a list of reasons to reject him. Republicans lost control of the presidency, the Senate and the House during his four years in office. He failed to deliver the red wave of victories he promised in the 2022 midterms. He has been charged with 91 felonies in four criminal cases this past year.

And they stayed with him even as they were offered viable alternatives: Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida, a popular young governor who embraced Mr. Trump’s policies, and Nikki Haley, one of the Deep South’s first female governors, who credibly promised she could win back voters Mr. Trump drove away.

Yet in the first chance Americans had to cast judgment on Mr. Trump since he tried to overthrow an election, many Iowa Republicans made clear they don’t judge him. They adore him.

“Trump is not a candidate, he’s the leader of a national movement,” said Newt Gingrich, a former House speaker who has advised Mr. Trump. “No one has come to grips with what’s it like to take on the champion of a movement. That’s why even as all these legal issues pile up, it just infuriates his movement and increases their anger unbelievably.”

The risks associated with the kind of unusually strong hold Mr. Trump maintains on the party have already emerged.

He has encouraged supporters to view him as above fault or defeat, a mindset that can lead to the kind of political violence that shocked the nation during the Capitol riot on Jan. 6, 2021. Elevating charisma over character can open the door to the kind of authoritarianism that Mr. Trump has [*promised on the campaign trail*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/20/us/politics/trump-rhetoric-fascism.html) this past year.

“A lot of the people that support Donald Trump really are fed up with democracy, representative democracy, they think that an authoritarian-style government would probably be preferable at this point, in order to save the nation or whatever,” said former Representative Charles Bass, a New Hampshire Republican who previously voted for Mr. Trump, but said he would not do so again. “I don’t think they feel threatened by having somebody who at least has the trappings of being more authoritarian than past presidents.”

Although Mr. Trump’s win was resounding, the Iowa results suggest the party remains deeply divided over his return to power. Roughly half of Iowa Republicans voted for one of Mr. Trump’s rivals, including about 20 percent who backed Mr. DeSantis, who finished in second, with Ms. Haley close behind.

Republicans who resisted Mr. Trump in Iowa included the party’s youngest voters and anti-abortion-rights conservatives who backed Mr. DeSantis, according to entrance polls.

Similarly, Ms. Haley won moderate voters, Republicans who believed Mr. Trump lost the 2020 election, those who support a muscular foreign policy and the segment of the party that prioritized temperament in their choice for a presidential nominee.

Party strategists and officials in other states caution against drawing sweeping conclusions from the votes of a narrow slice of Republicans in a small state. As the Republican nominating contest moves to New Hampshire next week, one poll this month showed Ms. Haley [*within striking distance*](https://scholars.unh.edu/survey_center_polls/776/) of Mr. Trump. The state’s voters tend to be more moderate and less religious, suggesting an opening for her.

Mr. DeSantis’s ability to threaten Mr. Trump is less clear. He marketed himself to voters as a Trumpian wunderkind, able to deliver America First policies without the drama and chaos that often trail the former president.

But MAGA Nation rivals the Queen’s Guard when it comes to standing at the ready to defend their sovereign, and Mr. DeSantis was turned back as Republicans showed they are less interested in policies than they are the man.

“I know that he is picked by God for this hour,” said Patricia Lage, an Iowa caucusgoer who spoke in support of Mr. Trump on Monday night in Carlisle, outside Des Moines. “There are things that he has done in the past, but we all have pasts.”

Mr. Trump has spent years tending to his voters — taking aim at their shared enemies and anticipating their grievances. He has compulsively tried to ensure that he was never out of step.

That preoccupation repeatedly drove his decisions in the White House, from refusing to wear a mask during the initial outbreak of Covid-19 in 2020 to his opposition to striking the names of Confederate generals from U.S. military bases.

More recently, Mr. Trump [*has attacked*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/17/us/politics/trump-meet-the-press-abortion-desantis.html) Mr. DeSantis for signing a [*six-week abortion ban*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/13/us/florida-six-week-abortion-ban.html) and [*avoided committing*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/14/upshot/trump-abortion-republicans-2024-election.html) to a federal ban on the procedure, betting that his voters will either agree or forgive him for deviating from a core conservative priority.

Perhaps most significantly, he has rallied their support amid unprecedented legal troubles in part by describing the prosecution of him as an attempt to silence them.

“You and I have been in this battle side-by-side, together — and we have been taking on the entire corrupt system in Washington like no one has ever done before,” Mr. Trump told Iowa supporters at a rally on Sunday, adding that the political establishment and global elites “are at war with us — we have to fight.”

Voter anger at political institutions remains sky-high — a dynamic that explains what appears, at first glance, to be nothing short of a political magic act: The billionaire son of a multimillionaire has become the voice for ***working-class*** Americans.

“His gift is that the average voter in Iowa, New Hampshire and state after state feels like he connects with them,” said David Bossie, Mr. Trump’s deputy campaign manager in 2016. “He’s a blue-collar billionaire.”

Both Mr. DeSantis and Ms. Haley have tried to weaken Mr. Trump’s ties to his supporters without issuing many direct attacks on Mr. Trump. But the race to emerge as the Trump alternative is becoming increasingly urgent, with limited time for the candidates to cement that standing.

Former Senator Judd Gregg of New Hampshire, a Haley supporter, lamented that much of his party had become “sort of a cult” around Mr. Trump. He still considers himself a Republican, though, and views Mr. Trump as the interloper.

“I don’t think Trump’s a Republican,” Mr. Gregg said. “He’s a demagogue.”

David Kochel, a longtime Iowa Republican operative opposed to Mr. Trump, said the former president’s bond with his voters was unlikely to be replicated by other candidates. The party has become more populist and anti-establishment, but Mr. Trump’s ability to capitalize on his celebrity status while harnessing the swirling mix of anger at elites, racial grievances and mounting distrust of political, judicial and international institutions was, for now, unique.

“He’s a unicorn in our party,” Mr. Kochel said. “Republicans have become more populist and anti-establishment, but that doesn’t mean the party will nominate Majorie Taylor Greene or Jim Jordan next. There’s no going back to the old party.”

Alyce McFadden contributed reporting.

Alyce McFadden contributed reporting.

PHOTOS: Supporters in Indianola, Iowa, on Sunday. Many Iowa Republicans made clear they don’t judge Mr. Trump. They adore him. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HAIYUN JIANG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES ) (A18); Former President Donald J. Trump in Des Moines on Monday. “He’s a unicorn in our party,” a longtime Iowa Republican said. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A18-A19) This article appeared in print on page A18, A19.

**Load-Date:** January 16, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Using Dance to Tell the Story of Mozambique’s Struggles; The Saturday Profile***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69W6-N0B1-JBG3-60DW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 15, 2023 Friday 23:45 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; africa

**Length:** 1233 words

**Highlight:** Mozambique’s most influential contemporary choreographer uses bodies in motion to artfully — and clearly — trace the complex recent history of his country.

**Body**

Mozambique’s most influential contemporary choreographer uses bodies in motion to artfully — and clearly — trace the complex recent history of his country.

A soft voice broke into the dark auditorium, lit only by a projection of a globe bearing the outline of Africa on a screen.

“Who said empires don’t exist anymore,” the voice said, as dancers dressed in European colonial-era robes slowly emerged on stage, carrying what looked like crosses or swords. They banged on maps of Africa, as if divvying up the continent to their liking.

Over the course of the next hour, the performance, in Maputo, the capital of Mozambique, grew into a frenetic dance of stomping and jabbing, the movements of warriors in battle, set to the beat of thundering drums.

“You’re such a liar that even if you lose, you can still win,” declared a man standing still at the back of the stage, in what seemed a not-so-veiled reference to allegations that Mozambique’s governing party had rigged recent local elections.

That man, Panaíbra Gabriel Canda, is arguably Mozambique’s most prolific and influential contemporary dancer and choreographer. And in many ways, this performance last month, at the same venue in Maputo where he launched his first work more than 25 years ago, was the culmination of a career that has traced the complicated political and social struggles of his country.

Born the year after Mozambique gained independence from Portugal in 1975, Mr. Canda, 47, has used his art to offer searing critiques of his nation’s evolution through the independence struggle, socialism, civil war, democracy and corruption. He also has taken aim at Western domination and jaded perceptions of Africa.

“My work is intrinsically connected to history — the archives of this country but in dialogue with the world,” Mr. Canda said.

Along the way, he started a company that helped to train countless dancers and develop Mozambique’s contemporary dance scene to the point where, last month, the country hosted “Danse L’Afrique, Danse,” the largest African contemporary dance festival on the continent, for the first time.

That’s where Mr. Canda was showcasing his latest production, [*Cheered Lies*](https://kinani.co.mz/programa/mentiras-aplaudidas/), an ambitious work that presented messages both challenging assumptions of African civilization as primitive, and condemning what he believes is a growing disconnect between political leaders’ words and their actions, particularly in his home country.

Mr. Canda’s career has been defined by a constant reassessing of what it means to be a Mozambican and “reflecting about our existence globally,” he said. He has explored the country’s search for an identity and its redefinition of values like democracy and justice.

“In Mozambican contemporary dance in general, there’s an issue of comprehension,” said Benilde Matsinhe, a journalism lecturer at Eduardo Mondlane University in Maputo who has covered contemporary dance. “With Panaíbra, that doubt does not exist. You don’t leave Panaíbra’s performance without understanding what this piece is about.”

Mr. Canda was born into a country pursuing a socialist project that saw the arts as a critical tool of indoctrination.

Many independence movements across Africa embraced Leninist ideology that advocated ***working-class*** revolution. One way Mozambique’s liberation movement, Frelimo, tried to spark such revolution was by promoting a new culture of socialist values, including through art.

Dance was used in Frelimo’s military camps during the war for independence that began in the 1960s, with fighters sharing dances from their communities with each other, said Marílio Wane, an anthropologist at the National Institute for Socio-Cultural Research in Maputo.

“We may come from a different territory, but I have to establish connections with that person, and dance was a tool for that,” Mr. Wane said.

In the early years after independence, former fighters were brought to Maputo to teach dances native to their areas of origin, leading to an inventory of 250 dances across Mozambique.

“There was also the objective of comforting those who fought the war by saying, ‘This is the country you fought for, now feel better,’” said Cândida Mata, a former dancer and instructor at the National School of Dance in Maputo.

Mr. Canda may have been born after the country’s freedom struggle, but he grew up in its legacy.

In the early 1980s, Mr. Canda said he was caught up in the euphoria of an independent Mozambique. He heeded the pleadings of the first post-colonial president, Samora Machel, for children to be active. He recalled attending events at Heroes Square in Maputo, where children sang revolutionary songs and cheered on their president.

Raised by musicians, Mr. Canda took a liking to dance as a young boy. His father, a locksmith by trade, played guitar in a band, while his mother, a seamstress, was a backup singer. His father’s music, he said, celebrated the liberation struggle, “glorifying the movement to fight for the country.”

At 16, Mr. Canda enrolled in a technical school near one of the cultural houses that developed during the socialist era to promote the arts. He was studying accounting, but that quickly took a back seat to his frequent visits to the cultural venue, Casa Velha, where he took theater lessons and joined a theater company. A traditional dance group formed in the house, and Mr. Canda said he eventually gravitated toward that art form because he saw dance as a more flexible medium to project ideas.

“People were expressing themselves freely,” he said. “They’d jump, dance, sweat and were not attached to a character or the script in classic theater.”

The instructors at Casa Velha invited former liberation fighters to come teach traditional dances, introducing several new techniques and traditions from around Mozambique to Mr. Canda.

Early in his career, Mr. Canda focused on traditional cultural dances that Mozambican dancers often practiced during the liberation struggle. But he felt that traditional dance stifled his creativity.

So he began to reflect on his life in Maputo, his present concerns and the burning issues in his nation — communism, democracy, freedom of expression.

He has a lot of material to work with these days. Many Mozambicans are increasingly concerned that their government is sliding toward authoritarianism. An extremist [*insurgency in the northern part of the country*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/28/world/africa/mozambique-palma-hotel-insurgents.html) has led to some instability.

Mr. Canda’s work has expressed disillusion with politics, a sentiment that Mozambique’s leaders lie to their constituents.

But amid the pressing issues, he has sought to use new aesthetics and rhythms to transform traditional dance. He once mixed xigubo, a traditional Mozambican war dance, with fado, a musical genre of Portugal. It was an experiment, Mr. Canda said, to see what happens when you merge art from a colonial power that imposed its ways on his country with Mozambican tradition.

Through it all, Mr. Canda said, he is trying to understand his era and establish a historical record.

“I wanted to create something inspired in traditional dances but that reflected my time,” he said. “I hope future generations can understand our times through my work.”

PHOTOS: Mr. Canda, top and above right, and others performing in “Cheered Lies.” It was staged during “Danse L’Afrique, Danse,” Africa’s largest contemporary dance festival. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY AMILTON NEVES FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A8.

**Load-Date:** December 16, 2023

**End of Document**



[***A Union Leader in Nebraska Tries to Leap to the Senate on Labor’s Strength***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BC2-RTC1-JBG3-62B4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 18, 2024 Sunday 10:30 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1767 words

**Byline:** Jonathan Weisman Jonathan Weisman is a politics writer, covering campaigns with an emphasis on economic and labor policy. He is based in Chicago.

**Highlight:** Dan Osborn led a strike in 2021 against the Kellogg’s plant in Omaha. Now he is challenging Senator Deb Fischer as an independent in deep-red Nebraska.

**Body**

Dan Osborn led a strike in 2021 against the Kellogg’s plant in Omaha. Now he is challenging Senator Deb Fischer as an independent in deep-red Nebraska.

In 2021, as the first Halloween decorations were coming out in Omaha, Neb., a mechanic named Dan Osborn led 500 of his fellow union members out of the Kellogg’s cereal plant on F Street and onto the picket lines.

The strike, which involved over 1,400 workers across multiple plants, would last for a difficult 77 days, [*through brutal storms*](https://www.vice.com/en/article/jg8y3p/the-kelloggs-worker-in-this-viral-photo-told-us-why-hes-braving-the-storm) and imported strikebreakers and [*the threat of summary dismissals*](https://www.vice.com/en/article/jg8y3p/the-kelloggs-worker-in-this-viral-photo-told-us-why-hes-braving-the-storm), which drew the attention of President Biden. A first [*contract was soundly rejected*](https://www.vice.com/en/article/jg8y3p/the-kelloggs-worker-in-this-viral-photo-told-us-why-hes-braving-the-storm) by the union, then a [*second finally ended the walkout*](https://www.vice.com/en/article/jg8y3p/the-kelloggs-worker-in-this-viral-photo-told-us-why-hes-braving-the-storm), just before Christmas.

Now Mr. Osborn, 48, is trying to do something considerably harder: win a United States Senate seat as an independent in the deep-red state of Nebraska.

Mr. Osborn’s [*long-shot bid*](https://www.vice.com/en/article/jg8y3p/the-kelloggs-worker-in-this-viral-photo-told-us-why-hes-braving-the-storm) to defeat Deb Fischer, Nebraska’s Republican senior senator, in November, or even come close, will test whether the rising power of [*an energized union movement*](https://www.vice.com/en/article/jg8y3p/the-kelloggs-worker-in-this-viral-photo-told-us-why-hes-braving-the-storm) can translate to high elective office during an election year when ***working class*** voters will likely decide the next president, and the direction of the country.

The rail unions of western Nebraska first approached him last year to mount a bid, and a [*December survey from a left-leaning group called Change Research*](https://www.vice.com/en/article/jg8y3p/the-kelloggs-worker-in-this-viral-photo-told-us-why-hes-braving-the-storm) put Mr. Osborn up on Ms. Fischer, at 40 percent over her 38 percent. It is a questionable result, as even Mr. Osborn’s supporters concede, but enough to capture imaginations in a one-party state that has long receded from the national political conversation.

With no Democrat in the race, the Nebraska Democratic Party is likely to endorse Mr. Osborn at a meeting on March 2, the party chairwoman, Jane Kleeb, said, though Mr. Osborn said he was not sure he wants that. The state A.F.L.-C.I.O. will back him at a gathering in late March, and national unions are taking a close look.

But can a union leader with no political experience find an agenda that transcends the two political parties and appeals narrowly to blue-collar wallets? And can that leader find the money to put that message out farther west, beyond the urban centers of Omaha and Lincoln?

“I’ve gone up against a major American corporation,” Mr. Osborn said as he cut into a steak Tuesday night. “I stood up for what I thought was right, and I won.”

The Fischer campaign appears to be treating Mr. Osborn as a nuisance, not as a serious threat to her bid for a third term.

“Deb Fischer has actual, strong and deep support all across the state, including 93 bipartisan county chairs and over 1,000 endorsements,” Derek Oden, her campaign manager, said. “She is proud of her longstanding support from members of Nebraska labor unions and is willing to work with any Nebraskan to make life easier for working families across our state.” The campaign cited three firefighters’ unions as well as the carpenters and electricians who backed her six years ago.

Mr. Osborn’s attempt to leap from leader of his local to member of the U.S. Senate has little precedent, almost akin to the five failed presidential bids of the celebrated labor leader Eugene V. Debs early last century.

Union members in other states have made the jump to elective office, like Tim Walz, the governor of Minnesota, and Brandon Johnson, the mayor of Chicago. The New Jersey A.F.L.-C.I.O. has trained 1,300 members to run for office over the past 27 years, with a success rate of 76 percent.

Those seeking office receive instruction in campaigning, opposition research, election law, campaign finance, public speaking and handling the press, said Charles Wowkanech, the president of the New Jersey A.F.L.-C.I.O. In a heavily unionized, Democratic state, the program identifies and contacts every union member in a given district, and, often, they account for more than enough votes to win.

That is not the situation in lightly unionized Nebraska, [*where 9.4 percent of workers*](https://www.vice.com/en/article/jg8y3p/the-kelloggs-worker-in-this-viral-photo-told-us-why-hes-braving-the-storm) are represented. But even in New Jersey, where 17.3 percent are, the highest office sought has been the U.S. House of Representatives, where a union electrician who went through the program, Donald Norcross, holds the First Congressional District.

“We modeled the labor candidate program after apprenticeship programs,” Mr. Wowkanech said. “You don’t start as a journeyman earning top rate. You work your way up.”

In 2018, Randy Bryce, who is known as “[*Iron Stache*](https://www.vice.com/en/article/jg8y3p/the-kelloggs-worker-in-this-viral-photo-told-us-why-hes-braving-the-storm),” captured liberal imaginations and a lot of money as an iron worker (and the secretary of the Racine County Labor Council) running for the house seat of retiring Speaker Paul D. Ryan in Wisconsin. He lost by more than 12 percentage points.

“There definitely are ways to reach across the aisle, but it’s getting rougher every year, that civil divide,” Mr. Bryce said. “We’ve got to find reasons to talk to each other again, and working people running for office is a start.”

Soft-spoken and earnest, Mr. Osborn is not exactly [*Norma Rae*](https://www.vice.com/en/article/jg8y3p/the-kelloggs-worker-in-this-viral-photo-told-us-why-hes-braving-the-storm), the brash protagonist of the 1979 film that dramatized the plight of workers and the struggle to organize in the South. Kellogg’s management fired him a year ago, accusing him of watching Netflix while on the job, a charge he and his friends called trumped up. He is now an apprentice with the steamfitters’ union, [*still working on heating and air conditioning systems*](https://www.vice.com/en/article/jg8y3p/the-kelloggs-worker-in-this-viral-photo-told-us-why-hes-braving-the-storm) as he gets his campaign in gear. He’s also a father of three children between the ages of 16 and 21. His wife is the general manager of a bar and grill in Omaha.

“He’s not pounding his fist on the table,” said Danny Begley, an Omaha City Council member and vice president of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 1483. “He’s measured. He’s calculated.”

Mr. Osborn, who said he was a Democrat until 2016, wants to run on a narrow platform with what he hopes is extremely broad appeal: legalize marijuana (at least for medical use), raise the minimum wage nationally, secure abortion rights, protect gun rights and expand laws to facilitate union organizing. He condemns the inflation of the Biden era, but blames corporate greed and price gouging. He speaks of the U.S. border in distinctly Republican ways.

“Without borders you don’t have a country,” he said, though he added that once the border is closed, Congress should explore ways to legalize some undocumented workers already in the U.S.

Early in Israel’s war in Gaza, campaign advisers told him to put out a statement staking a position. He refused, saying that it was not an issue he wants associated with his campaign.

“Dan has to get a message out that transcends political lines and goes to their pocketbooks,” said Josh Josoff, an ally with the International Union of Elevator Constructors. “Don’t let the wedge issues pull you away.”

On the one issue he most certainly will not be able to escape, the presidential campaign, he seemed genuinely befuddled. Nebraska is overwhelmingly behind Donald J. Trump, as is Ms. Fischer. Mr. Osborn is not, a potential campaign killer this November. But he is not backing President Biden either.

“I think they’re both too old; I think they’re both incompetent,” he said, finally settling on a position. “There’s a good chance I won’t vote for president.”

Bob Kerrey — a once-popular Democratic governor and senator in Nebraska who, in 2012, [*tried and failed at a comeback against Ms. Fischer*](https://www.vice.com/en/article/jg8y3p/the-kelloggs-worker-in-this-viral-photo-told-us-why-hes-braving-the-storm) in her first run for the Senate — is a fan of Mr. Osborn, but is also a skeptic.

“He’s got a hard-core economic agenda, and he has a really unique profile,” Mr. Kerrey said. “You can’t say, ‘Well, what do you know about what we’re going through?’ because he does. He knows that the rules don’t work for working people.”

But Nebraska is stacked against Mr. Osborn. West of Lincoln are some of the largest rail yards in the country, but the freight rail companies, backed by Nebraska Republicans, have manhandled the rail unions, which were the first to ask Mr. Osborn to run after a [*new contract failed*](https://www.vice.com/en/article/jg8y3p/the-kelloggs-worker-in-this-viral-photo-told-us-why-hes-braving-the-storm) to grant their demand of seven paid sick days a year. Such unions may have limited power to deliver North Platte and points west.

The state’s junior senator and former Republican governor, Pete Ricketts, is the other obstacle to Mr. Osborn’s bid. He comes from a family of financiers worth billions of dollars, and he is more than willing to spend it.

Just ask Crista Eggers, who has been trying to legalize medical marijuana since 2019 to treat her son, Colton, who suffers daily epileptic seizures that his physicians believe are treatable with cannabis. Only three states still prohibit medical marijuana, though polls suggest 70 percent to 80 percent of Nebraskans support it. One of those people opposed is Mr. Ricketts, [*who declared*](https://www.vice.com/en/article/jg8y3p/the-kelloggs-worker-in-this-viral-photo-told-us-why-hes-braving-the-storm) as governor, “If you legalize marijuana, you’re going to kill your kids.”

In 2020, Nebraskans for Medical Marijuana got 197,000 signatures, in more than enough counties to get a legalization referendum on the ballot. But the [*Nebraska Supreme Court struck it*](https://www.vice.com/en/article/jg8y3p/the-kelloggs-worker-in-this-viral-photo-told-us-why-hes-braving-the-storm) from consideration on a technicality. Supporters tried again in 2022 but came up short of signatures. Ms. Eggers and her group are now at it again, hoping for some synergy with a ballot drive to protect abortion rights and with Mr. Osborn’s campaign, though the group is prohibited from endorsing him.

A problem for Ms. Eggers, and for Mr. Osborn, is money. Signature drives are costly, and 90 of Nebraska’s 93 counties are rural, adding to the challenge. Mr. Osborn himself has little name recognition statewide, and would require an introduction in the form of television ads and a robust campaign schedule, both expensive endeavors. Union supporters are optimistic that Mr. Osborn’s message resonates against Ms. Fischer, if he has the cash to get it out.

“We just need to push past the Republican and Democrat thing, these teams we’re on,” said Josh Dredla, a friend of Mr. Osborn’s who was on the Kellogg’s picket lines.

Mr. Osborn said at a minimum the campaign needs to raise $2 million. So far, he’s raised just over $200,000.

Ms. Fischer ended 2023 [*sitting on a war chest*](https://www.vice.com/en/article/jg8y3p/the-kelloggs-worker-in-this-viral-photo-told-us-why-hes-braving-the-storm) of close to $3.3 million.

PHOTOS: Dan Osborn, left, is focusing on pocketbook issues in his independent campaign to unseat Senator Deb Fischer, a Nebraska Republican. Mr. Osborn is expected to be endorsed by the Democratic Party. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID ROBERT ELLIOTT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; SARAHBETH MANEY/THE NEW YORK TIMES); A strike against the Kellogg’s plant in Omaha in 2021. Mr. Osborn led his fellow union members onto the picket lines. The strike lasted for 77 days. (PHOTOGRAPH BY LILY SMITH/OMAHA WORLD-HERALD, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS) This article appeared in print on page A12.

**Load-Date:** February 20, 2024

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[***Labor Groups Vexed by New California Senator's Work With Uber***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69C4-6KC1-JBG3-61MF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 10, 2023 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 12

**Length:** 1741 words

**Byline:** By Kellen Browning and Michael Corkery

**Body**

Laphonza Butler was part of Uber's push to avoid having to classify its drivers as employees. Her new appointment has drawn ire from labor advocates.

In the summer of 2019, Uber, Lyft and other companies that use contract drivers faced a crisis in California. The State Legislature was poised to pass a law that would effectively require them to treat their drivers as employees, meaning the gig companies would have to pay drivers a minimum wage, cover their expenses and contribute to state unemployment -- all significant new costs.

Desperate for a way out, the companies pushed legislators to exempt their drivers from the new law, saying they faced huge economic losses. But they wanted the backing of the state's unions for the exemption, and promised to extend some new benefits for drivers if the unions got on board.

So Uber brought in a team of high-powered consultants, including one whose connections with organized labor were unimpeachable: Laphonza Butler, the former president of California's largest union, a branch of the Service Employees International Union.

Ms. Butler, working through a prominent California consulting firm, advised Uber on how to deal with unions like the Teamsters and S.E.I.U., and sat in on several face-to-face meetings between the gig companies and union representatives, according to those familiar with the negotiations.

The overture to labor divided union activists, some of whom bristled at negotiating with the companies, and ultimately, it failed. But Ms. Butler's chapter with Uber proved to be a pivotal moment in her career, moving from labor activism to the world of high-powered political consulting, which also involved a role in advising Vice President Kamala Harris in her 2020 presidential campaign.

On Sunday, Gov. Gavin Newsom of California announced that he was naming Ms. Butler as the state's next senator, replacing Dianne Feinstein, who died last week. Many Democrats cheered the appointment of Ms. Butler, the third Black woman to serve in the Senate and a prominent figure in Democratic politics for more than a decade who most recently served as president of Emily's List, the political action committee that works to elect women and candidates who support abortion rights.

But the appointment has also drawn ire from labor advocates, who have not forgotten Ms. Butler's work consulting with Uber, which some saw as an uncomfortable reversal from her history in the labor movement and the values she promoted there.

''The sense was she was betraying her commitment to working people,'' said Veena Dubal, a professor at the University of California, Irvine, School of Law, who has argued that Uber's drivers should be classified as employees. ''She sold out in a really big way.''

The negotiations Ms. Butler was involved in eventually fell apart, and the gig companies turned to a ballot initiative with similar provisions, Proposition 22, that voters passed the following year.

Supporters of Ms. Butler said her time consulting for Uber was scarcely a blip compared with her long history of labor advocacy, which includes organizing hundreds of thousands of workers in nursing homes and home-based care and successfully pushing for a statewide $15-per-hour minimum wage.

''Labor hasn't had a union leader in the Senate in 60 years -- let alone a union president who spent nearly two decades leading successful campaigns to raise the minimum wage and help workers organize,'' said Jeffrey Lerner, the acting chief of staff for Ms. Butler. ''That's Senator Butler's résumé and those are her values.''

Ms. Butler declined to be interviewed for this article but told The San Francisco Chronicle this week that she believed gig drivers ''should have the protections of employment,'' and said her role with Uber ''was one that was consistent with my résumé.'' Uber also declined to comment.

In 2019, Mr. Newsom's administration encouraged the gig companies and labor unions to work out their differences over the issue, several people involved in the discussions said. Uber and Lyft wanted to persuade the unions to back a bill they could bring to the Legislature that would exempt their drivers from Assembly Bill 5, which would treat many categories of gig workers, like freelance writers and janitors, as employees for the purposes of employment law.

In exchange for the exemption, the gig companies would agree that the drivers could receive some limited benefits and join ''network driver advocacy organizations'' in which the state's unions would represent them and negotiate for some labor rights.

Ms. Butler was brought in as well, with Uber paying the team at the consulting firm where she worked, SCRB Strategies, now known as Bearstar Strategies, $185,000 in 2019 and 2020. She was seen essentially as a translator, helping company managers understand the subtleties of labor leaders' positions and frame arguments in ways that would appeal to the unions, according to several people familiar with the discussions, who declined to be identified because they were not authorized to discuss internal Uber issues or did not want to air internal conflicts in the labor movement.

One person said Ms. Butler was expected to take on other tasks as well, including talking with her former union colleagues about a possible compromise. It was also expected that she might help with a public relations strategy to persuade lawmakers and the general public that AB-5 could have negative effects on gig workers, though it was not clear whether she agreed to do so.

Ms. Butler participated in occasional conference calls with the company's public affairs team, according to two people with knowledge of the calls. She answered their questions and advised Uber to use fewer vague tech industry buzzwords and be more straightforward in communicating with the unions.

Ms. Butler told the Uber employees that she would help them as long as it did not betray her values, one of the people recalled.

Still, Ms. Butler's presence on the other side of the negotiating table rankled many of the state's most prominent labor unions, several union officials said, although they did not want to discuss the matter publicly because they did not want to cross Mr. Newsom and Ms. Butler.

The months of discussions stretched from consultants' offices in Sacramento to hotels in Oakland and the headquarters of Uber and Salesforce in San Francisco. They included large group negotiations, forums for drivers to share their views with labor organizers and smaller sit-downs between the unions' top negotiators and gig company executives, including John Zimmer, the former president of Lyft, and Tony West, Uber's chief legal officer and the brother-in-law of Vice President Harris.

Ms. Butler's role during the meetings she attended was minimal, according to several people. She sat on the sidelines listening, exchanged brief niceties with the union leaders she knew and once made introductions during a meeting in which drivers gave their perspective to the two parties.

Leaders of S.E.I.U., the union where Ms. Butler had formerly worked, were the most amenable to cutting a deal, according to two people involved in the discussions. But many other unions were strongly opposed, fearing they were bargaining away crucial employment rights for vulnerable workers. The talks fizzled out.

Assembly Bill 5 passed that fall and took effect the following year, but Uber and Lyft eventually got what they wanted anyway, joining DoorDash to spend more than $200 million on Prop. 22, passed by voters in 2020, which maintained gig drivers' status as independent contractors and provided them limited benefits, like a wage floor and some health insurance stipends. The measure is currently facing a legal challenge.

Ms. Butler was not involved in the Prop. 22 campaign and left the consulting firm in 2020 to become a director of public policy at Airbnb, the short-term home rental company launched in San Francisco.

Like Uber, Airbnb has faced regulatory heat in Democratic, union-friendly strongholds like New York, where the company was being blamed for pushing up rents for ***working class*** residents and hurting hotel jobs. (Airbnb has said many other factors have caused rents to rise in New York and that its business model has helped drive down lodging costs for consumers.) One of the company's chief adversaries in New York had been the Hotel Trades Council, a powerful union.

Mary Kay Henry, S.E.I.U.'s international president, said Ms. Butler was a ''transformational'' labor leader and suggested that her pro-worker voice being part of Uber's negotiating team may have been a benefit for workers.

''She's who I'd want in the room helping corporations understand what workers want and need,'' Ms. Henry said.

But the animosity Ms. Butler engendered among organized labor remains, and supporters of those running for the permanent Senate seat -- who include Representatives Adam Schiff, Barbara Lee and Katie Porter -- have been quick to resurrect the issue. If Ms. Butler runs for a full term, the unions will have to decide whether to support her. Some, including a firefighters' union, a film set workers' union and a public transit union have already endorsed Mr. Schiff.

The deadline to seek the endorsement of the California Democratic Party was originally Oct. 13, but the party decided this week to push back that date to Oct. 27 to give Ms. Butler time to apply if she decides to run, said Rusty Hicks, the state party's chair.

For some Democrats, Ms. Butler's appointment draws attention to a deeper messaging problem within the Democratic Party. Mr. Newsom might get credit for appointing an L.G.B.T.Q. Black senator, but her consulting work, to some, highlights the party's ties to big businesses.

''This is why many ***working class*** voters have this distaste for the Democratic Party and a lot of them went to Trump,'' said Larry Cohen, the former president of the Communications Workers of America, which represents hundreds of thousands of workers at companies like Verizon and AT&T.

Mr. Cohen is now chairman of Our Revolution, a progressive advocacy group that recently endorsed Ms. Lee.

But Anthony York, a spokesman for Mr. Newsom, defended the governor's appointment. ''Anyone casting doubt on Senator Butler's record of fighting for working families either doesn't know what they're talking about or has some sort of political ax to grind,'' he said.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/07/us/politics/laphonza-butler-uber-lobbying.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/07/us/politics/laphonza-butler-uber-lobbying.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Laphonza Butler was part of Uber's push to avoid having to classify its drivers as employees. Ms. Butler, working through a prominent California consulting firm, advised Uber on how to deal with unions like the Teamsters and S.E.I.U. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE/ASSOCIATED PRESS

BRITTANY GREESON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

In 2019, the State Legislature was poised to pass a law that would require Uber and Lyft to treat their drivers as employees, meaning companies would have to pay them a minimum wage, and more. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JUSTIN SULLIVAN/GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page A12.

**Load-Date:** October 10, 2023

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[***Reviving the American Dream***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69G4-7MV1-DXY4-X005-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 24, 2023 Tuesday 06:33 EST

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1882 words

**Byline:** David Leonhardt

**Highlight:** The American political system helped create today’s problems, and only the American political system can solve them.

**Body**

The American political system helped create today’s problems, and only the American political system can solve them.

Many Americans have come to see the political system as rigged. They worry that grass-roots political movements are powerless to overcome entrenched interests, whether those interests are self-serving politicians, large employers or dominant social media platforms. And I understand why this cynicism exists.

For most Americans, progress has slowed to a crawl in recent decades. Income and wealth inequality have both soared. The top 1 percent have pulled away from everyone else, while ***working-class*** Americans often struggle to afford the best health care and homes in good school districts.

The clearest sign of our problems is this statistic: In 1980, the U.S. had a typical life expectancy for an affluent country. Today, we have the lowest such life expectancy, worse than those of Britain, France, Germany, Canada, Japan or South Korea, as well as some less rich countries, like China or Chile. The main reason is the stagnation of life expectancy for ***working-class*** people.

For nearly a half-century, our economy has failed to deliver on the basic promise of the American dream — that living standards meaningfully improve over time for most citizens.

These themes will probably sound familiar to regular readers of this newsletter. The Morning often covers them because I believe that they shape so many parts of American life, including our polarized politics and angry national dialogue. I have just written a book — my first, called “[*Ours Was the Shining Future: The Story of the American Dream*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/217260/ours-was-the-shining-future-by-david-leonhardt/)” — that tries to explain how we got here.

(For the New York Times Audio app, I read [*part of the introduction*](https://www.nytimes.com/audio/app/2023/10/20/AudioContainer-6532b458.html?referringSource=sharing), including my own family’s story.)

In today’s newsletter, I want to tell you why I nonetheless emerged from writing the book with hope about the country’s future: In short, the American political system helped create today’s problems, and only the American political system can solve them.

When inequality fell

For all the cynicism about politics today, it is worth remembering how often grass-roots political movements in the U.S. have managed to succeed. In the 1920s and 1930s, the country had a highly unequal economy and a Supreme Court that threw out most policies to reduce inequality. But activists — like A. Philip Randolph, a preacher’s son from Jacksonville, Fla., who took on a powerful railroad company — didn’t respond by giving up on the system as hopelessly rigged.

They instead used the tools of democracy to create mass prosperity. They spent decades building a labor movement that, despite many short-term defeats, ultimately changed public opinion, won elections and remade federal policy to put workers and corporations on a more equal footing. The rise of the labor movement from the 1930s through the 1950s led to incomes rising even more rapidly for the poor and middle class than for the rich, and to the white-Black wage gap shrinking.

One big lesson I took from my research was the unparalleled role of labor unions in combating inequality (a role that more Americans [*seem to have recognized*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/18/briefing/hollywood-strikes.html) recently).

There are plenty of other examples of grass-roots movements remaking American life. The civil-rights and women’s movements of the 1960s also overcame long odds, as did the disability-rights movement of the 1970s and the marriage-equality movement of the 2000s.

Other examples come from the political right. In the 1950s and 1960s, a group of conservatives, including Milton Friedman and Robert Bork, began trying to sell the country on the virtues of a low-tax, light-regulation economy. For years, they struggled to do so and were frustrated by their failures. Friedman kept a list of newspapers and magazines that did not even review his first major book.

But the conservatives kept trying — and the oil crisis that began 50 years ago last week eventually helped them succeed. A politician who embraced their ideas, Ronald Reagan, won the presidency and moved the U.S. closer to the laissez-faire ideal than almost any other country.

The conservatives who sold this vision promised it would lead to a new prosperity for all. They were wrong about that, of course. Since 1980, the U.S. has become a grim outlier on many indicators of human well-being. But the conservatives were right that overhauling the country’s economic policy was possible.

This history does not suggest that the political system is hopelessly broken. It instead suggests that the U.S. doesn’t have a broadly prosperous economy largely because the country has no mass movement organized around the goal of lifting living standards for the middle class and the poor. If such a movement existed, it might well succeed. It has before.

The central lesson I took from immersing myself in the past century of the American economy is that it can change, sometimes much more quickly than people expect. When it has changed in a major way, it often has been because Americans have used the political system to change it. The future can be different from the past.

(You can read more [*about the book here*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/217260/ours-was-the-shining-future-by-david-leonhardt/).)

ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR

The Latest in Israel

* Hamas released two more hostages, [*Israeli women aged 79 and 85*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/10/22/world/israel-hamas-war-gaza-news/hamas-hostage-release?smid=url-share) whose husbands remain captive. The older of the two said she was [*held in a tunnel*](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/live/world-middle-east-67201465) but given medical care and hygiene products, the BBC reports.

1. Emmanuel Macron, France’s president, [*arrived in Israel*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/10/24/world/israel-hamas-war-gaza-news/1a6be3bb-78d9-55e7-9770-028e73be4b75?smid=url-share). He is expected to push for the release of more hostages and aid to Gaza.
2. Israeli officials showed [*raw footage from Hamas’s Oct. 7 attack*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/23/world/middleeast/israel-hamas-attack-video.html?smid=url-share) to a group of reporters, including images of bloodied corpses in a bedroom, brutalized young women and soldiers without heads.

The Latest in Gaza

* While Israel delays its ground invasion, it [*continues to attack from the sky*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/10/24/world/israel-hamas-war-gaza-news). Israeli officials said the military had hit more than 400 targets in the past 24 hours.

1. The Hamas-run health ministry in Gaza says more than 5,000 people have been killed there since the start of the war. The Times could not verify the total.
2. The aid convoys entering southern Gaza include [*emergency delivery kits*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/10/23/world/israel-hamas-war-gaza-news/with-aid-stuck-at-the-border-pregnant-women-in-gaza-face-dangerous-births-on-their-own) for pregnant women who will likely give birth on their own as hospitals shut down.
3. U.S. officials are concerned that Israel has [*not sufficiently prepared*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/23/us/politics/israel-us-gaza-invasion.html) for a ground war in Gaza, where Hamas maintains intricate tunnel networks under densely populated areas.

MORE NEWS

Congress

* House Republicans heard privately from eight candidates for speaker and a ninth dropped out. [*They plan to pick a nominee today*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/23/us/politics/house-republicans-divisions-speaker.html).

1. All but two of the candidates — Tom Emmer and Austin Scott — objected to certifying President Biden’s 2020 win.
2. Jim Jordan’s bid for speaker failed, but anti-establishment outsiders like him appear close to [*becoming the dominant Republican faction in the House*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/23/upshot/house-speaker-republicans-jordan.html), Nate Cohn explains.
3. Senator Robert Menendez, a New Jersey Democrat, [*pleaded not guilty*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/23/nyregion/menendez-arraignment-egypt-plot.html) to a charge that he plotted to act as an agent of Egypt.

Latin America

* María Machado, a center-right candidate, [*is leading in Venezuela’s opposition presidential primary*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/22/world/americas/venezuela-presidential-election-vote.html), highlighting voters’ dissatisfaction with years of authoritarian rule.

1. After fleeing Venezuela and attempting to cross the Darién Gap, a mother and daughter followed Biden’s rules and applied for legal asylum. A year later, [*they’re still waiting*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/24/world/americas/venezuela-migrants-darien-gap-biden.html).
2. An armed group [*killed 13 law enforcement officers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/23/world/americas/mexico-police-attack.html) in the Mexican state of Guerrero, where cartels fight turf wars.

War in Ukraine

* The war has [*disrupted the coming of age*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/24/world/europe/ukraine-war-young-adults.html) of many young Ukrainians, exposing them to death, depression and displacement.

1. The battlefield has a cruel math: [*Kill or be killed*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/23/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war.html).

Climate

* “It’s like our country exploded”: The [*scale of Canada’s wildfires*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/24/magazine/canada-wildfires.html) this year was without precedent.

1. After a drought, Maine tried to restrict bottled water companies that draw from local sources. The maker of Poland Spring [*stepped in to kill the bill*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/10/24/climate/maine-water-laws-blue-triton-poland-spring.html).
2. Gov. Gavin Newsom of California is touting his climate policies — including an effort end oil drilling — as he [*considers a future run for president*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/23/climate/gavin-newsom-california-climate-action.html).

Other Big Stories

* The United Automobile Workers union [*expanded its strike*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/23/business/economy/uaw-strike-ram-pickup-truck.html) to a Ram pickup truck plant in Michigan, owned by Stellantis.

1. An off-duty pilot accused of trying to cut fuel to the engines during an Alaska Airlines flight [*was charged with attempted murder*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/23/us/alaska-airlines-flight-diverted.html).
2. A “super fog” hit New Orleans, causing traffic pileups that [*killed at least seven people*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/23/us/fog-new-orleans-louisiana-crash.html).

Opinions

Teachers want to give their students high letter grades out of kindness. But [*tougher grading*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/23/opinion/grade-inflation-high-school.html) helps them improve in the long run, Tim Donahue argues.

Here are columns by Nicholas Kristof on [*Gazan children*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/21/opinion/israel-gaza-palestine-children.html) and Michelle Goldberg on [*Palestinian authors*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/23/opinion/israel-cancel-culture-debate.html).

MORNING READS

Health: It’s the season of pumpkin flavor everything. But is pumpkin [*actually good for you*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/24/well/eat/pumpkin-health-benefits.html)

Call that crazy? She made a TikTok video about pesto. It inspired people to [*spill their secrets*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/24/us/pesto-susi-vidal-tiktok.html).

Walkout: Women in Iceland are taking the day off to [*protest gender inequality*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/23/world/europe/iceland-equality-strike.html).

Lives Lived: The historian Natalie Zemon Davis wrote about peasants, unsung women and Martin Guerre, a 16th-century village impostor recalled in a 1982 movie. She [*died at 94*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/23/books/natalie-zemon-davis-dead.html).

SPORTS

World Series bound: The Texas Rangers [*crushed their in-state rivals*](https://theathletic.com/4992561/2023/10/23/rangers-astros-game-7-alcs/), the Houston Astros, 11-4, to reach their first World Series in over a decade.

One more game: The Arizona Diamondbacks [*staved off elimination*](https://theathletic.com/4992338/2023/10/23/phillies-diamondbacks-pitching-game-7/) in the N.L.C.S., beating the Philadelphia Phillies, 5-1. Game 7 is tonight in Philadelphia.

Monday Night Football: The Minnesota Vikings [*beat the San Francisco 49ers*](https://theathletic.com/4992265/2023/10/23/vikings-49ers-mnf-score-result/).

N.B.A.: The superstar forward Giannis Antetokounmpo and the Milwaukee Bucks [*agreed to a three-year*](https://theathletic.com/4991871/2023/10/23/giannis-antetokounmpo-contract-extension-milwaukee-bucks/), $186 million max extension. The league’s season tips off tonight.

Pink wave: Lionel Messi has made [*Inter Miami’s eye-catching jersey*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/23/business/lionel-messi-inter-miami-jersey.html) the hottest piece of sports merchandise on the planet.

ARTS AND IDEAS

Sondheim’s final note: Shortly before Stephen Sondheim’s death two years ago, he gave a team of collaborators permission to complete his last, unfinished musical. The show, “Here We Are,” premiered this week in New York, and it’s a [*worthy send-off for Sondheim’s career*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/22/theater/here-we-are-review-stephen-sondheim.html), the Times critic Jesse Green writes. The surrealist story, inspired by two Luis Buñuel films, finds a group of obnoxious high-society types searching for an elusive meal. “It is never less than a pleasure to watch as it confidently polishes and embraces its illogic,” Jesse writes.

More on culture

* Caster Semenya, the Olympic runner, explains [*how she has coped*](https://www.thecut.com/2023/10/caster-semenya-race-to-be-myself-memoir-interview.html) with being banned from the sport in an interview with The Cut.

1. Late night hosts joked about the [*lack of diversity in the House speaker race*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/24/arts/television/late-night-house-speaker.html).

THE MORNING RECOMMENDS …

Make sopa de fideo, a Mexican staple [*great for a chilly night*](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1022957-sopa-de-fideo).

Shower as often as you need — which [*might not be every day*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/23/well/live/shower-every-day.html).

Buy a piano [*on a budget*](https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/reviews/best-budget-digital-piano-for-beginners/).

Give [*these great presents*](https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/gifts/best-gifts-under-25/) under $25.

GAMES

Here is [*today’s Spelling Bee*](https://www.nytimes.com/puzzles/spelling-bee). Yesterday’s pangram was hologram.

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

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

P.S. New York Magazine named Carolyn Ryan, a Times managing editor, and Mara Gay, a Times Opinion writer, on its [*list of powerful New Yorkers*](https://nymag.com/intelligencer/article/new-york-inside-power-list.html).

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PHOTO: A former glass factory in West Virginia being converted to a battery factory. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Andrew Spear for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** October 24, 2023

**End of Document**



[***DeSantis Has Shown What G.O.P. Voters Really Want***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B3M-9661-DXY4-X04V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 14, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section SR; Column 0; Sunday Review Desk; Pg. 5; ROSS DOUTHAT

**Length:** 1424 words

**Byline:** By Ross Douthat

**Body**

If Ron DeSantis surprises in Iowa and beyond, if he recovers from his long polling swoon and wins the Republican nomination, it will represent the triumph of a simple, intuitive, but possibly mistaken idea: That voters should be taken at their word about what they actually want from their leaders.

It was always clear, going into 2024, that a large minority of the Republican primary electorate would vote for Donald Trump no matter what -- including, in the event of his untimely passing, for the former president's reanimated corpse or his A.I. simulation. A smaller bloc strongly preferred a pre-Trump and un-Trump-like Republican; this has become the Nikki Haley constituency.

This left a crucial middle bloc, maybe 40 percent of the party in my own guesstimation, that was Trump-friendly but also seemingly persuadable and open to another choice. These were those Republicans who mostly hadn't voted for Trump in the early primaries in 2016, who had regarded him as the lesser of two evils during his tilt with Hillary Clinton, but who had gradually become more authentically favorable toward him over the course of his presidency -- because of the judges he appointed, because of the strength of the economy, because they reacted against the hysteria of his liberal opponents, or just because of the alchemy of partisan identification.

I talked to a lot of these kind of Republicans between 2016 and 2020 -- not a perfectly representative sample, probably weighted too heavily toward Uber drivers and Catholic lawyer dads, but still enough to recognize a set of familiar refrains. These voters liked Trump's policies more than his personality. They didn't like some of his tweets and insults, so they mostly just tuned them out. They thought that he had the measure of liberals in a way that prior Republicans had not, that his take-no-prisoners style was suited to the scale of liberal media bias and progressive cultural hegemony. But they acknowledged that he didn't always seem entirely in charge of his own administration, fully competent in the day-to-day running of the government.

So their official position was that they wanted a version of Trump with less drama, who wasn't constantly undermined by his generals or his bureaucrats, who didn't seem confused about the difference between tweeting about a problem and actually addressing it. They didn't want to go back to the pre-Trump G.O.P., but they also didn't just want to replay Trump's first term -- especially how it ended, with Trump at war with his own public health apparatus over Covid while a left-wing cultural revolution surged through American cities and schools and mass media.

Ron DeSantis's entire persona as governor of Florida seemed to meet this ostensible demand. He had a strong record of both political and legislative success, having moved Florida rightward at the ballot box and in public policy -- a clear contrast with Trump, as a one-term president who presided over notable Republican political defeats. DeSantis was a cultural battler who seemed more adept than Trump at picking fights and more willing than many pre-Trump Republicans to risk the wrath of big donors and corporations. His Covid record was exactly in tune with the party's mood; he exuded competence when a hurricane hit; he fought constantly with the media and still won over Florida's swing voters. If Republicans wanted to keep key elements of Trumpism but joined to greater competence, if they wanted a president who would promise to build a wall and then actually complete it, DeSantis was clearly the best and only possibility.

Those voters still have a chance, beginning in Iowa, to make the choice they claimed to want. But if current polls are correct and they mostly just return to Trump, what will it say about how political identification really works?

One argument will be that DeSantis failed the voters who were open to supporting him, by failing to embody on the campaign trail the brand that he built up in Florida and that had built him solid national polling numbers before he jumped into the race.

For instance, it's clear that the ability to wrangle happily with the liberal media is a crucial part of the Trumpian persona, and having showed some of that ability in Florida, DeSantis unaccountably tried to run a presidential campaign exclusively via right-wing outlets and very-online formats like his disastrous Muskian debut. His lack of charisma relative to Trump was always going to be a problem, but he still made it worse by cocooning himself, initially at least, from the conflicts that should have been a selling point.

Or again, any Trumpism-without-Trump would presumably need to copy some of Trump's flair for ideological heterodoxy, his willingness to ignore the enforcers of True Conservatism and promise big -- new infrastructure projects, universal health care, flying cars -- whatever the indifferent follow-through. And again, while the DeSantis of Florida seemed to have some instinct for this approach -- attacking woke ideology in schools while also raising teacher salaries, say -- as a presidential candidate he's been more conventional, running the kind of ideologically narrow campaign that already failed to deliver Ted Cruz the nomination in 2016.

But allowing for these kind of specific critiques of how DeSantis has failed to occupy the space he seemed to have carved out, his struggles still seem more about the gap between what voters might seem to want on paper and how political attractions are actually forged.

Here DeSantis might be compared to the foil in many romantic comedies -- Ralph Bellamy in a Cary Grant vehicle, Bill Pullman in ''Sleepless in Seattle,'' the boyfriend left behind in the city while the heroine reconnects with her small-town roots in various TV Christmas movies. He's the guy who's entirely suitable, perfectly sympathetic and yet incapable of inspiring passion or devotion.

Or again, to borrow an insight from a friend, DeSantis is an avatar for the generation to which he (like me, just barely) belongs: He's the type of Generation X-er who pretends to be alienated and rebellious but actually has a settled marriage, a padded résumé, a strong belief in systems and arguments and plans -- and a constant middle-aged annoyance at the more vibes-based style of his boomer elders and millennial juniors.

The Republican Party in the Trump era has boasted a lot of Gen X leaders, from Cruz and Marco Rubio to Paul Ryan and Haley. But numerically and spiritually, the country belongs to the boomers and millennials, to vibes instead of plans.

This might be especially true for a Republican Party that's becoming more ***working-class***, with more disaffected and lower-information voters, fewer intensely focused consumers of the news, less interest than the Democratic electorate in policy plans and litmus tests. (Though even the Democratic electorate in 2020 opted against its most plans-based candidates in the end, which is why an analogy between DeSantis and Elizabeth Warren has floated around social media.)

And it's definitely true in the narrative context created by Trump's legal battles, all the multiplying prosecutions, which were clearly the inflection point in DeSantis's descent from plausible successor to likely also-ran.

If a majority or plurality of Republican voters really just wanted a form of Trumpism free of Trump's roiling personal drama, a version of his administration's policies without the chaos and constant ammunition given to his enemies, the indictments were the ideal opportunity to break decisively for DeSantis -- a figure who, whatever his other faults, seems very unlikely to stuff classified documents in his bathroom or pay hush money to a porn star.

But it doesn't feel at all surprising that, instead, voters seem ready to break decisively for Trump. The prosecutions created an irresistible drama, a theatrical landscape of persecution rather than a quotidian competition between policy positions, a gripping narrative to join rather than a mere list of promises to back. And irresistible theater, not a more effective but lower-drama alternative, appears to be the revealed preference of the Republican coalition, the thing its voters really want.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/13/opinion/desantis-trump-iowa-republicans.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/13/opinion/desantis-trump-iowa-republicans.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY ALEX WONG, VIA GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page SR5.

**Load-Date:** January 14, 2024

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[***Young Fathers’ Music Has Always Been Subversive. Now It’s Joyful, Too.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67HJ-8RC1-JBG3-60PX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 10, 2023 Friday 22:25 EST

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**Section:** ARTS; music

**Length:** 1141 words

**Byline:** Alex Marshall

**Highlight:** The Scottish trio has been making political, genre-blending songs for a decade. On a new album, the group embraces the elation of community.

**Body**

The Scottish trio has been making political, genre-blending songs for a decade. On a new album, the group embraces the elation of community.

When the Scottish band Young Fathers were partway through writing their new album, “Heavy Heavy,” Graham Hastings, known as G, played his brother-in-law a song called “[*Rice*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AlgcqWf6evk&amp;ab_channel=YOUNGFATHERS).” The track features cascading drums and bouncy, booming bass as the three-piece chant lyrics including “These hands can heal” and “See the turning tide.”

“What are you doing?” Hastings, who sings and plays keys, percussion and synths, recalled his brother-in-law asking. “That’s far too happy for Young Fathers.”

For years, the group’s music had been labeled [*abrasive or forbidding*](https://www.theguardian.com/music/2018/mar/08/young-fathers-cocoa-sugar-review-twisted-sounds-for-a-twisted-world). Being told it was too upbeat, Hastings, 35, said, was “another surprise, another sense that we were doing something we hadn’t before.”

Over the past decade, Young Fathers — which also includes Alloysious Massaquoi and Kayus Bankole, who both sing, rap and play percussion — have made music that juxtaposes gospel, hip-hop, electronic music and even the swagger of punk. Despite winning the prestigious Mercury Prize in 2014, their songs have a habit, Bankole said, of “falling between the cracks,” and rarely get played on pop radio stations.

The director Danny Boyle, who used Young Fathers’ music for [*his 2017 movie “T2 Trainspotting,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/16/movies/t2-trainspotting-review.html) said in an interview that they “are like a boy band, except no other boy band you’ve ever heard in your life before.” Their music, with oblique lyrics that touch on topics including masculinity and [*attitudes to immigrants*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uPyC0JUfZrU&amp;ab_channel=YOUNGFATHERS), sums up the loneliness of urban Britain, Boyle added, but he said the group sings with such “white and Black soul,” it lifts listeners up.

That uplift is the focus of “Heavy Heavy,” Young Fathers’ fourth studio album and first in five years, though not necessarily by design. In a recent interview at its messy studio — a squat building wedged between a graveyard and a furniture upholsterer in a ***working class*** district of Edinburgh — the trio said it hadn’t taken an intentional direction on the LP. It was just trying to “expel all we needed to expel,” Massaquoi, 35, said.

At the end of 2019, the group started working on “Heavy Heavy” following a rare year off, so when the three men finally met up to write, they could really “appreciate what we have: the arguments, the fallouts, the joy, the happy moments,” Bankole, 35, said.

The trio has been having those ups and downs for over 20 years, after meeting when they were 14 at an underage club in Edinburgh. They each had very different backgrounds: Massaquoi arrived in Edinburgh as a refugee from Liberia’s civil war; Hastings grew up in a ***working class*** home in the city; and Bankole lived in a Nigerian household where he was expected to become a doctor or a lawyer. But Massaquoi said that on the club’s dance floor, surrounded by tipsy teenagers, their connection was immediate.

Soon, they were making tracks in Hastings’s bedroom, crowded around a microphone hanging in a closet. As teenagers, they initially tried to be a “psychedelic boy band,” Hastings said, performing upbeat rap songs, complete with dance routines, at the club where they had met. They secured a manager, but got stuck in limbo, spending a decade writing songs that were never released. Frustrated, their music took a darker turn, which unlocked a new level of their creativity. Once they started putting those new tracks online in 2013, they once again had the industry’s attention.

When Young Fathers reconvened for the “Heavy Heavy” sessions in 2019, it was the first time they’d written music alone since those early days in the bedroom. Massaquoi said going back to their childhood connection simply “made the most sense.” Sometimes writing felt like “toil,” Hastings added, but he said the trio were addicted to “the moments of ecstasy” they create together. It was only once the album was finished that they realized many of its songs had a real “communal aspect,” Massaquoi said.

The album includes “[*Ululation*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CmPrU-ygD_U&amp;ab_channel=YOUNGFATHERS),” in which the band hands vocal duties to Tapiwa Mambo, a friend who ululates joyfully in Shona, a southern African language; and “[*Drum*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wTc1r3VKUXI&amp;ab_channel=YOUNGFATHERS)” in which the group urges listeners to “hear the beat of the drums and go numb, have fun.”

“Sometimes the most radical thing you can do is create a sense of community,” Hastings said, “to get people together and to dance.”

In the past, Young Fathers were known for taking a disruptive approach to their art. In 2015, they released an album titled “White Men Are Black Men Too” hoping to encourage discussion around issues of race and identity (Massaquoi and Bankole are Black, Hastings is white.)

Two years later, the group made [*a video for Scotland’s National Portrait Gallery*](https://www.facebook.com/nationalportraitgallery/videos/10155556827439664/). As Bankole danced in front of the gallery’s paintings of white aristocrats from centuries ago, Massaquoi pointed out that there was no one like him “framed in gold” in the museum.

“Am I meant to admire the brushwork and the colors and the historical context without considering how you came to be here, and the people who look like me aren’t?” Massaquoi intones in the track. “Am I meant to just accept this?”

Today, discussions about Britain’s legacy of colonialism are commonplace, [*even in the country’s museums*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/28/arts/design/public-art-black-britain.html). But in 2017, some social media users [*posted racist responses*](https://www.scotsman.com/arts-and-culture/young-fathers-suffer-backlash-over-art-galleries-criticism-1443792) to the video.

“Sometimes we’re consciously subverting things,” Hastings said. But as a multiracial group working across genres, “we’re accidentally subverting things by just being.”

At a recent album release show, a handful of fans in the 900-strong crowd said the group’s racial mix and politics were a vital part of its appeal. Greg Shaw, 40, a personal trainer who’d driven two hours to the gig at Chalk, a club in Brighton, southern England, said he loved that the band “sing about Black issues, about ***working class*** issues, about being together as one.”

For most of the 40-minute set, the band seemed lost in its own experience of the music: Bankole prowled and danced around the stage, dreadlocks flying; Massaquoi crooned soulfully into a mic with his eyes closed; and Hastings glared intensely at the crowd as he sung gruffly.

But just before Young Fathers began a final number, an old fan favorite called “Toy,” Bankole beamed at the crowd.

“What a beautiful family we have here,” he said. Soon, much of the audience was dancing and jittering just like him. As the track ended, Hastings twisted knobs and hit buttons on a bank of electronic equipment to fill the venue with noise. Then he turned and grinned at everyone.

There’s nothing wrong with happiness, Hastings had said in Edinburgh: “There is a lot of power in joy.”

PHOTO: From left, Kayus Bankole, Graham Hastings and Alloysious Massaquoi, better known as Young Fathers, in concert in Brighton, England. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JEREMIE SOUTEYRAT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page C3.

**Load-Date:** February 19, 2023

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[***Plutocratic Power and Its Perils***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:681T-4SR1-JBG3-619R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 18, 2023 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 18; PAUL KRUGMAN

**Length:** 904 words

**Byline:** By Paul Krugman

**Body**

The rich are different from you and me: They have immensely more power. But when they try to exercise that power they can trap themselves -- supporting politicians who will, if they can, create a society the rich themselves wouldn't want to live in.

This, I'd argue, is the common theme running through four major stories that have been playing out over the past few months. They are: the relationship between Justice Clarence Thomas and the billionaire Harlan Crow; the rise and seeming decline of Ron DeSantis's presidential campaign; the trials (literally) of Fox News; and the Muskopalypse at Twitter.

First, some notes on the role of vast wealth in a democracy.

People on the right often insist that expressing any concern about highly concentrated wealth is ''un-American.'' The truth, however, is that worrying about the dangers great wealth poses for democracy is very much part of the American tradition. And our nation basically invented progressive taxation, which was traditionally seen not just as a source of revenue but also as a way to limit excessive wealth.

In fact, if you read what prominent figures said during the Progressive Era, many expressed views that would be hysterically denounced as class warfare today. Theodore Roosevelt warned against ''a small class of enormously wealthy and economically powerful men, whose chief object is to hold and increase their power.'' Woodrow Wilson declared, ''If there are men in this country big enough to own the government of the United States, they are going to own it.''

How does great wealth translate into great power? Campaign finance is dominated by a tiny number of extremely rich donors. But there are several other channels of influence.

Until recently I would have said that outright corruption -- direct purchase of favors from policymakers -- was rare. ProPublica's revelation that Justice Thomas enjoyed many lavish, undisclosed vacations at Crow's expense suggests that I may have been insufficiently cynical.

Beyond that, there's the revolving door: Former politicians and officials who supported the interests of the wealthy find comfortable sinecures at billionaire-supported lobbying firms, think tanks and media organizations. These organizations also help shape what military analysts call the ''information space,'' defining public discourse in ways that favor the interests of the superrich.

Despite all that, however, there's only so much you can achieve in America, imperfect and gerrymandered as our democracy may be, unless you can win over large numbers of voters who don't support a pro-billionaire economic agenda.

It's a simplification, but I think fundamentally true, to say that the U.S. right has won many elections, despite an inherently unpopular economic agenda, by appealing to intolerance -- racism, homophobia and these days anti-''wokeness.'' Yet there's a risk in that strategy: Plutocrats who imagine that the forces of intolerance are working for them can wake up and discover that it's the other way around.

Which brings us to the other stories I mentioned.

For a while DeSantis seemed to be surging in the race for the 2024 Republican presidential nomination. Much of his apparent rise reflected support from big G.O.P. donors, who saw him as a saner alternative to Donald Trump -- someone who would serve their financial interests while attracting ***working-class*** support with his social conservatism and willingness to play footsie with conspiracy theories.

But some of those donors are now bailing, because it looks increasingly as if DeSantis's intolerance and conspiracy theorizing weren't a political show -- they're who he really is. And the big money was looking for a charlatan, not a genuine fanatic.

Among the forces pushing a DeSantis candidacy has been Rupert Murdoch's Fox News. Fox was essentially founded to carry out the right-wing strategy of pushing plutocratic policy while winning over ***working-class*** whites with intolerance and conspiracy theories. But emails and texts uncovered by the defamation suit by Dominion Voting Systems show that Fox has become a prisoner of the audience it created. It found itself endorsing claims about a stolen election, even though its own people knew they were false, because it feared losing market share among viewers who wanted to believe the Big Lie.

And does anyone doubt that if the Republican primary goes the way it seems to be heading, Fox will soon be back in Trump's corner?

Rupert Murdoch's organization, then, has effectively been taken hostage by the very forces he helped conjure up.

But Elon Musk's story is, if anything, even sadder. As Kara Swisher recently noted for Time magazine, he's become ''the world's richest online troll.'' The crazy he helped foment hasn't taken over his organization -- it has taken over his mind.

I still believe that the concentration of wealth at the top is undermining democracy. But it isn't a simple story of plutocratic rule. It is, instead, a story in which the attempts of the superrich to get what they want have unleashed forces that may destroy America as we know it. And it's terrifying.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/17/opinion/plutocrats-power-trump.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/17/opinion/plutocrats-power-trump.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A18.

**Load-Date:** April 18, 2023

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[***A Looming Clash Of Two Presidents, And Two Americas***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B65-27Y1-JBG3-604R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 26, 2024 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 18; NEWS ANALYSIS

**Length:** 1591 words

**Byline:** By Peter Baker

**Body**

The general election matchup that seems likely between President Biden and former President Donald J. Trump is about fundamentally disparate visions of the nation.

Each of them has sat behind the Resolute Desk in the Oval Office, signed bills into law, appointed judges, bartered with foreign leaders and ordered the armed forces into combat. They both know what it is like to be the most powerful person on the planet.

Yet the general election matchup that seems likely after this week's New Hampshire primary represents more than the first-in-a-century contest between two men who have both lived in the White House. It represents the clash of two presidents of profoundly different countries, the president of Blue America versus the president of Red America.

The looming showdown between President Biden and former President Donald J. Trump, assuming Nikki Haley cannot pull off a hail-mary surprise, goes beyond the binary liberal-conservative split of two political parties familiar to generations of Americans. It is at least partly about ideology, yes, but also fundamentally about race and religion and culture and economics and democracy and retribution and most of all, perhaps, about identity.

It is about two vastly disparate visions of America led by two presidents who, other than their age and the most recent entry on their résumés, could hardly be more dissimilar. Mr. Biden leads an America that, as he sees it, embraces diversity, democratic institutions and traditional norms, that considers government at its best to be a force for good in society. Mr. Trump leads an America where, in his view, the system has been corrupted by dark conspiracies and the undeserving are favored over hard-working everyday people.

Deep divisions in the United States are not new; indeed, they can be traced back to the Constitutional Convention and the days of John Adams versus Thomas Jefferson. But according to some scholars, they have rarely reached the levels seen today, when Red and Blue Americas are moving farther and farther apart geographically, philosophically, financially, educationally and informationally.

Americans do not just disagree with each other, they live in different realities, each with its own self-reinforcing Internet-and-media ecosphere. The Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol was either an outrageous insurrection in service of an unconstitutional power grab by a proto-fascist or a legitimate protest that may have gotten out of hand but has been exploited by the other side and turned patriots into hostages.

The two lands have radically different laws on access to abortion and guns. The partisan breakdown is so cemented in 44 states that they effectively already sit in one America or the other when it comes to the fall election. That means they will barely see one of the candidates, who will focus mainly on six battleground states that will decide the presidency.

In an increasingly tribal society, Americans describe their differences more personally. Since Mr. Trump's election in 2016, according to the Pew Research Center, the share of Democrats who see Republicans as immoral has grown from 35 percent to 63 percent while 72 percent of Republicans say the same about Democrats, up from 47 percent. In 1960, about 4 percent of Americans said they would be displeased if their child married someone from the other party. By 2020, that had grown to nearly four in 10. Indeed, only about 4 percent of all marriages today are between a Republican and a Democrat.

''Today, when we think about America, we make the essential error of imagining it as a single nation, a marbled mix of red and blue people,'' Michael Podhorzer, a former political director of the AFL-CIO, wrote in an essay last month. ''But America has never been one nation. We are a federated republic of two nations: Red Nation and Blue Nation. This is not a metaphor; it is a geographic and historical reality.''

The current divide reflects the most significant political realignment since Republicans captured the South and Democrats the North following the civil rights legislation of the 1960s. Mr. Trump has transformed the G.O.P. into the party of the white ***working class***, rooted strongly in rural communities and resentful of globalization, while Mr. Biden's Democrats have increasingly become the party of the more highly educated and economically better off, who have thrived in the information age.

''Trump was not the cause of this realignment, since it has been building since the early 1990s,'' said Douglas B. Sosnik, who was a White House counselor to President Bill Clinton and studies political trends. But ''his victory in 2016 and his presidency accelerated these trends. And this realignment is largely based on the winners and losers in the new 21st-century digital economy, and the best predictor of whether you are a winner or loser is your level of education.''

Each of the leaders of these two Americas wields power in his own way. As the current occupant of the White House, Mr. Biden has all the advantages and disadvantages of incumbency. But Mr. Trump has been acting as an incumbent in a fashion too -- he never conceded his 2020 defeat and the majority of his supporters, polls show, believe that he, not Mr. Biden, is the legitimate president.

Even without a formal office, Mr. Trump has set the agenda for Republicans in Washington and the state capitals. He encouraged the internal coup that took down Speaker Kevin McCarthy last year after he made a spending deal with Mr. Biden. He is advising the current speaker, Mike Johnson, on how to handle the impasse over border policy and security aid for Ukraine.

Many elected Republicans who once stood against Mr. Trump, with notable exceptions, have rushed to endorse him in recent weeks as his claim to the party's presidential nomination has grown almost complete. As a result, it is hard to imagine any major policy deal coming together in Washington this year without Mr. Trump's approval or at least his acquiescence.

The current situation has no exact analog in American history. Only twice before have two presidents faced off against each other. In 1892, former President Grover Cleveland won a rematch against President Benjamin Harrison. In 1912, former President Theodore Roosevelt lost a third-party bid to depose his successor and estranged protégé, President William Howard Taft, but paved the way for victory by the Democratic candidate, Woodrow Wilson.

Neither of those contests reflected the kind of epochal moment that scholars and political professionals see this year. When historians search for parallels, they often point to the period before the Civil War, when an industrializing North and an agrarian South were divided over slavery. While secession today is far-fetched, the fact that it nonetheless comes up in conversation among Democrats in California and Republicans in Texas from time to time indicates how divorced many Americans feel from each other.

''Whenever I mention the 1850s, everyone thinks we are going to have a civil war,'' said Sean Wilentz, a Princeton historian who was among a group of scholars who met recently with Mr. Biden. ''I'm not saying that. It's not predictive. But when institutions are weakened or changed or transformed the way they have, you can get perspective from history. I think people have yet to understand just how abnormal the situation is.''

Mr. Biden and Mr. Trump are both historically unpopular presidents. Mr. Biden opens his re-election year with an approval rating of just 39 percent in Gallup polling, the lowest of any elected president at this point going back to Dwight D. Eisenhower. The two are essentially equal in favorability, a slightly different question, with 41 percent expressing positive feelings about Mr. Biden compared with 42 percent about Mr. Trump.

But they represent different electorates. Mr. Biden is viewed favorably by 82 percent of Democrats but only 4 percent of Republicans. Mr. Trump is viewed favorably by 79 percent of Republicans but only 6 percent of Democrats.

In Mr. Sosnik's latest analysis, Mr. Biden starts the general election with 226 likely votes in the Electoral College and Mr. Trump with 235. To get to the 270 needed for victory, one of them will have to harvest some of the 77 votes up for grab in half a dozen states: Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

Because Mr. Biden and Mr. Trump have both served as president, Americans already know what they think about them. That will make it harder for either to define his opponent with the public the way that President George W. Bush defined John F. Kerry in 2004 and President Barack Obama defined Mitt Romney in 2012.

But the wild cards this year remain unique nonetheless -- an 81-year-old incumbent who is already the oldest president in American history against a 77-year-old predecessor who is facing 91 felony counts in four separate criminal indictments. No one can say for sure how those dynamics will play out over the next 285 days, which Mr. Biden and Mr. Trump are already treating as the general election presidential campaign.

And while voters may already have some sense of how the winner will operate in the White House over the next four years, it is not at all clear how a divided country will respond to victory by one or the other. Rejectionism, disruption, further schism, even violence all seem possible.

As Mr. Wilentz said, ''Things are not normal here. I think that's important for people to understand.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/25/us/politics/biden-trump-presidential-election.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/25/us/politics/biden-trump-presidential-election.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: A campaign ad airing last week in Concord, N.H. A likely Biden-Trump rematch in the fall reflects disparate visions of the country. (PHOTOGRAPH BY SOPHIE PARK FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A18.

**Load-Date:** January 26, 2024

**End of Document**



[***He Promised a Feast, on One Condition: Watch His Art Film***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B8J-7TP1-DXY4-X07B-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 6, 2024 Tuesday 17:04 EST

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**Section:** STYLE

**Length:** 1544 words

**Byline:** Alex Vadukul Alex Vadukul is a features writer for the Styles section of The Times, specializing in stories about New York City.

**Highlight:** Hundreds of moviegoers went to rare screenings of a 1990 film directed by the New York restaurateur Keith McNally. Afterward, he treated them to half-price dinners at Balthazar.

**Body**

Hundreds of moviegoers went to rare screenings of a 1990 film directed by the New York restaurateur Keith McNally. Afterward, he treated them to half-price dinners at Balthazar.

On Thursday night at the Roxy Cinema in Lower Manhattan, a throng of scarf-bundled cinephiles attended the sold-out screening of a black-and-white psychological thriller, “End of the Night,” that was being shown for the first time in more than 30 years.

The film’s obscurity wasn’t what drew the crowd: They were there because of its unlikely writer and director, [*Keith McNally*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/17/style/keith-mcnally-instagram-restaurants.html), the downtown restaurateur who runs Balthazar, Minetta Tavern, Pastis and Morandi.

Before he shaped New York’s nightlife with his brasseries, Mr. McNally had serious filmmaking ambitions. His first full-length feature, “[*End of the Night*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/17/style/keith-mcnally-instagram-restaurants.html),” premiered at the Directors’ Fortnight showcase during the 1990 Cannes Film Festival, appearing alongside Whit Stillman’s “Metropolitan.” It went on to be a minor hit in Europe before it became a cinematic footnote.

In advance of the screenings at [*the Roxy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/17/style/keith-mcnally-instagram-restaurants.html), an 118-seat art house cinema located in a hotel in TriBeCa, Mr. McNally drummed up interest with [*a post*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/17/style/keith-mcnally-instagram-restaurants.html) on his popular Instagram account: “ANYONE WATCHING THIS FILM AT THE ROXY CAN EAT AT BALTHAZAR OR MINETTA TAVERN THAT SAME NIGHT FOR HALF-PRICE,” he wrote in his typical all-caps style.

The post also quoted from a Cahiers du Cinéma review that described “End of the Night” as a “noirish tale of self-destruction” that provides an “unsettling look at a man whose life is turned upside down during his wife’s pregnancy.”

Soon after the credits rolled at the Thursday night showing, three friends lingered in the lobby, channeling their inner Pauline Kael.

“It’s giving Wim Wenders,” said Frankie Galassi, an actress and waitress who was carrying a Vanity Fair tote bag.

“It felt like a mix of ‘After Hours’ and ‘Eyes Wide Shut,’” said Zac Zellers, a bespectacled writer and bartender with sideburns. “I detected early Cronenberg and Jarmusch in there, too.”

“I think McNally showed promise,” added Ben Booth, a filmmaker and waiter.

Then they discussed dinner at [*Balthazar*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/17/style/keith-mcnally-instagram-restaurants.html), because they planned to take advantage of the discount Mr. McNally had offered to anyone who could produce a Roxy ticket. The deal was good through Sunday night, when the film would have the last of its four screenings.

Mr. Zellers placed an unlit cigarette to his lips as he and his two friends prepared to march through the cold to Balthazar. “I think some just came for the ticket deal, because I saw a couple people leaving early during the film,” he said. “I’m thinking we’ll do the seafood tower when we get there.”

When the trio arrived at the SoHo brasserie, the [*maître d’*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/17/style/keith-mcnally-instagram-restaurants.html) examined their tickets before [*seating*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/17/style/keith-mcnally-instagram-restaurants.html) them in the grand hall. They ordered the seafood tower, moules frites, steak tartare, frisée aux lardons, fries and profiteroles. They continued analyzing the film as they downed cocktails and concluded that it also contained echoes of the Coen brothers. When they were hit with the bill, they calculated that they had saved $199.

Ms. Galassi sipped her martini.

“I heard that McNally thought he wasn’t good at making films, so that’s why he stopped directing them, but I don’t know,” she said. “I feel maybe he had more movies in him.”

Mr. McNally, 72, was seated nearby in a red booth, keeping an eye on things. A few fans nervously approached his table to compliment him on the film, including one who gave him a bouquet of flowers. Mr. McNally, who suffered a stroke several years ago, thanked them in his soft-spoken English accent.

The next afternoon, he reminisced about his filmmaking past in an interview at his cottage-like SoHo apartment as classical music played from a sound system.

“I never really liked the film, to be honest,” Mr. McNally said of “End of the Night.” “I hated when I saw it in the cinema, even at Cannes. It was difficult for me, because I noticed all the things I didn’t like.”

“Now everyone is calling me and telling me they loved it,” he continued, “and I don’t know if they’re just being polite. I look back and can’t believe I had the audacity to make a film, though I don’t miss it, because I think my talent as a filmmaker was minimal.”

But as a teenager in London’s ***working class*** East End in the 1960s, he dreamed of making movies.

At 16, while working as a hotel bellhop, he met a producer who needed to fill a role for a boy in “Mr. Dickens of London,” a 1967 television movie about Charles Dickens’s ghost starring Michael Redgrave. Mr. McNally received the part and later acted in a West End production of Alan Bennett’s “Forty Years On.” He went on to work as a lighting technician for “The Rocky Horror Picture Show.”

“That’s why my places are so well lit,” he said. “Because I used to work lighting boards.”

When he arrived in New York in the 1970s, he was committed to becoming a director. While waiting tables to pay the rent, he studied the works of Michelangelo Antonioni, Billy Wilder and Woody Allen, and he made noirish short films of his own. One of them, he said, starred a then little-known [*Ellen Barkin*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/17/style/keith-mcnally-instagram-restaurants.html).

But after Mr. McNally opened the Odeon in 1980 with his brother, Brian, and his first wife, Lynn Wagenknecht, he was dragged under by its success. “As Odeon and then [*Cafe Luxembourg*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/17/style/keith-mcnally-instagram-restaurants.html) and Nell’s became enormously successful, my ambitions to make films got further and further away from me,” he said.

It wasn’t until he was almost 40 that he tore away from his all-consuming occupation to direct his first feature, “End of the Night,” which chronicles the midlife crisis of Joe Belinksy, a Manhattan insurance man who loses his job while his wife is pregnant.

The protagonist, who is suffering from a brain tumor, has a one-night stand with a Frenchwoman and goes on to pursue others who look like her in nightclubs. Mr. McNally, who was growing into fatherhood when he wrote the script, described the film as an exploration of male parental anxiety.

He followed it up in 1992 with an existential thriller, “[*Far from Berlin*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/17/style/keith-mcnally-instagram-restaurants.html),” which flopped. By the time he opened Balthazar in 1997, his cinematic ambitions had faded to black.

In recent years, the young New Yorkers who have become fans of his brasseries and his often provocative Instagram account — where he has offered support for Mr. Allen and skewered [*James Corden*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/17/style/keith-mcnally-instagram-restaurants.html) — have also taken an interest in his cultural taste. That led the Roxy Cinema’s programming director, Illyse Singer, to approach him last year about putting together a lineup of his favorite films. His [*film series*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/17/style/keith-mcnally-instagram-restaurants.html), which played at the Roxy in September, included “Sexy Beast,” “Klute,” “Husbands and Wives” and “The Third Man.”

Ms. Singer also asked him about his forgotten 1990 movie.

“I didn’t even know where the film cans were,” Mr. McNally said. “But Illyse was persistent, so I found them for her. They were in the basement of my house in Martha’s Vineyard. Two big film cans that had been sitting there for years.”

He said he had no plans to see “End of the Night” at the Roxy.

“I’m not going to any screenings, because I can’t bear to see it myself,” he said. “But I’m hearing that lots of young people are coming to the film, and that makes me happy. I’m not quite sure why they like it, but I’m glad they do.”

As to the 50 percent discount he was offering, Mr. McNally said: “I don’t want to subject anybody to having to see my film without getting something in return. I lose money on the deal, but I don’t care.”

By the end of Sunday’s dinner service, Balthazar and Minetta Tavern had given half-price meals to some 300 movie nerds from the Roxy. The four screenings had all sold out.

Padma Lakshmi sat among the filmgoers on Friday night. After the showing, she offered a quick review as she hailed a cab outside: “I thought the cinematography was beautiful, and it reminded me of an older New York that I miss.”

Over a shrimp cocktail at Balthazar later that evening was Megan Griffith, an actor. “It was an interesting yet infuriating exploration of the private life of a married man,” she said. “But I think any film that makes you feel a raw, visceral feeling is a success, and he did that.”

At the end of another screening, Hannah Wyatt and Sean Bentley prepared to take their tickets to Minetta Tavern to dine on roasted bone marrow and the black label burger. Ms. Wyatt, a photographer, said the movie had deepened her understanding of Mr. McNally.

“I guess his film career didn’t work out for him,” she said. “But I admire him for having at least tried to follow his dream. It’s hard to be professionally successful at doing the things we’re passionate about. So most people don’t even try.”

PHOTOS: The restaurateur Keith McNally, at home in SoHo, made two movies in the 1990s. (PHOTOGRAPH BY LANNA APISUKH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (ST1); Above from left, James Chrisman, Sam Eichner, Joshuwa Riggs and Joe Eichner, among those seeing Keith McNally’s 1990 movie “End of the Night” at the Roxy Cinema. Right from top: dinner at Mr. McNally’s restaurant Balthazar, where audience members dined half-price; the film’s poster in Mr. McNally’s apartment; he found the canisters containing the film’s reels in the basement of his house on Martha’s Vineyard. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY LANNA APISUKH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (ST3) This article appeared in print on page ST1, ST3.

**Load-Date:** February 9, 2024

**End of Document**



[***We Know How America Got Such a Corporate-Friendly Court; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65P4-F9J1-DXY4-X3G9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 14, 2022 Tuesday 14:00 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1147 words

**Byline:** Sohrab Ahmari, Patrick Deneen and Chad Pecknold

**Highlight:** Can the right really be realigned with the ***working class***?

**Body**

With the potential overturning of Roe v. Wade, the Federalist Society appears poised for a triumph. This organization of conservative and libertarian lawyers and law professors and students turns 40 this year.

Yet contrary to progressive perceptions, the society’s function has not been solely, or even primarily, to roll back abortion and other elements of the sexual revolution. If you look at the full scope of its activities, you will notice that a far more important mission has been to mount an economic revolution of its own, on behalf of corporations and other powerful market actors.

The Federalist Society has become a judicial pipeline of the Republican Party, helping to supply numerous nominees to the federal bench. In the progressive imagination, the society is a secretive cabal of theocrats and cultural reactionaries. In reality, it is best understood as a professional-development club for what the writer Michael Lind calls “libertarians in robes” who shift power “from ***working-class*** voters to overclass judges.”

The society was largely one of many institutions nurtured by the right wing of the American donor class to roll back the legal and material achievements of U.S. workers dating back to the New Deal and to elevate economic deregulation to high moral and constitutional principle. In tandem, other right-of-center institutions emerged to solidify America’s status abroad as a hegemon guarding the rule of global capital against rival claimants for organizing world order.

None of this is news to leftist critics of 20th-century conservatism. But a growing number of dissidents within conservatism view these legacy institutions — not just the Federalist Society but also the Heritage Foundation, National Review Institute and others — as ultimately hostile to core commitments that ought to inform the right. These would include cultivation of republican and personal virtue that rests on common prosperity and, yes, a measure of material equality; robust social-democratic support, especially for working families, who shouldn’t have to choose between paying their bills and having children; and modesty about Washington’s role in foreign affairs.

Yet the institutions of Conservatism Inc. persist in advancing a pro-business agenda despite opposition from the large [*populist-right*](https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2021/11/09/the-republican-coalition/)segment of the Republican rank and file. While the G.O.P. has never been a workers’ party, many of its voters are. Yet Conservatism Inc. refuses to embrace a multiethnic, ***working-class*** ethos.

Having seen the workings of institutional conservatism firsthand for several decades, we believe that the best way to understand the contemporary conservative intellectual movement is by examining the material interests that underwrite its workings and shape its mission. Those material interests aren’t all perfectly in agreement with one another, which is why the organizations in question don’t always play nice together. There are disagreements at the margins. But the North Star of all is rule by large corporate and financial power, and support for militarism and cultural aggression abroad.

The Federalist Society itself offers the best illustration of the misguided development of movement conservatism. Hot-button social questions are sometimes fiercely contested among those with ties to the society. For instance, it was Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch who in 2020 [*led*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/15/us/politics/gorsuch-supreme-court-gay-transgender-rights.html)a majority of the court in ruling that sexual orientation and gender identity apply to the 1964 Civil Rights Act’s definition of sex. And Edward Whelan, an originalist stalwart, [*countered*](https://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2021/04/doubts-about-constitutional-personhood) arguments in favor of constitutional protection of fetal personhood — the likely next stage in the anti-abortion battle if or when Roe falls.

Where the society has been supremely effective — and far more united — is in the realm of political economy. In the same decades of progressive ascendancy on cultural issues, society-certified judges on the federal bench pushed through a raft of decisions aimed at thwarting collective action by workers and government action against monopolies.

Over the past several decades, society heroes like Justice Antonin Scalia upended decades of settled law and clear congressional intent to expand the use of commercial arbitration to employment and consumer contexts. This was despite the manifest imbalance in power between the parties agreeing to arbitrate their disputes.

The conservative legal scholar Robert Bork proposed reforms to U.S. antitrust law by arguing that it should focus on “consumer welfare,” often understood to mean lower prices, even if monopoly power means a less competitive economy lorded over by a few giant companies.

The Federalist Society is not the only conservative institution to pursue a similar, pro-corporate agenda. Others, like the Heritage Foundation, the Hudson Institute and National Review Institute, also receive large sums from wealthy individuals and trusts and have similarly too often equated conservatism with a neoliberal, imperial agenda.

What does this tell us about whether the right can really be realigned with the ***working class***? There are a number of smaller right-of-center institutions trying meaningfully to adapt, but Conservatism Inc. at best pays only lip service to ***working-class*** concerns. The largest institutions are still dedicated to inventing, often from whole cloth, as the Ronald Reagan and Newt Gingrich revolutionaries also did, a version of movement conservatism that holds at bay authentic American traditions that run counter to corporate interests.

In the republican tradition, the political economy must be embedded, with state intervention as needed, within a moral order. Yet the longstanding American tradition that fretted over compromises to civic virtue and democratic self-rule demanded by unchecked financial power and imperial expansion has very little institutional expression in today’s Conservatism Inc.

In his farewell address, in 1961, President Dwight Eisenhower [*warned*](https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/president-dwight-d-eisenhowers-farewell-address) his compatriots about just this threat: the rise of a military-industrial complex that shuts out the primacy of public order and the common good to secure the economic commitments of corporate entities. This is what the conservative movement became, the jackals of Mammon. And it is what threatens the common good of the nation.

Sohrab Ahmari is a founder and editor of the journal [*Compact*](https://compactmag.com/). Patrick Deneen is a professor of political science at the University of Notre Dame. Chad Pecknold is an associate professor of systematic theology at the Catholic University of America.

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PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY SAMUEL CORUM FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** June 18, 2022

**End of Document**



[***The DeSantis Campaign Is Revealing What Republican Voters Really Want; Ross Douthat***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B3D-4D11-DXY4-X18N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 13, 2024 Saturday 15:30 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1427 words

**Highlight:** The G.O.P. coalition is poised to choose irresistible theater over a more effective but lower-drama alternative.

**Body**

If Ron DeSantis surprises in Iowa and beyond, if he recovers from his long polling swoon and wins the Republican nomination, it will represent the triumph of a simple, intuitive but possibly mistaken idea: that voters should be taken at their word about what they actually want from their leaders.

It was always clear, going into 2024, that a large minority of the Republican primary electorate would vote for Donald Trump, no matter what — including, in the event of his untimely passing, for the former president’s reanimated corpse or his A.I. simulation. A smaller bloc strongly preferred a pre-Trump and un-Trump-like Republican; this has become the Nikki Haley constituency.

This left a crucial middle bloc, maybe 40 percent of the party in my guesstimation, that was Trump friendly but also seemingly persuadable and open to another choice. These were those Republicans who mostly didn’t vote for Trump in the early primaries in 2016 and who regarded him as the lesser of two evils during his tilt with Hillary Clinton but who gradually became more authentically favorable toward him over the course of his presidency — because of the judges he appointed, because of the strength of the economy, because they reacted against the hysteria of his liberal opponents or just because of the alchemy of partisan identification.

I talked to a lot of these kind of Republicans between 2016 and 2020 — not a perfectly representative sample, probably weighted too heavily toward Uber drivers and Catholic lawyer dads, but still enough to recognize a set of familiar refrains. These voters liked Trump’s policies more than his personality. They didn’t like some of his tweets and insults, so they mostly just tuned them out. They thought that he had the measure of liberals in a way that prior Republicans had not, that his take-no-prisoners style was suited to the scale of liberal media bias and progressive cultural hegemony. But they acknowledged that he didn’t always seem entirely in charge of his own administration, fully competent in the day-to-day running of the government.

So their official position was that they wanted a version of Trump with less drama, who wasn’t constantly undermined by his generals or his bureaucrats, who didn’t seem confused about the difference between tweeting about a problem and actually addressing it. They didn’t want to go back to the pre-Trump G.O.P., but they also didn’t just want to replay Trump’s first term — especially how it ended, with Trump at war with his own public health apparatus over Covid while a left-wing cultural revolution surged through American cities and schools and mass media.

Ron DeSantis’s entire persona as governor of Florida seemed to meet this ostensible demand. He had a strong record of both political and legislative success, having moved Florida rightward at the ballot box and in public policy — a clear contrast with Trump, as a one-term president who presided over notable Republican political defeats. DeSantis was a cultural battler who seemed more adept than Trump at picking fights and more willing than many pre-Trump Republicans to risk the wrath of big donors and corporations. His Covid record was exactly in tune with the party’s mood; he exuded competence when a hurricane hit; he fought constantly with the media and still won over Florida’s swing voters. If Republicans wanted to keep key elements of Trumpism but joined to greater competence, if they wanted a president who would promise to build a wall and then actually complete it, DeSantis was clearly the best and only possibility.

Those voters still have a chance, beginning in Iowa, to make the choice they claimed to want. But if current polls are correct and they mostly just return to Trump, what will it say about how political identification really works?

One argument will be that DeSantis failed the voters who were open to supporting him, by failing to embody on the campaign trail the brand that he built up in Florida and that had built him solid national polling numbers before he jumped into the race.

For instance, it’s clear that the ability to wrangle happily with the liberal media is a crucial part of the Trumpian persona, and having showed some of that ability in Florida, DeSantis unaccountably tried to run a presidential campaign exclusively via right-wing outlets and very-online formats like his disastrous Muskian debut. His lack of charisma relative to Trump was always going to be a problem, but he still made it worse by cocooning himself, initially at least, from the conflicts that should have been a selling point.

Or again, any Trumpism-without-Trump would presumably need to copy some of Trump’s flair for ideological heterodoxy, his willingness to ignore the enforcers of True Conservatism and promise big — new infrastructure projects, universal health care, flying cars — whatever the indifferent follow-through. And again, while the DeSantis of Florida seemed to have some instinct for this approach — attacking woke ideology in schools while raising teacher salaries, say — as a presidential candidate he’s been more conventional, running the kind of ideologically narrow campaign that already failed to deliver Ted Cruz the nomination in 2016.

But allowing for this kind of specific criticism of how DeSantis has failed to occupy the space he seemed to have carved out, his struggles still seem more about the gap between what voters might seem to want on paper and how political attractions are actually forged.

Here DeSantis might be compared to the foil in many romantic comedies — Ralph Bellamy in a [*Cary Grant*](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0032599/) [*vehicle*](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0028597/), Bill Pullman in “Sleepless in Seattle,” the boyfriend left behind in the city while the heroine reconnects with her small-town roots in various TV Christmas movies. He’s the guy who’s entirely suitable, perfectly sympathetic and yet incapable of inspiring passion or devotion.

Or again, to borrow an insight from a friend, DeSantis is an avatar for the generation to which he (like me, just barely) belongs: He’s the type of Generation X-er who pretends to be alienated and rebellious but actually has a settled marriage, a padded résumé, a strong belief in systems and arguments and plans — and a constant middle-aged annoyance at the more vibes-based style of his boomer elders and millennial juniors.

The Republican Party in the Trump era has boasted a lot of Gen X leaders, from Cruz and Marco Rubio to Paul Ryan and Haley. But numerically and spiritually, the country belongs to the boomers and millennials, to vibes instead of plans.

This might be especially true for a Republican Party that’s becoming more ***working-class***, with more disaffected and lower-information voters, fewer intensely focused consumers of the news, less interest than the Democratic electorate in policy plans and litmus tests. (Though even the Democratic electorate in 2020 opted against its most plans-based candidates in the end, which is why an analogy between DeSantis and Elizabeth Warren has floated around social media.)

And it’s definitely true in the narrative context created by Trump’s legal battles, all the multiplying prosecutions, which were clearly the inflection point in DeSantis’s descent from plausible successor to likely also-ran.

If a majority or plurality of Republican voters really just wanted a form of Trumpism free of Trump’s roiling personal drama, a version of his administration’s policies without the chaos and constant ammunition given to his enemies, the indictments were the ideal opportunity to break decisively for DeSantis — a figure who, whatever his other faults, seems very unlikely to stuff classified documents in his bathroom or pay hush money to a porn star.

But it doesn’t feel at all surprising that, instead, voters seem ready to break decisively for Trump. The prosecutions created an irresistible drama, a theatrical landscape of persecution rather than a quotidian competition between policy positions, a gripping narrative to join rather than a mere list of promises to back. And irresistible theater, not a more effective but lower-drama alternative, appears to be the revealed preference of the Republican coalition, the thing its voters really want.

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PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY ALEX WONG, VIA GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page SR5.

**Load-Date:** January 15, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Plutocratic Power and Its Perils; Paul Krugman***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:681N-V4F1-JBG3-614F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 17, 2023 Monday 13:35 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 901 words

**Byline:** Paul Krugman

**Highlight:** Great wealth — and its dangers — are very much part of the American story.

**Body**

The rich are different from you and me: They have immensely more power. But when they try to exercise that power they can trap themselves — supporting politicians who will, if they can, create a society the rich themselves wouldn’t want to live in.

This, I’d argue, is the common theme running through four major stories that have been playing out over the past few months. They are: the relationship between Justice Clarence Thomas and the billionaire Harlan Crow; the rise and seeming decline of Ron DeSantis’s presidential campaign; the trials (literally) of Fox News; and the Muskopalypse at Twitter.

First, some notes on the role of vast wealth in a democracy.

People on the right often insist that expressing any concern about highly concentrated wealth is “[*un-American*](https://www.businessinsider.com/wealth-tax-history-hamilton-founding-fathers-american-revolution-2020-2).” The truth, however, is that worrying about the dangers great wealth poses for democracy is very much part of the American tradition. And our nation basically invented progressive taxation, which was traditionally seen not just as a source of revenue but also as a way to limit excessive wealth.

In fact, if you read what prominent figures said during the Progressive Era, many expressed views that would be hysterically denounced as class warfare today. Theodore Roosevelt [*warned*](https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2011/12/06/archives-president-teddy-roosevelts-new-nationalism-speech) against “a small class of enormously wealthy and economically powerful men, whose chief object is to hold and increase their power.” Woodrow Wilson [*declared*](https://www.gutenberg.org/files/14811/14811-h/14811-h.htm), “If there are men in this country big enough to own the government of the United States, they are going to own it.”

How does great wealth translate into great power? Campaign finance is dominated by a [*tiny number*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/02/us/small-pool-of-rich-donors-dominates-election-giving.html) of [*extremely rich*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/20/us/politics/megadonors-political-spending.html) donors. But there are several other channels of influence.

Until recently I would have said that outright corruption — direct purchase of favors from policymakers — was rare. ProPublica’s [*revelation*](https://www.propublica.org/article/clarence-thomas-scotus-undisclosed-luxury-travel-gifts-crow) that Justice Thomas enjoyed many lavish, undisclosed vacations at Crow’s expense suggests that I may have been insufficiently cynical.

Beyond that, there’s the revolving door: Former politicians and officials who supported the interests of the wealthy find comfortable sinecures at billionaire-supported lobbying firms, think tanks and media organizations. These organizations also help shape what military analysts call the “[*information space*](https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-march-11-2023),” defining public discourse in ways that favor the interests of the superrich.

Despite all that, however, there’s only so much you can achieve in America, imperfect and gerrymandered as our democracy may be, unless you can win over large numbers of voters who don’t support a pro-billionaire economic agenda.

It’s a simplification, but I think fundamentally true, to say that the U.S. right has won many elections, despite an inherently unpopular economic agenda, by appealing to intolerance — racism, homophobia and these days anti-“wokeness.” Yet there’s a risk in that strategy: Plutocrats who imagine that the forces of intolerance are working for them can wake up and discover that it’s the other way around.

Which brings us to the other stories I mentioned.

For a while DeSantis seemed to be surging in the race for the 2024 Republican presidential nomination. Much of his apparent rise reflected support from [*big G.O.P. donors*](https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/wealthy-gop-donors-flock-desantis-presidential-speculation-swirls-n1278172), who saw him as a saner alternative to Donald Trump — someone who would serve their financial interests while attracting ***working-class*** support with his social conservatism and willingness to play footsie with conspiracy theories.

But some of those donors are now [*bailing*](https://www.yahoo.com/entertainment/gop-megadonor-pulls-plug-ron-070606428.html), because it looks increasingly as if DeSantis’s intolerance and conspiracy theorizing weren’t a political show — they’re who he really is. And the big money was looking for a charlatan, not a genuine fanatic.

Among the forces pushing a DeSantis candidacy has been Rupert Murdoch’s [*Fox News*](https://www.axios.com/2023/03/02/republican-2024-primary-fox-news-desantis-trump). Fox was essentially [*founded*](https://theweek.com/articles/880107/why-fox-news-created) to carry out the right-wing strategy of pushing plutocratic policy while winning over ***working-class*** whites with intolerance and conspiracy theories. But [*emails and texts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/20/technology/fox-news-dominion-texts.html) uncovered by the defamation suit by Dominion Voting Systems show that Fox has become a prisoner of the audience it created. It found itself endorsing claims about a stolen election, even though its own people knew they were false, because it feared losing market share among viewers who wanted to believe the Big Lie.

And does anyone doubt that if the Republican primary goes the way it seems to be heading, Fox will soon be [*back in Trump’s corner*](https://apnews.com/article/fox-news-dominion-trial-trump-carlson-election-f580413e13d1bfaea1e94827a4f35dc1)

Rupert Murdoch’s organization, then, has effectively been taken hostage by the very forces he helped conjure up.

But Elon Musk’s story is, if anything, even sadder. As [*Kara Swisher*](https://time.com/collection/100-most-influential-people-2023/6269883/elon-musk-2023/) recently noted for Time magazine, he’s become “the world’s richest online troll.” The crazy he helped foment hasn’t taken over his organization — it has taken over his mind.

I still believe that the concentration of wealth at the top is undermining democracy. But it isn’t a simple story of plutocratic rule. It is, instead, a story in which the attempts of the superrich to get what they want have unleashed forces that may destroy America as we know it. And it’s terrifying.

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This article appeared in print on page A18.

**Load-Date:** April 18, 2023

**End of Document**



[***As Egypt’s Presidential Election Closes, No Suspense Over Winner***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69VM-DGS1-DXY4-X2CH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 12, 2023 Tuesday 15:26 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; middleeast

**Length:** 1150 words

**Highlight:** President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi is all but certain to come out on top after a three-day vote, with the war in Gaza turning the country’s focus from economic calamity to security.

**Body**

President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi is all but certain to come out on top after a three-day vote, with the war in Gaza turning the country’s focus from economic calamity to security.

There were four men on the ballot when Egyptians voted in this week’s presidential election, but with rare exception, only one of their faces gazed out from billboards, banners, buses and lampposts across Egypt: that of President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi.

According to the government, Mr. el-Sisi won 97 percent of the vote in his last two electoral bids, in [*2014*](https://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/29/world/middleeast/egyptian-presidential-election.html) and [*2018*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/29/world/middleeast/egypt-sisi-vote.html). “All of us are with you,” many of the pro-Sisi banners read, as if anticipating a similar result this time.

At voting stations, which closed on Tuesday at the end of a three-day vote, “Oh Egypt, My Love” and other patriotic songs played at nightclub-worthy volumes, while glowing newspaper [*headlines*](https://news.yahoo.com/egypt-honeymoon-starts-ballot-box-110827787.html) told of newlyweds so dedicated to the nation that they showed up to the polls still in tuxedos and white gowns.

In a country with almost no space for dissent, a tightly leashed media and a lamed opposition, Mr. el-Sisi’s victory is not a matter of great suspense. Official energy appeared to be channeled instead into boosting turnout — a measure of Mr. el-Sisi’s popularity that an economic crisis, and the deep [*resentment*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/05/world/middleeast/egypt-election-sisi.html) and despair it has generated, was otherwise likely to depress.

The get-out-the-vote effort appeared to involve some unsubtle encouragement.

Four people in Cairo, the capital, said they had received 200 Egyptian pounds each — the equivalent of about $6.67 — after voting. Several others said they had voted only because they had heard they would be fined for failing to do so or because their employers had given them time off with explicit instructions to use it to cast ballots.

The thought of selecting any of the other three candidates, all unknowns, did not seem to cross anyone’s mind. A few said they had deliberately spoiled their ballots by checking all four boxes; the rest said they had voted Sisi.

Diaa Rashwan, head of Egypt’s State Information Service, said in a statement that while there was a fine for not voting on the books, in practice it had never been applied. He said that providing money or goods in exchange for votes was a criminal offense, but dismissed allegations of such offers as “hearsay.”

Voters who said they had taken payments explained that they needed the money. Others, disdaining the election, said they had skipped voting altogether.

“I used to like Sisi a lot, but now I’m fed up,” said Nadia Assran, 63, who on Sunday, rather than voting, was having coffee with her sister in the lower-middle-class Cairo neighborhood of Shubra.

Such coffee breaks are increasingly expensive, and therefore increasingly rare. Then there was the problem of paying for her daughter’s marriage expenses, or of simply finding affordable sugar and onions amid soaring inflation.

Ms. Assran mentioned the roads, bridges and shiny new cities Mr. el-Sisi has built around Egypt, which officials and state media have hailed as a major presidential accomplishment.

“This is good for our sons and our grandsons,” said Ms. Assran, a widow who survives on the pension from her husband’s job as a police officer. “But how does it help me now?”

Her sister, Hana Assran, 50, flicked a hand at some nearby Sisi banners.

“Why would we vote? He’s going to make it anyway,” she said, reflecting widespread cynicism about the outcome. “And why are you spending so much on election propaganda when we’re struggling so much with the prices?”

Though it dipped slightly in November, annual [*inflation*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/23/world/middleeast/egypt-economy.html) hit record highs of nearly 40 percent this year as Egypt grapples with an economic crisis in which the currency’s value has plummeted and basic items have disappeared from grocery shelves.

The 200 pounds voters said they had received for casting their ballots was worth about $12.50 in 2019, when a [*constitutional referendum*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/23/world/middleeast/sisi-egypt-referendum.html) granted Mr. el-Sisi the right to run for a third term, lengthened presidential terms to six years from four and handed him greater powers. Now it is worth about half that.

Economists say Egypt’s economic implosion stemmed from mismanagement, most notably Mr. el-Sisi’s lavish spending on weapons and [*megaprojects*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/08/world/middleeast/egypt-new-administrative-capital.html) such as new cities, a spree that piled unsustainable debt on what had already been a structurally [*unsound*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/06/world/middleeast/egypt-public-schools-tutoring.html) economy.

The country managed to dodge [*a reckoning*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/20/world/middleeast/egypt-economy-ukraine-war-pandemic.html) until Russia’s 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Egyptian officials have attributed Egypt’s problems to outside causes such as the war and the coronavirus pandemic.

Egypt says it is opening up its politics, pointing to initiatives such as a much-publicized [*dialogue*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/13/world/middleeast/egypt-opposition-talks.html) between government and opposition figures.

But Mr. el-Sisi, a former general who rose to power in a 2013 military takeover, has also succeeded in persuading many Egyptians that they need a strong leader like him to fend off the war, chaos and destruction that have swallowed many of Egypt’s neighbors in recent years, including Libya, Sudan and now the Gaza Strip.

“At least we’re guaranteed to have safety and security,” said Nadia Negm, 28, a housewife in Shubra al-Khaima, a ***working-class*** area northeast of Cairo, who said she had proudly voted for Mr. el-Sisi. “Yes, it’s hard, but at least we’re better off than other countries.”

Ms. Negm, like other Sisi supporters interviewed, pointed out that many other countries were also staring down high inflation and shortages, a common refrain in the state-controlled media.

But for others who declined to vote or said they voted only because they had heard they would be fined if they did not, the humiliation of not knowing how they would pay for next week’s meals, of having to break off a child’s engagement for lack of funds to cover marriage expenses or of being in constant debt outweighed their fear of instability.

“Security and safety should be applied to food and jobs, too,” said Mahmoud Mohamed, 65, a coffeehouse waiter in Banha, a small city in Egypt’s Nile Delta region, who said he had fallen into a cycle of borrowing each month just to pay back the previous month’s debts. “He promised us so much, and none of it was achieved.”

The war in next-door Gaza, however, has [*shifted some Egyptians’ focus*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/10/world/middleeast/egypt-election-gaza-war.html) back to other threats such as terrorism, which Mr. el-Sisi says he has successfully battled in northern Sinai, and what many Egyptians see as [*Israel’s drive*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/10/world/middleeast/gaza-egypt-border.html) to push Gazans across the border into Egypt.

Yasmine Fouad, 39, who owns a cellphone accessories shop in Banha, said she had initially planned to sit out the election as a quiet protest of Mr. el-Sisi and the inflation he has presided over.

The crisis in Gaza changed her mind.

“At this moment, we all have to be behind the president, because anything could happen,” she said. “That makes us accept the current situation.”

PHOTO: Lining up to vote at a polling station in downtown Cairo on Tuesday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Khaled Desouki/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** December 12, 2023

**End of Document**



[***The Power of a Wild Mind***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B05-W6P1-JBG3-60V2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 29, 2023 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; Movies, Performing Arts/Weekend Desk; Pg. 11; CRITIC'S PICK

**Length:** 1330 words

**Byline:** By Walker Mimms

**Body**

A crackling collection of experimental prints by William Blake resurrects the English poet-painter in all his radical frenzy, and foretells the limits of political art.

''A wild pet for the supercultivated,'' as T.S. Eliot called him, is only half the story of William Blake (1757-1827), a poet who is more famous for his influence on certain moderns (Allen Ginsberg, Bob Dylan, Patti Smith) than actually read.

Blake combined extremes: rambling incantations about European history alongside short ditties on the soul that any child can enjoy. As he wrote in 1794: ''I was angry with my friend; / I told my wrath, my wrath did end ...''

He made drawings and paintings, too, and some nice ones appear among the 112 works in ''William Blake: Visionary'' at the Getty Center in Los Angeles, curated by the museum's Edina Adam and Julian Brooks in cooperation with the Tate Britain, where the show originated. But the works that steal this concise and compelling retrospective are his prints, which were the primary means of Blake's living.

In an age of pamphleteering and upward mobility, Blake's ''illuminated books,'' as he called them, stuck out like a Gutenberg relic. His best known collection, ''Songs of Innocence and Experience'' (1789-94), six sheets of which are on view here, occupies a print block not much bigger than a credit card. Lean in close to ''The Tyger,'' his short hymn on creation from the ''Songs.'' Each detail bespeaks a child narrator's awe and the clipped meter of a lullaby: the squiggly tails of his y's (printed in booby-blue ink), the tendrils of green vines framing his tiny stanzas, the spotting of his folk-drawn beast at the foot of the page.

Born in London to ***working-class*** parents, Blake never saw the Continent, missing the Grand Tour and a classical education. His drawings feel both of their time -- with neoclassical musculature and big Roman noses -- but also self-found and a little palsied, as seen in the faces of ''Laocoön'' (1815-27), his engraving of the renowned Hellenistic Greek statue surrounded in graffiti-like inscriptions from Greek and Christian mythology.

Blake sought approval from the Royal Academy, London's artistic gatekeeper, but never quite got it. (The Getty show was postponed by the pandemic, and as a result some of his more traditional paintings, and other telling works from the Tate debut, missed their loan window.)

He apprenticed instead as an engraver -- a title he could never shake -- and made his living illustrating the books of others. By age 33, according to his skilled engraving of William Hogarth's ''Beggar's Opera'' (1790), he knew how cross hatching could convey depth and shadow -- and showed deference to Hogarth, the society satirist whose work hung in London's most exclusive clubs.

But Hogarth was 25 years gone. Revolutions were afoot: monarchies toppling in America and France, William Wilberforce's crusade against the slave trade, deism on the loose. Blake found fellow travelers -- the abolitionist bookseller Joseph Johnson, the radical feminist Mary Wollstonecraft, the Swiss gothic painter Henry Fuseli -- and cut plates for them all. ''Blake is damned good to steal from,'' said Fuseli, whose dramatic ink drawings on view feel tame beside Blake's wildings. ''Fancy is the end, and not a means in his designs.''

Back then, text was printed from small pieces of metal type that stamped ink onto the page in positive. Conversely, illustrations such as Blake's Hogarth were transferred to paper in negative, and had to be printed on separate sheets from text. Ink filled the incisions of an engraver's plate, the metal face was wiped clean, and then the paper, squeezed deep into those incisions, bonded with the ink. Thanks to conflicting processes, text and images had to alternate pages.

Instead Blake found a new, empowering way for his books. He drew both words and images together directly onto his plates in wax. He then used acid to etch away all the negative space, revealing a unified, positive matrix, like a metal stamp. He inked impressions in different colors, then added pigments and inks to the page with brush.

This new process took time but allowed auteurship. In ''America, a Prophecy'' (1793), his 17-panel paean to the revolution of 1776, we follow Orc (rebellion and creation, personified) in his struggle against Albion (George III's England, roughly) and Urizen (Blake's deity of cold, unfeeling logic). Among squiggling roots, gusts and hellfire, the nude Orc, Blake's strongest use of the human form, vogues and flops around stanzas, printed in blue, that tell how ''British soldiers through the thirteen states sent up a howl / Of anguish, threw their swords and muskets to the earth and ran.'' These pages look both scribal and conjured, like Polaroids from the Enlightenment unconscious.

No one else made such things. Not Fuseli or Francisco Goya, painters who confronted but seemed to fear such depths of imagination. While some poets who were Blake's contemporaries (Keats, Shelley, Byron) also unearthed old verse forms (Blake preferred the long-winded ''fourteeners'' of George Chapman), only Blake so fully assaulted neoclassical visuals.

His allegories reach the density of J.R.R Tolkien. Occasionally cloying, they ask how much interpretation true political art can invite. But they were also necessary protection. When Thomas Paine supported the French Revolution in 1791, denouncing the conservative warnings of Edmund Burke, infamous trials followed in London. In an altercation with a soldier in 1803, Blake was charged with sedition; he was ultimately acquitted.

Glad those days are over. But recall one of the most talked-about acquisitions of 2023: a full-length portrait of the Polynesian prince Mai (1776) by Burke's friend Joshua Reynolds (1723-92), founder of the Royal Academy, which cost $60 million, jointly raised by the Getty and London's National Portrait Gallery. In 2026, ''Mai'' will come to the Getty. Reynolds sought a quiet dignity, and found it in his tattooed and turbaned subject. (And a wonderful portrait it is.)

Blake thought Reynolds was ''hired by Satan for the depression of art,'' and instead went for the jugular -- his busy books attack colonial rule, child labor, patriarchy, religious zealotry and sexual repression (he and his wife, who was his colorist and collaborator, read ''Paradise Lost'' to each other in the nude, à la Adam and Eve) in his dense works, using an esoteric printing method that matched the spur of that moment. (His most abolitionist works, traditional engravings for John Stedman's 1796 book on Suriname, don't appear here because of the pandemic delay.) As our museums struggle to reflect colonial realities, this 18th-century debate -- the hushed humanism or the wild radicalism -- lives on.

In a final bid for a painter's renown, Blake staged a solo show in 1809, which flopped. One oil painting, a scene from Thomas Gray's ode ''The Bard,'' appears here, browned by bad varnish, odd and antique. Blake wouldn't live to see the longed-for reforms of the 1830s: emancipation, voting, representation.

His last great illuminated book, ''Jerusalem, the Emanation of the Giant Albion'' (1804-20), better reflects the final, frustrated years of this black sheep of Romanticism. The copy here is from Yale University, and its rainbow-colored creatures include the uber-mensch Orc bound like Prometheus, and a giant birdman contemplating the nature of vengeance, a pursuit that Blake, in incandescent orange cursive, calls ''the destroyer of Grace & Repentance in the bosom.''

Put more simply, in the rest of that quatrain quoted at the top of this review: ''I was angry with my foe; / I told it not, my wrath did grow.''

William Blake: Visionary Through Jan. 14, 2024, at the Getty Center, 1200 Getty Center Drive, Los Angeles; 310-440-7300; getty.edu. William Blake: VisionaryThrough Jan. 14 at the Getty Center, 1200 Getty Center Drive, Los Angeles; 310-440-7300; getty.edu.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/28/arts/design/william-blake-art-getty.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/28/arts/design/william-blake-art-getty.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Top left and right, pages from ''Songs of Innocence and of Experience'' (1806)

center, ''Laocoön'' (1815-27). Left, ''Laughing Song,'' from ''Songs of Innocence and of Experience.'' Bottom left, ''America, a Prophecy'' (about 1807). Right, an image from ''Jerusalem, the Emanation of the Giant Albion'' (about 1821). (PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM

THE HUNTINGTON LIBRARY, ART MUSEUM, AND BOTANICAL GARDENS, SAN MARINO

ALE CENTER FOR BRITISH ART, NEW HAVEN) This article appeared in print on page C11.

**Load-Date:** December 29, 2023

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[***California’s New Senator Was a Labor Leader. Why Are Unions Upset With Her?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69BG-GP41-DXY4-X18R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 7, 2023 Saturday 22:54 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1830 words

**Byline:** Kellen Browning and Michael Corkery

**Highlight:** Laphonza Butler was part of Uber’s push to avoid having to classify its drivers as employees. Her new appointment has drawn ire from labor advocates.

**Body**

Laphonza Butler was part of Uber’s push to avoid having to classify its drivers as employees. Her new appointment has drawn ire from labor advocates.

In the summer of 2019, Uber, Lyft and other companies that use contract drivers faced a crisis in California. The State Legislature was poised to pass a law that would effectively require them to treat their drivers as employees, meaning the gig companies would have to pay drivers a minimum wage, cover their expenses and contribute to state unemployment — all significant new costs.

Desperate for a way out, the companies pushed legislators to exempt their drivers from the new law, saying they faced huge economic losses. But they wanted the backing of the state’s unions for the exemption, and promised to extend some new benefits for drivers if the unions got on board.

So Uber brought in a team of high-powered consultants, including one whose connections with organized labor were unimpeachable: Laphonza Butler, the former president of California’s largest union, a branch of the Service Employees International Union.

Ms. Butler, working through a prominent California consulting firm, advised Uber on how to deal with unions like the Teamsters and S.E.I.U., and sat in on several face-to-face meetings between the gig companies and union representatives, according to those familiar with the negotiations.

The overture to labor divided union activists, some of whom bristled at negotiating with the companies, and ultimately, it failed. But Ms. Butler’s chapter with Uber proved to be a pivotal moment in her career, moving from labor activism to the world of high-powered political consulting, which also involved a role in advising Vice President Kamala Harris in her 2020 presidential campaign.

On Sunday, Gov. Gavin Newsom of California announced that he was naming Ms. Butler as the state’s next senator, replacing Dianne Feinstein, [*who died last week*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/29/us/politics/dianne-feinstein-obituary.html). Many Democrats cheered the appointment of Ms. Butler, the third Black woman to serve in the Senate and a prominent figure in Democratic politics for more than a decade who most recently served as president of Emily’s List, the political action committee that works to elect women and candidates who support abortion rights.

But the appointment has also drawn ire from labor advocates, who have not forgotten Ms. Butler’s work consulting with Uber, which some saw as an uncomfortable reversal from her history in the labor movement and the values she promoted there.

“The sense was she was betraying her commitment to working people,” said Veena Dubal, a professor at the University of California, Irvine, School of Law, who has argued that Uber’s drivers should be classified as employees. “She sold out in a really big way.”

The negotiations Ms. Butler was involved in eventually fell apart, and the gig companies turned to a ballot initiative with similar provisions, Proposition 22, [*that voters passed the following year*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/04/technology/california-uber-lyft-prop-22.html).

Supporters of Ms. Butler said her time consulting for Uber was scarcely a blip compared with her long history of labor advocacy, which includes organizing hundreds of thousands of workers in nursing homes and home-based care and [*successfully pushing for a statewide $15-per-hour minimum wage*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/05/us/california-enacts-15-minimum-wage.html).

“Labor hasn’t had a union leader in the Senate in 60 years — let alone a union president who spent nearly two decades leading successful campaigns to raise the minimum wage and help workers organize,” said Jeffrey Lerner, the acting chief of staff for Ms. Butler. “That’s Senator Butler’s résumé and those are her values.”

Ms. Butler declined to be interviewed for this article but [*told The San Francisco Chronicle this week*](https://www.sfchronicle.com/politics/article/laphonza-butler-exclusive-18404204.php) that she believed gig drivers “should have the protections of employment,” and said her role with Uber “was one that was consistent with my résumé.” Uber also declined to comment.

In 2019, Mr. Newsom’s administration encouraged the gig companies and labor unions to work out their differences over the issue, several people involved in the discussions said. Uber and Lyft wanted to persuade the unions to back a bill they could bring to the Legislature that would [*exempt their drivers from Assembly Bill 5*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/09/business/economy/uber-lyft-california.html), which would treat many categories of gig workers, like freelance writers and janitors, as employees for the purposes of employment law.

In exchange for the exemption, the gig companies would agree that the drivers could receive some limited benefits and join “network driver advocacy organizations” in which the state’s unions would represent them and negotiate for some labor rights.

Ms. Butler was brought in as well, with Uber [*paying the team at the consulting firm where she worked, SCRB Strategies, now known as*](https://cal-access.sos.ca.gov/PDFGen/pdfgen.prg?filingid=2551004&amp;amendid=0)Bearstar Strategies, [*$185,000 in 2019 and 2020*](https://cal-access.sos.ca.gov/PDFGen/pdfgen.prg?filingid=2551004&amp;amendid=0). She was seen essentially as a translator, helping company managers understand the subtleties of labor leaders’ positions and frame arguments in ways that would appeal to the unions, according to several people familiar with the discussions, who declined to be identified because they were not authorized to discuss internal Uber issues or did not want to air internal conflicts in the labor movement.

One person said Ms. Butler was expected to take on other tasks as well, including talking with her former union colleagues about a possible compromise. It was also expected that she might help with a public relations strategy to persuade lawmakers and the general public that AB-5 [*could have negative effects on gig workers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/31/technology/california-freelance-gig-workers.html), though it was not clear whether she agreed to do so.

Ms. Butler participated in occasional conference calls with the company’s public affairs team, according to two people with knowledge of the calls. She answered their questions and advised Uber to use fewer vague tech industry buzzwords and be more straightforward in communicating with the unions.

Ms. Butler told the Uber employees that she would help them as long as it did not betray her values, one of the people recalled.

Still, Ms. Butler’s presence on the other side of the negotiating table rankled many of the state’s most prominent labor unions, several union officials said, although they did not want to discuss the matter publicly because they did not want to cross Mr. Newsom and Ms. Butler.

The months of discussions stretched from consultants’ offices in Sacramento to hotels in Oakland and the headquarters of Uber and Salesforce in San Francisco. They included large group negotiations, forums for drivers to share their views with labor organizers and smaller sit-downs between the unions’ top negotiators and gig company executives, including John Zimmer, the former president of Lyft, and Tony West, Uber’s chief legal officer and the brother-in-law of Vice President Harris.

Ms. Butler’s role during the meetings she attended was minimal, according to several people. She sat on the sidelines listening, exchanged brief niceties with the union leaders she knew and once made introductions during a meeting in which drivers gave their perspective to the two parties.

Leaders of S.E.I.U., the union where Ms. Butler had formerly worked, were the most amenable to cutting a deal, according to two people involved in the discussions. But many other unions were strongly opposed, fearing they were bargaining away crucial employment rights for vulnerable workers. The talks fizzled out.

Assembly Bill 5 passed that fall and took effect the following year, but Uber and Lyft eventually got what they wanted anyway, joining DoorDash to spend more than $200 million on Prop. 22, passed by voters in 2020, which maintained gig drivers’ status as independent contractors and provided them limited benefits, like a wage floor and some health insurance stipends. The measure is [*currently facing a legal challenge*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/13/business/prop-22-upheld-california.html).

Ms. Butler was not involved in the Prop. 22 campaign and left the consulting firm in 2020 to become [*a director of public policy at Airbnb*](https://regents.universityofcalifornia.edu/about/members-and-advisors/bios/laphonza-butler.html), the short-term home rental company launched in San Francisco.

Like Uber, Airbnb has faced regulatory heat in Democratic, union-friendly strongholds like New York, where the company was being blamed for pushing up rents for ***working class*** residents and hurting hotel jobs. (Airbnb has said many other factors have caused rents to rise in New York and that its business model has helped drive down lodging costs for consumers.) [*One of the company’s chief adversaries in New York*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/02/nyregion/hotel-union-nyc-airbnb.html) had been the Hotel Trades Council, a powerful union.

Mary Kay Henry, S.E.I.U.’s international president, said Ms. Butler was a “transformational” labor leader and suggested that her pro-worker voice being part of Uber’s negotiating team may have been a benefit for workers.

“She’s who I’d want in the room helping corporations understand what workers want and need,” Ms. Henry said.

But the animosity Ms. Butler engendered among organized labor remains, and supporters of those running for the permanent Senate seat — who include Representatives Adam Schiff, Barbara Lee and Katie Porter — have been quick to resurrect the issue. If Ms. Butler runs for a full term, the unions will have to decide whether to support her. Some, including [*a firefighters’ union*](https://pstribune.com/2023/09/05/international-association-of-fire-fighters-iaff-endorses-adam-schiff-for-u-s-senate/), a [*film set workers’ union*](https://iatse.net/california-iatse-council-endorses-adam-schiff-for-u-s-senate/) and a [*public transit union*](https://www.atu.org/media/press/2023/atu-endorses-congressman-adam-schiff-for-senate) have already endorsed Mr. Schiff.

The deadline to seek the endorsement of the California Democratic Party was originally Oct. 13, but the party decided this week to push back that date to Oct. 27 to give Ms. Butler time to apply if she decides to run, said Rusty Hicks, the state party’s chair.

For some Democrats, Ms. Butler’s appointment draws attention to a deeper messaging problem within the Democratic Party. Mr. Newsom might get credit for appointing an L.G.B.T.Q. Black senator, but her consulting work, to some, highlights the party’s ties to big businesses.

“This is why many ***working class*** voters have this distaste for the Democratic Party and a lot of them went to Trump,” said Larry Cohen, the former president of the Communications Workers of America, which represents hundreds of thousands of workers at companies like Verizon and AT&amp;T.

Mr. Cohen is now chairman of Our Revolution, a progressive advocacy group that recently endorsed Ms. Lee.

But Anthony York, a spokesman for Mr. Newsom, defended the governor’s appointment. “Anyone casting doubt on Senator Butler’s record of fighting for working families either doesn’t know what they’re talking about or has some sort of political ax to grind,” he said.

PHOTOS: Laphonza Butler was part of Uber’s push to avoid having to classify its drivers as employees. Ms. Butler, working through a prominent California consulting firm, advised Uber on how to deal with unions like the Teamsters and S.E.I.U. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE/ASSOCIATED PRESS; BRITTANY GREESON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); In 2019, the State Legislature was poised to pass a law that would require Uber and Lyft to treat their drivers as employees, meaning companies would have to pay them a minimum wage, and more. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JUSTIN SULLIVAN/GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page A12.

**Load-Date:** October 9, 2023

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[***Behind the Coverage of the Maui Wildfire’s Toll; race/related***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69D0-M361-JBG3-61GG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 14, 2023 Saturday 01:45 EST

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 734 words

**Byline:** The New York Times

**Highlight:** A New York Times reporter spent more than a week in Maui talking with residents who lost relatives in the fire.

**Body**

A New York Times reporter spent more than a week in Maui talking with residents who lost relatives in the fire.

This article is also a weekly newsletter. Sign up for Race/Related [*here*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/race-related).

The fire that swept through the town of Lahaina, on Maui, in early August destroyed much of a beloved place with a [*deep history*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/10/us/lahaina-maui-wildfires-hawaii-history.html) for Native Hawaiians. At least [*98 people are believed to have died*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/maui-wildfire-victims.html) in the wildfire, the country’s deadliest in more than 100 years.

[*Corina Knoll*](https://www.nytimes.com/by/corina-knoll) traveled to Maui to cover the tragedy for The New York Times, and spent time talking with residents who lost relatives in the fire and learning about [*one family’s harrowing escape*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/13/us/maui-lahaina-fire-family-escape.html). We asked her over email what it was like to report on such a painful experience. This interview has been lightly edited and condensed for clarity.

How did you find the family you wrote about?

The Tone family had posted some details about themselves on a GoFundMe page, and I started looking more deeply into them because it seemed particularly heartbreaking that four people from the same household had died — and that one was a 7-year-old boy. It was also important to me to write about a ***working-class*** Pacific Islander family, as I’m always hoping to illuminate the lives of people of color. The labor force that sustains Maui’s tourism industry deserves to be highlighted. I couldn’t get in touch with them at first, but eventually reached a pastor who helped connect me with them.

It’s difficult reporting on disasters. How did you approach talking to this family? What kind of sensitivities did you have in mind?

There is a very strange and hard line we walk when trying to get victims’ families to talk to us. They’re going through the worst time of their lives, and a stranger is asking them to open up. But we are on the ground for a limited number of days, and are highly aware that the world’s attention soon moves on. I tell people very gently that if they want to tell their story, the timing does matter.

At first, Folau Tone didn’t seem to want to meet. When I arrived on Maui, we started communicating mostly through texts. His replies were usually short and vague, and it was hard to tell what he would be up for. But I figured, he hadn’t told me to go away, so I kept checking in with him.

I tried to make it clear that I wanted to tell a sensitive story that would hopefully honor his family members. He finally agreed to an interview at his hotel. I ended up talking to him and his wife, Sabrina, for a few hours.

I’ll always be grateful that they spoke to me. Stories like theirs are so invaluable. It revealed how harrowing and terrible the escape was for survivors and how much was truly lost.

What was it like being on Maui and seeing the wildfire’s devastation firsthand?

When I arrived, three weeks after the fire, sections of Lahaina were closed off, but you could still see burned areas and scorched cars that had been abandoned. There was a row of white crosses, each one for a victim. It was odd to be on a beautiful island that was heavy with tragedy.

But there was also such community at work: makeshift centers where volunteers cooked food and played music and tried to create a vibe of peace and fellowship. I attended a memorial for a 28-year-old father, and his family invited me to their home afterward. They were so warm and open, and the night was filled with laughter and honesty. It felt like something that would only happen in a place like Hawaii.

Is it emotional for you to work on these stories? How do you cope and process what you’re feeling?

When Folau spoke, it brought me to tears. But that emotion tells me that the story matters, and I use it while I’m writing. That’s one way of coping — being able to get it out and onto paper.

It can be an all-consuming process because I take stories like these personally, which is admittedly not healthy. But I feel a great responsibility to write something that is worth the trust someone gave me.

Invite your friends.

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PHOTO: A makeshift memorial for the victims of the wildfire in Lahaina, Hawaii, on Aug. 8, lined Lahaina Bypass Road. The fire killed at least 98 people.; Four members of the Tone family, from three generations, died trying to escape the fire. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHELLE MISHINA KUNZ FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A2.

**Load-Date:** October 18, 2023

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[***A High School Run-In Roils a Community***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BT1-G6S1-DXY4-X043-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 14, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section MB; Column 0; Metropolitan Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 2980 words

**Byline:** By John Leland

**Body**

In a high school lobby in New Jersey, the principal saw a student heading toward a stairway and moved to cut her off. There was physical contact between them, though no blows.

The interaction lasted less than a minute.

The student filed an affirmative action complaint against the principal, saying that he had grabbed her and ''slammed'' her against a wall. The student is Black; the principal is white and Latino.

The principal, reporting the episode later that day, said he was preventing an altercation between the student and three others, who said she had threatened them.

Over the months that followed, those roughly 60 seconds, captured partially on video, have divided neighbors across two towns, spawned two investigations and set off a legal process that could end with the principal in prison.

On March 11, almost exactly a year after the encounter, the principal, Frank Sanchez, was taken into custody and charged with assault and endangering a minor.

What happened that day last spring at Columbia High School, a high-performing school that serves the towns of Maplewood and South Orange, N.J., has become a Rorschach test for a liberal school district with a racially mixed population.

Did Mr. Sanchez use unlawful force against a vulnerable 15-year-old in his care? Or was he simply protecting students from harm?

The answers hinge on Mr. Sanchez's state of mind and the student's intentions -- unknowable elements into which community members have projected their own experiences and assumptions. In a district that is both diverse and divided, the assumptions do not fall neatly along racial or political lines.

A lawyer for the student, who is no longer at the school, said the case revealed a side of the community that many residents did not want to face. The lawyer, James H. Davis III, is chairman of the Black Parents Workshop, an organization that has sued the school district over racial disparities in the past, including unequal punishments for Black students.

''How many other Black students have been ignored over the years that something's happened to them, in violation of their rights and privileges?'' he asked.

But many in the school district tell a different story, of a popular principal simply intervening to prevent a fight and being targeted by people inside and outside the school who opposed his philosophy for running it.

Within days of the arrest, students at the high school held a walkout in support of Mr. Sanchez, and parents and teachers rallied at the town hall, where one demonstrator held up a sign that read, ''Who's Next?''

Charges of bad faith abound.

''Fundamentally, this story is about something having gone horribly awry in our school community,'' said Rhea Mokund-Beck, a parent who supports Mr. Sanchez. ''There has been such a breakdown of trust. Such a breakdown of good will. Such a breakdown of even understanding what public education is for. And then one layers that with all of the dynamics of race and class, and, you know, this is about a real maelstrom that we've made for ourselves.''

Inequality in a Proudly Diverse Community

South Orange and Maplewood, situated about 20 miles west of New York City, are liberal towns with a mix of affluent professionals and ***working-class*** families. The high school, a colossal, century-old Gothic Revival edifice serving a racially diverse student body of 2,000, ranks in the Top 10 percent of schools statewide, according to U.S. News and World Report, and routinely sends students to elite colleges.

The two towns, sometimes abbreviated SOMA, trumpet their progressive colors in their multiple social justice organizations, including SOMA Justice, SOMA Action and Community Coalition on Race, and in a 40-foot mural, ''I Am Maplewood,'' depicting a child's face divided into six sections, each conveying a different racial identity.

But the school system has long had an achievement gap between white and Black students, with Black students graduating and attending college at lower rates, despite years of lawsuits and programs to fix the disparities. A former superintendent, citing the lack of progress, told the school board in 2018, ''We have open and visible segregation in the elementary schools, and classroom segregation at the high school level.''

The Black Parents Workshop, which formed in 2014, sued the district in 2018, charging that Black students were routinely assigned to less rigorous academic tracks and were suspended more frequently than white students for the same acts. The suit was settled in 2020, with the district agreeing to an outside monitor and a complete audit of its practices and outcomes.

Frank Sanchez, who started at Columbia High School that fall, was not an obvious candidate to repair the school's racial disparities. His previous job was at Mountain Lakes High School in Mountain Lakes, N.J., where the student body is less than 2 percent Black.

The Black Parents Workshop opposed his hiring, citing the economic and demographic differences between Mountain Lakes and Columbia, as did an outspoken parent named Elissa Malespina, who would soon join the school board.

Mr. Sanchez arrived at Columbia to find a starkly divided student body. ''Some students spent Covid in Aspen,'' he said, ''and some went to a White Castle or a Burger King to get Wi-Fi because they didn't have it at home.'' He hoped his background, as a son of Cuban immigrants, would help him connect with students from the district's sizable Haitian American community.

A New Approach to School Discipline

Mr. Sanchez made a point to greet students by name in the mornings and to walk the halls between periods, and he called on administrators to do the same. He also introduced changes to the school's disciplinary processes, which met resistance from some at the school and on the board.

He wanted to cut back on student suspensions, which fell disproportionately on Black students, and to reduce police access to students, which he felt abetted a ''school-to-prison pipeline.''

These measures, he said in an interview, put him at odds with some of the ''law and order'' administrators at the school, as well as the local Police Department. They also drew opposition from the Black Parents Workshop. ''Our position has always been, if students are committing crimes, they need to be held accountable,'' said Walter Fields, the group's founder. If students do not feel safe at school, he added, it ''creates systemic barriers to learning for Black children.''

It was against this backdrop that Mr. Sanchez encountered a ninth grader in the school lobby last March 9.

Mr. Sanchez, school officials, the student, the prosecutor and the police all declined to discuss the episode. Teachers were instructed by the district not to talk with the news media.

According to an outside investigation commissioned by the school, several students had filed complaints that the girl had threatened and bullied them over the previous days. She was among roughly 50 students assigned a special one-day workshop designed to build empathy and connection, held in the gym.

But at 1:27 p.m., she was in the lobby and heading toward the stairway to the cafeteria, where the students who filed the complaints against her were eating lunch. Mr. Sanchez moved to stop her. Three video cameras captured parts of the scene, but each missed key actions.

The videos, which have no sound, show the two making contact in front of the stairway doors, Mr. Sanchez slightly taller and considerably stockier. Their hands are mostly obscured. For about 20 seconds they jostle in front of the doors, then move through them, as other students gather to look.

Mr. Sanchez, holding a laptop in his right arm, appears to block or hold the student with his left, as they move toward a wall not visible to two of the cameras. For the last 20 seconds of the interaction the only view is from a lower camera, which shows only their feet. Finally another student seems to lead the girl back through the doors and away from the scene. Mr. Sanchez returns to the lobby.

In her affirmative action complaint, filed a month after the encounter, the student wrote that she had left the workshop to use the restroom when Mr. Sanchez grabbed her and accused her of bullying other students. When she tried to get out of his grip, she wrote, ''he pushed me against the wall.'' She added: ''Mr. Sanchez should be held accountable for wrongly accusing me, and physically grabbing me. This should not be the way he disciplines students.''

Mr. Sanchez's union lawyer, Robert Schwartz, said, ''The video is the best evidence, and it doesn't support the charges.'' He added: ''I've been doing this for a long time, and it's not unusual for an administrator who breaks up a fight to then have the kid accuse him of something. That happens.''

The New Jersey Department of Education leaves it up to school districts to set policies for when school officials may physically engage students. In the South Orange-Maplewood district, staff members may use ''reasonable and necessary'' force to ''quell a disturbance'' that threatens physical harm to others, according to the district's policy manual.

Police documents from Mr. Sanchez's arrest describe him ''pushing and/or shoving and/or grabbing'' the girl, ''causing her to sustain injury.'' In her statement to the prosecutor, she said she was bruised during the encounter.

Mr. Fields, from the Black Parents Workshop, said the circumstances leading up to the confrontation were beside the point. ''I don't care where the young lady was going,'' he said. ''No adult has a right to physically accost a student. I think those are excuses being made for Mr. Sanchez's behavior.''

As the academic year wound down, Ms. Malespina and the Black Parents Workshop campaigned against renewing Mr. Sanchez's contract, citing the student's affirmative action complaint, along with an ''increasing number of fights'' and students feeling unsafe, according to an email Ms. Malespina sent to the superintendent and school board president.

At a packed year-end board meeting last May, a few dozen students and parents, including a current and former mayor of Maplewood, argued for retaining Mr. Sanchez. ''Frank Sanchez is the best thing to happen to our district in the 13 years I've lived here,'' said one mother, Stephanie Nasteff Pilato. A decision to fire him, she said, ''would be a catastrophe.''

Mr. Davis, who spoke against retaining Mr. Sanchez at the meeting, sees the support for him, and the unwillingness to believe a Black student, as revealing. ''These towns purport to be extremely progressive and extremely inclusive,'' he said in an interview. ''So they're saying this girl was in a fight. She was a troublemaker. She was a thug. And I said, 'What does that matter?''' He added: ''They're so determined to protect this principal that for whatever reason, they will put their -- I'll call it pseudo-progressive liberalism -- aside to meet their own objectives.''

The board voted in May to retain Mr. Sanchez, but the showdown left wounds in the community. Several Black parents said that Mr. Davis's group did not speak for them.

''This is an effort to advocate for Black children by burning up the entire system,'' said Khalil Gibran Muhammad, a parent who supports Mr. Sanchez. ''These folks have played very aggressively and unfairly with people's lives to try to score political points. And this is an escalation, in my opinion, that is very dangerous and crosses the line.''

A Flawed Investigation, Then Another

In fall 2023, the school hired an outside law firm, Cooper Levenson, to investigate the student's affirmative action complaint. It delivered its report last December, nine months after the confrontation, finding that Mr. Sanchez had used ''excessive'' force to restrain the girl, and that he seemed ''to have lost his temper and escalated rather than de-escalated the situation.'' The report noted that two assistant principals and two students told investigators that Mr. Sanchez had a pattern of ''taking harsher disciplinary measures against females, and particularly Black females.'' It recommended that the district ''consider appropriate consequences'' for Mr. Sanchez.

But there was a problem with the report, said Courtney Winkfield, who was on the school board at the time. ''The investigator's supervisor personally called our board attorney and told them to halt on doing anything with this report,'' Ms. Winkfield said. ''He said specifically that the investigator did not follow standard operating procedure, did not submit his draft report for review to him.''

Nonetheless, on Dec. 27, according to police records, Ms. Malespina called the police to share the report's findings. The Maplewood Police Department gathered the videos and incident reports from the school and began its own investigation -- this time not into civil charges of bias but criminal charges of assault. Ms. Malespina, whose term on the school board ended in January, declined an interview request.

The school district commissioned Cooper Levinson to do a second investigation, and placed Mr. Sanchez on administrative leave pending its results.

On March 7, Cooper Levinson delivered its revised report, noting that the first one ''should have been deemed a draft report only and subject to revision, change and further peer review.'' The revised report cleared Mr. Sanchez of all charges from the affirmative action complaint and recommended that he be reinstated. It found Mr. Sanchez's description of the episode credible, and cast doubt on the student's, adding that there was no record to support the charges of bias in his treatment of Black girls. ''Security video,'' the investigator wrote, ''does not demonstrate that Principal Sanchez engaged in behavior unbecoming a public school official.''

The report also noted that Mr. Sanchez ''could have engaged in better de-escalation techniques,'' for which it recommended that the school provide more training.

But if the report seemed to vindicate Mr. Sanchez, it brought him little comfort. On the same day he learned of the findings, he was called to turn himself in to the county prosecutor. If convicted of assault and endangering a child, he faces a prison term of up to 10 years.

At a school board meeting two weeks later, a half-dozen mothers, wearing red to support Mr. Sanchez, held up signs and took turns reading aloud from the report of the second outside investigation, to rounds of applause from other supporters. Gwyneth Brown, a student representative on the board, said students felt ''unconnected'' and ''very, very lost.''

No one spoke against Mr. Sanchez.

The Teachers' Dilemma

For educators everywhere, the criminal prosecution of Mr. Sanchez for an action that schools typically handle using their own disciplinary codes opens up new levels of potential risk. Fights are part of high school life. If a school official can be not just disciplined but also jailed for intervening to break up or prevent a fight, what are teachers supposed to do?

In an interview, Mr. Sanchez mentioned a fight last year in which a teacher told the students to stop but did not physically separate them. ''And the parent was just so upset when they saw the video, like, 'Why isn't this person stopping it?''' he said. ''And to be honest, I was a little upset, too. I didn't say that to the parent, but I did say, 'Well, because sometimes people are worried about liability.'''

The implications of Mr. Sanchez's arrest extend far beyond South Orange and Maplewood, said Christopher Emdin, a professor of science education at Teachers College, Columbia University, who has written extensively about race and education.

''The nature of schools is that uncomfortable interactions happen,'' Dr. Emdin said. In districts with a history of racial litigation, he added, ''there's a tendency to blow things out of proportion and to attach what happens oftentimes during the school day to race and racism. And that's dangerous for Black kids who are undergoing legitimate racist practices in contemporary schools. Teachers can't act effectively if they're fearful that their actions are going to be misconstrued as racist.''

Other students at the school may feel a different effect, said Monique Couvson, author of ''Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools,'' who cites research that Black girls' conduct is disproportionately likely to be met with force. For those who witness such uses of force, she said, ''it sends a message that their anger or their quote-unquote attitude is not a valid expression of a form of harm that they might be experiencing.''

In South Orange and Maplewood, bright red ''Friends of Frank'' signs have sprung up on neighborhood lawns. A crowdfunding campaign to pay Mr. Sanchez's legal bills has raised more than $60,000.

At Columbia High School, the Board of Education's lawyer met for two hours with faculty members after Mr. Sanchez's arrest to discuss what teachers could and could not do when students are fighting or are threatening to. ''The entire room was on pins and needles,'' said Amy Biasucci, who has taught A.P. biology and environmental science at the school for 15 years. The meeting was clarifying, she said, but did not dispel teachers' fears.

''We make tens of thousands of micro-decisions on a daily basis,'' she said. ''And it is very scary to think that someone could take a micro-decision out of context and you could now go to jail for that. Your life could be ruined after literally giving your entire life to public service. It's excruciating.''

Mr. Sanchez remains on paid administrative leave, with his next court date scheduled for June.

Taylor Robinson contributed reporting.

Audio produced by Jack D'Isidoro.Taylor Robinson contributed reporting. Audio produced by Jack D'Isidoro.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/11/nyregion/nj-principal-student-assault.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/11/nyregion/nj-principal-student-assault.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Frank Sanchez, the principal of Columbia High School in Maplewood, N.J., has been charged with assault for an encounter that he had with a student in March 2023. (MB1)

Clockwise from top: Columbia High School, where Frank Sanchez is the principal, serves students from the towns of Maplewood and South Orange

James H. Davis III, is the chairman of an organization that has sued the school district over racial disparities

signs supporting Mr. Sanchez dot lawns

Rhea Mokund-Beck, left, and Mia Charlene White support Mr. Sanchez

at a recent board meeting, a parent read statements from students who back Mr. Sanchez. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRYAN ANSELM FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (MB7) This article appeared in print on page MB1, MB7.

**Load-Date:** April 14, 2024

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[***The Looming Contest Between Two Presidents and Two Americas; news analysis***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B5Y-FJ11-JBG3-600X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 25, 2024 Thursday 11:03 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1620 words

**Highlight:** The general election matchup that seems likely between President Biden and former President Donald J. Trump is about fundamentally disparate visions of the nation.

**Body**

The general election matchup that seems likely between President Biden and former President Donald J. Trump is about fundamentally disparate visions of the nation.

Each of them has sat behind the Resolute Desk in the Oval Office, signed bills into law, appointed judges, bartered with foreign leaders and ordered the armed forces into combat. They both know what it is like to be the most powerful person on the planet.

Yet the general election matchup that seems likely after [*this week’s New Hampshire primary*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/23/us/politics/trump-win-new-hampshire-haley.html) represents more than the first-in-a-century contest between two men who have both lived in the White House. It represents the clash of two presidents of profoundly different countries, the president of Blue America versus the president of Red America.

The looming showdown between President Biden and former President Donald J. Trump, assuming Nikki Haley cannot [*pull off a hail-mary surprise*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/24/us/politics/nikki-haley-trump-south-carolina-republican-primary.html), goes beyond the binary liberal-conservative split of two political parties familiar to generations of Americans. It is at least partly about ideology, yes, but also fundamentally about race and religion and culture and economics and democracy and retribution and most of all, perhaps, about identity.

It is about two vastly disparate visions of America led by two presidents who, other than their age and the most recent entry on their résumés, could hardly be more dissimilar. Mr. Biden leads an America that, as he sees it, embraces diversity, democratic institutions and traditional norms, that considers government at its best to be a force for good in society. Mr. Trump leads an America where, in his view, the system has been corrupted by dark conspiracies and the undeserving are favored over hard-working everyday people.

Deep divisions in the United States are not new; indeed, they can be traced back to the Constitutional Convention and the days of John Adams versus Thomas Jefferson. But according to some scholars, they have rarely reached the levels seen today, when Red and Blue Americas are moving farther and farther apart geographically, philosophically, financially, educationally and informationally.

Americans do not just disagree with each other, they live in different realities, each with its own self-reinforcing Internet-and-media ecosphere. The Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol was either an outrageous insurrection in service of an unconstitutional power grab by a proto-fascist or a legitimate protest that may have gotten out of hand but has been exploited by the other side and turned patriots into hostages.

The two lands have radically different laws on access to abortion and guns. The partisan breakdown is so cemented in 44 states that they effectively already sit in one America or the other when it comes to the fall election. That means they will barely see one of the candidates, who will focus mainly on six battleground states that will decide the presidency.

In an increasingly tribal society, Americans describe their differences more personally. Since Mr. Trump’s election in 2016, [*according to the Pew Research Center*](https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2022/08/09/as-partisan-hostility-grows-signs-of-frustration-with-the-two-party-system/), the share of Democrats who see Republicans as immoral has grown from 35 percent to 63 percent while 72 percent of Republicans say the same about Democrats, up from 47 percent. In 1960, about 4 percent of Americans said they would be displeased if their child married someone from the other party. By 2020, that had grown to [*nearly four in 10*](https://today.yougov.com/society/articles/32171-america-speaks-what-do-they-think-about-cross-part?redirect_from=%2Ftopics%2Flifestyle%2Farticles-reports%2F2020%2F09%2F24%2Famerica-speaks-what-do-they-think-about-cross-part). Indeed, only about 4 percent of all marriages today are between a Republican and a Democrat.

“Today, when we think about America, we make the essential error of imagining it as a single nation, a marbled mix of red and blue people,” Michael Podhorzer, a former political director of the AFL-CIO, [*wrote in an essay last month*](https://www.weekendreading.net/p/the-two-nations-of-america). “But America has never been one nation. We are a federated republic of two nations: Red Nation and Blue Nation. This is not a metaphor; it is a geographic and historical reality.”

The current divide reflects the most significant political realignment since Republicans captured the South and Democrats the North following the civil rights legislation of the 1960s. Mr. Trump has transformed the G.O.P. into the party of the white ***working class***, rooted strongly in rural communities and resentful of globalization, while Mr. Biden’s Democrats have increasingly become the party of the more highly educated and economically better off, who have thrived in the information age.

“Trump was not the cause of this realignment, since it has been building since the early 1990s,” said Douglas B. Sosnik, who was a White House counselor to President Bill Clinton and studies political trends. But “his victory in 2016 and his presidency accelerated these trends. And this realignment is largely based on the winners and losers in the new 21st-century digital economy, and the best predictor of whether you are a winner or loser is your level of education.”

Each of the leaders of these two Americas wields power in his own way. As the current occupant of the White House, Mr. Biden has all the advantages and disadvantages of incumbency. But Mr. Trump has been acting as an incumbent in a fashion too — he never conceded his 2020 defeat and the majority of his supporters, polls show, believe that he, not Mr. Biden, is the legitimate president.

Even without a formal office, Mr. Trump has set the agenda for Republicans in Washington and the state capitals. He encouraged the internal coup that took down Speaker Kevin McCarthy last year after he made a spending deal with Mr. Biden. He is advising the current speaker, Mike Johnson, on how to handle the impasse over border policy and security aid for Ukraine.

Many elected Republicans who once stood against Mr. Trump, with notable exceptions, [*have rushed to endorse him*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/24/us/politics/republicans-congress-endorse-trump.html) in recent weeks as his claim to the party’s presidential nomination has grown almost complete. As a result, it is hard to imagine any major policy deal coming together in Washington this year without Mr. Trump’s approval or at least his acquiescence.

The current situation has no exact analog in American history. Only twice before have two presidents faced off against each other. In 1892, former President Grover Cleveland won a rematch against President Benjamin Harrison. In 1912, former President Theodore Roosevelt lost a third-party bid to depose his successor and estranged protégé, President William Howard Taft, but paved the way for victory by the Democratic candidate, Woodrow Wilson.

Neither of those contests reflected the kind of epochal moment that scholars and political professionals see this year. When historians search for parallels, they often point to the period before the Civil War, when an industrializing North and an agrarian South were divided over slavery. While secession today is far-fetched, the fact that it nonetheless comes up in conversation among Democrats in California and Republicans in Texas from time to time indicates how divorced many Americans feel from each other.

“Whenever I mention the 1850s, everyone thinks we are going to have a civil war,” said Sean Wilentz, a Princeton historian who was among a group of scholars who met recently with Mr. Biden. “I’m not saying that. It’s not predictive. But when institutions are weakened or changed or transformed the way they have, you can get perspective from history. I think people have yet to understand just how abnormal the situation is.”

Mr. Biden and Mr. Trump are both historically unpopular presidents. Mr. Biden opens his re-election year with an approval rating of just 39 percent in Gallup polling, [*the lowest of any elected president*](https://news.gallup.com/poll/329384/presidential-approval-ratings-joe-biden.aspx) at this point going back to Dwight D. Eisenhower. The two are essentially equal in favorability, a slightly different question, with 41 percent expressing positive feelings about Mr. Biden compared with 42 percent about Mr. Trump.

But they represent different electorates. Mr. Biden is [*viewed favorably by 82 percent*](https://news.gallup.com/poll/548138/american-presidential-candidates-2024-election-favorable-ratings.aspx) of Democrats but only 4 percent of Republicans. Mr. Trump is viewed favorably by 79 percent of Republicans but only 6 percent of Democrats.

In Mr. Sosnik’s latest analysis, Mr. Biden starts the general election with 226 likely votes in the Electoral College and Mr. Trump with 235. To get to the 270 needed for victory, one of them will have to harvest some of the 77 votes up for grab in half a dozen states: Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

Because Mr. Biden and Mr. Trump have both served as president, Americans already know what they think about them. That will make it harder for either to define his opponent with the public the way that President George W. Bush defined John F. Kerry in 2004 and President Barack Obama defined Mitt Romney in 2012.

But the wild cards this year remain unique nonetheless — an 81-year-old incumbent who is already the oldest president in American history against a 77-year-old predecessor who is facing 91 felony counts in four separate criminal indictments. No one can say for sure how those dynamics will play out over the next 285 days, which Mr. Biden and Mr. Trump are already treating as the general election presidential campaign.

And while voters may already have some sense of how the winner will operate in the White House over the next four years, it is not at all clear how a divided country will respond to victory by one or the other. Rejectionism, disruption, further schism, even violence all seem possible.

As Mr. Wilentz said, “Things are not normal here. I think that’s important for people to understand.”

PHOTO: A campaign ad airing last week in Concord, N.H. A likely Biden-Trump rematch in the fall reflects disparate visions of the country. (PHOTOGRAPH BY SOPHIE PARK FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A18.

**Load-Date:** January 26, 2024

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[***The Glowering Man Behind New England's Joy***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B35-FS61-JBG3-60Y0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 12, 2024 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1375 words

**Byline:** By Bill Pennington

**Body**

The head coach of the Patriots, who has parted ways with the team after 24 years, won six Super Bowls with a taciturn approach that rewarded performance over potential.

It is hard to make an impression, and even harder to make history in a place as old and momentous as New England. The measuring stick is so high.

But Bill Belichick, who departed Thursday as the head coach of the New England Patriots after 24 years of unmatched dominance in America's most popular sport, will be remembered alongside New England legends like Ted Williams, Bill Russell and Paul Revere.

OK, Paul Revere is a stretch. Only Tom Brady will exist in perpetuity alongside Paul Revere.

Nevertheless, Belichick, whose teams won an N.F.L. record six Super Bowls with Brady as quarterback, is big enough in the Boston area that he could qualify as an honorary Kennedy.

Belichick's exit as the Patriots coach, after consecutive losing years that included this season's 4-13 record, is an end of an era in a place where sports heroes can outshine almost any senator, civic leader or artist. Belichick, known for his rumpled appearance, unsmiling countenance and monotone voice, was celebrated as savant, savior and sage. He also became an influential, popular role model in New England.

Even moving to New England from New York was not held against him.

Ben Ravelson, a lifelong Patriots fan who lives in Boston, believed that Belichick's effect on the region became almost mystical.

''Any move he made, even if we as fans initially had doubt, we were conditioned to just know that this guy, Bill Belichick, was all knowing and wise,'' Ravelson, 34, said on Thursday, alluding to one of Belichick's nicknames, which is ''Yoda.''

''We never really questioned him.''

This is not a success story that anyone saw coming. On Jan. 27, 2000, nothing about Belichick's arrival from the Jets as the new field general of the Patriots suggested that the region's cultural identity was about to undergo a substantial makeover. The Patriots were disregarded, frequent losers. Brady was still an obscure, ex-college quarterback without a concrete job prospect in the offing.

And yet, Belichick's Patriots became an omnipresent source of pride, one that was emblematic of how New Englanders like to view themselves: reserved but coolly efficient, innovative, prosperous, industrious and furtive about their methods.

(When it came to the Patriots, some would call the last trait a smoke screen for cheating, but more on that later.)

Under Belichick, whose Patriots coaching record in the regular season was 266-121, the impact of a triumphant Boston-based sport team ballooned. For roughly a century, the importance or influence of New England teams was largely parochial. But with Belichick at the helm, the Patriots became a recognized national phenomenon. Albeit some of that was because fans in the 44 states outside of New England lived to hate them.

The almost wordless Belichick was the perfect poker face of the emergent Patriots movement that would dominate the once staid N.F.L. for nearly two decades. Belichick was not a son of New England, although he spent summers on Nantucket as a teenager and formative years in prep school in Andover, Mass., and at Wesleyan University, but he naturally exemplified personal characteristics that those in the area, especially ***working-class*** New Englanders, might find familiar.

Born in Nashville and largely raised in Annapolis, Md., Belichick had no birthright to having been made for New England, and yet he was, perfectly so.

He rewarded performance over potential and devalued pedigree. Belichick, who generally acted as his own boss when it came to assembling a roster and making college draft picks, had a developed a knack, and a desire, to find the versatile, undiscovered player ignored by others.

No one fit the bill as well as Brady (drafted with the 199th pick out of 254), unless it was wide receiver Julian Edelman, whom Belichick also chose late with the 232nd pick of the 2009 N.F.L. draft. As Edelman, who became a staple of three Patriots Super Bowl-winning teams, said of Belichick, whose 333 career N.F.L. victories are 14 shy of the record for coaching wins set by Don Shula: ''Bill wants winners, he doesn't care what those winners look like.''

If that was a gritty team motto, it had tens of thousands of Patriots fans nodding their heads in approval as they huddled against the wintry winds in the grandstands of creaky Foxboro Stadium, the dumpy edifice where Belichick's early New England teams were forced to play but nonetheless built the foundation of a dynasty.

''Bill became an adopted New Englander pretty quickly maybe because he embraced the challenge of coming here,'' said Richard Johnson, the curator of the Sports Museum in Boston who attended his first Patriots game in the 1960s. ''This is a tough area to work in sports because there are high expectations and people tend to be rather critical. You sink or swim pretty quickly but he did not shy away from that and people appreciated that.''

Johnson, the co-author of ''The Pats: An Illustrated History of the New England Patriots,'' added: ''He's certainly one of us in many ways.''

The against-all-odds ethos of Belichick's teams became a rallying cry in New England, as did his reputation as a taciturn, stony leader, most notably in team practices. To Patriots fans, who were fed up by decades of losing, their coach had good reason to be grouchy.

The fans wanted someone grumpy, like an old man trying to ''send back soup'' at a Boston chowder house (to borrow a line from ''Seinfeld''). The fans understood -- they were grumpy, too.

In time, as the Patriots began hoarding Super Bowl trophies, Belichick, 71, became the avatar for a new kind of New England chic. Fans came to games dressed in the coach's signature hoodie, sleeves chopped above the elbow. Novelty stores sold Belichick costumes for Halloween, complete with formless sweatpants and a drab ski cap. As always, the key to pulling off an impression of Belichick was to almost never smile.

The Patriots' successes became the impetus for what became a golden age for New England professional sports organizations. From their first N.F.L. title in 2001 to their last in 2018, Boston's Red Sox, Celtics and Bruins together matched the Patriots' six Super Bowl victories.

In the Patriots' case, however, there was at times a ferocious, nationwide backlash to the team's ongoing success that revolved around cheating scandals linked to the team and Brady. The cheating accusations, some of which played out in court, seemed legit to many, including N.F.L. Commissioner Roger Goodell, who ordered the team to pay a hefty fine, forfeit draft picks and ultimately play four games of the 2016 season without Brady. In a separate incident of apparent skulduggery in 2007, Belichick was fined a league maximum of $500,000.

Outside the six New England states, the Patriots' chicanery will never be forgotten, but inside the region it only resurrected an already familiar us-against-them mentality. The scandals, with trendy names like Deflategate and Spygate, just made the Patriots faithful stand their ground and fight back. The social media response was like a modern version of the Boston Tea Party.

In New England, Belichick and Brady had the last laugh and then some. After Brady returned from his four-game suspension in 2016, the Patriots advanced to the Super Bowl, and despite falling behind in the game by 25 points, rallied to win. Then, they won another Super Bowl two seasons later.

That was the last of Belichick's crowning achievements in New England. In his final five seasons, he lost more games than he won.

But that is not how Belichick will be remembered. He leaves behind a New England landscape transformed. At the beginning of a new century, Belichick's unforeseen revival of a downtrodden sports franchise breathed new energy into an old domain.

Most fitting, Belichick can take solace that his legacy in the region will be, like the man, understated.

It is a legacy perhaps most evident in the streets of hundreds of villages throughout New England on the afternoons and evenings when the Patriots play their games. They resemble ghost towns.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/11/us/bill-belichick-new-england-patriots.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/11/us/bill-belichick-new-england-patriots.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Before his departure on Thursday, Patriots Coach Bill Belichick was celebrated as savior and sage. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MADDIE MEYER/GETTY IMAGES) (A1)

Above from left, Scott Pioli, Bill Belichick, Robert K. Kraft and Jonathan Kraft rode through Boston in 2005. Before joining the Patriots, Belichick, far left, was a Jets assistant under Bill Parcells. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEW MILNE/EUROPEAN PRESSPHOTO AGENCY

BARTON SILVERMAN/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A18) This article appeared in print on page A1, A18.

**Load-Date:** January 12, 2024

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[***Why Bill Belichick Fit In So Well, for So Long, in New England***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B30-YTX1-DXY4-X016-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 11, 2024 Thursday 22:50 EST

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 1446 words

**Byline:** Bill Pennington

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[*Belichick’s exit as the Patriots coach*](https://theathletic.com/5046088/2024/01/11/bill-belichick-patriots-out-as-coach/), after consecutive losing years that included this season’s 4-13 record, is an end of an era in a place where sports heroes can outshine almost any senator, civic leader or artist. Belichick, known for [*his rumpled appearance*](https://www.espn.com/espn/feature/story/_/id/30161649/bill-belichick-hoodies-explained-visual-history-new-england-patriots-coach-most-memorable-looks), unsmiling countenance and monotone voice, was celebrated as savant, savior and sage. He also became an influential, popular role model in New England.

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Most fitting, Belichick can take solace that his legacy in the region will be, like the man, understated.

It is a legacy perhaps most evident in the streets of hundreds of villages throughout New England on the afternoons and evenings when the Patriots play their games. They resemble ghost towns.

PHOTOS: Before his departure on Thursday, Patriots Coach Bill Belichick was celebrated as savior and sage. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MADDIE MEYER/GETTY IMAGES) (A1); Above from left, Scott Pioli, Bill Belichick, Robert K. Kraft and Jonathan Kraft rode through Boston in 2005. Before joining the Patriots, Belichick, far left, was a Jets assistant under Bill Parcells. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEW MILNE/EUROPEAN PRESSPHOTO AGENCY; BARTON SILVERMAN/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A18) This article appeared in print on page A1, A18.

**Load-Date:** January 11, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Should I Keep Trying to Pay a $700 Bill? I Think They Forgot to Charge Me.; The Ethicist***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BB8-0451-JBG3-600N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 14, 2024 Wednesday 13:52 EST

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**Section:** MAGAZINE

**Length:** 1621 words

**Byline:** Kwame Anthony Appiah Kwame Anthony Appiah is The New York Times Magazine&amp;#8217;s Ethicist columnist and teaches philosophy at N.Y.U. His books include &amp;#8220;Cosmopolitanism,&amp;#8221; &amp;#8220;The Honor Code&amp;#8221; and &amp;#8220;The Lies That Bind: Rethinking Identity.&amp;#8221; To submit a query: Send an email to , [*ethicist@nytimes.com*](mailto:ethicist@nytimes.com)

**Highlight:** The magazine’s Ethicist columnist on the duty one has to rectify an unpaid bill.

**Body**

The magazine’s Ethicist columnist on the duty one has to rectify an unpaid bill.

I recently rented a car from a well-known car-rental company in a tiny office connected to an Amtrak station. Renting the car at this little outpost allowed my partner and me to have a wonderful vacation visiting a national park. The staff at this small office was very helpful — the car was waiting for us when we got off the train at 10 p.m. We used it for a week and returned it on time, clean and filled with gas.

The problem: We were never charged. I did receive an email detailing the cost — almost $700 — but never saw it reflected on my credit card. I called once to let them know, and a friendly “old duffer” (his term) answered and said they would deal with it. Weeks later, still no charge. I am quite grateful for what the gentleman did to help us, but I am unsure of how to proceed. Should I keep calling back? Or can I, with a clean conscience, let the matter go? — Name Withheld

From the Ethicist:

The skills of that little office would seem to be on the customer-service side, not on the accounts-receivable side. That’s decidedly not your fault. But if you’re right, you do owe a lot of money to the company. Because the transaction was booked and processed, I would think that the company will eventually expect payment from this local office or franchisee. Get in touch again, and explain that you still haven’t been charged. If you don’t, the company might penalize the friendly, if inefficient, folk there. You don’t have to make a mission out of it — it’s certainly not your job — but I wouldn’t stop with one call. Honk your horn a little.

A Bonus Question

Several years ago, an artist friend of mine gave my family a few of her paintings as a housewarming gift when we moved out of state. We had plenty of fun with this friend and her family when our kids were young and spent a lot of time together. At the time of the gift, I was very grateful to receive it: It was heartfelt, and I was sad to say goodbye. Since our move, the friendship has fizzled, and if I’m being honest, I realize we never shared the kind of closeness I have with my other old friends. My husband and I are doing some redecorating now, and we both agree that we’re tired of the paintings our friend gave us. We appreciated them for a long time, but now that we’ve taken them down, we don’t know what to do with them. I often hold onto art that friends have made long after I’m done with looking at it for sentimental reasons, but I don’t feel sentimental in this case. We know we don’t want to hold onto them, but we want to be respectful of my old friend and her art. Do I have to keep it in the basement forever? — Name Withheld

From the Ethicist:

You’ve moved on; it’s time for the paintings to move on, too. Holding on to art that you’ve soured on means depriving other potential owners of the enjoyment they might get from it. You should give them a chance to find a household where they will be appreciated. Tell your former friend that, in the course of redoing your new home, you haven’t found a place for the artwork and offer to return the paintings to her. Otherwise you might donate or sell them.

Right now, it’s clear, any sentimental value the paintings hold would be in the eyes of the giver alone. You can be diplomatic — and yes, respectful of the relationship you once had — without being forever responsible for the care and custody of unwanted work.

Readers Respond

The previous question was from a reader who was concerned about her mother-in-law’s financial planning. She wrote: “My mother-in-law is in her 50s and has worked as a horse trainer her whole life. She doesn’t own property and instead rents a house at the barn where she trains. She has no assets or retirement plan and is getting to the point where doing the job is becoming more difficult for her physically. My husband has tried to talk to her about her fiscal future, and she shuts these conversations down; she likes to talk about “someday” winning the lottery and buying her own place. … My husband and I are the only financially stable family members on his side, and every time my mother-in-law makes a comment about plans that would require a miracle windfall, I get anxious and frustrated thinking about how that financial burden will likely fall on us when she inevitably can’t work any longer. To be clear, she has never even hinted that she expects us to care for her. But we don’t see what other options she has, so it feels as if she has her head in the sand. Do we have a right to know what her plans are or make sure she has a plan? If she won’t discuss them with us, does that absolve us of the future responsibility?”

In his response, the Ethicist noted: “It sounds as if her reluctance to discuss the future reflects a reluctance to face up to her bleak financial prospects. Such procrastination isn’t unusual. In fact, it also sounds as if you and your husband may have put off making a serious attempt to figure things out with her — that the situation gained urgency only after her physical difficulties became evident. At this late date, though, what do you think she should be doing? Given her job history, is she going to be able to earn a lot more doing something else? No doubt she should have put away money over the years — perhaps, in the usual way, by making payments on property — but she can’t do so retroactively. … Does her refusal to talk about her dire situation absolve you from all responsibility? Your anxiety makes it clear that you don’t think it does. You and your husband needn’t compromise your own financial security, but if she finds herself in straitened circumstances, you’re going to want to help out, even if in a limited way. Your own family’s ethic of independence is admirable, but a history of improvidence can’t be undone; comparisons here aren’t so much odious as pointless. Facing reality — for you as for your mother-in-law — means looking ahead.” (Reread the full question and answer [*here*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/09/magazine/mother-in-law-retirement-savings-ethics.html).)

⬥

I agree wholeheartedly with the Ethicist. I would add that any attempts to help the letter writer’s mother-in-law make plans must be done graciously and compassionately, without judgment or a critical spirit. Otherwise, the discussion will devolve into nonproductive exchanges of blame and resistance in which it will be very hard to accomplish anything. — Rebecca

⬥

I enjoy The Ethicist’s column, but I am disappointed by his use of the word “improvidence” to describe the mother-in-law’s financial history. Often people don’t have a plan because all their current resources are used as they live and they are surrounded by people in the same situation so they don’t even have exposure to what might be possible. — Tim

⬥

It appears that the letter writer’s mother-in-law has been making do on her own for some time. Aging single women are the population most at risk for falling into poverty. Why? Because they get paid less than men and are not compensated for child rearing. Have some compassion for her. Jobs for ***working-class*** women in their 50s? Fast food, retail, home health care. The letter writer seems to acknowledge a generational attitude toward aging that suggests a privileged upbringing. Her mother-in-law is like millions of other women. It’s not pretty; behind her lottery jokes, I am sure she is scared. I live in Mexico where the generational attitudes are different and elders are afforded love, care and respect.— Gayle

⬥

I don’t like the letter writer’s condescending attitude. As a former horse trainer, I can tell you that one becomes a horse trainer for the love of horses, not to make money. I do have other skills and a college degree as well, but most trainers don’t. It is very unusual to get any benefits, including vacation and sick leave, and you generally work six days a week. I would suggest the letter writer’s mother-in-law shift to teaching only. She could also switch to training dogs, as my ex did. I’m 66 and I have two new hips, will probably need new knees and a new shoulder. I have arthritis everywhere. I wouldn’t change a thing. I was lucky enough to do what I loved. — Julie

⬥

I don’t disagree with the Ethicist, but I do have some insight to share. This ethical dilemma feels personally and humanely chilling, and deeply saddening. How might such a person as the letter writer consider herself so entirely different and superior that she has earned a distinct right to leverage another’s life choices? To reduce the value of her husband’s mother to one determined by haves and haves not, dollars and cents and nothing else? We know almost nothing about this mother-in-law. Has she participated in the family? Does she suffer from mental illness? Is she a beloved person by anyone? Does she have a spousal partner, and has she suffered loss? Is she educated? Might she be the giver of love and care to any children, grandchildren, friends and neighbors as well as to her horses and perhaps other animals? Of course personal responsibility matters. Of course a sound life requires financial means. However, not all means or financial requirements are equal in depth and purpose, and certainly not successful outcomes. What might the responsibility of this letter writer be then — one who apparently possesses financial means but suggests having nothing else at all to contribute to the well being of her aging mother-in-law? Could this more reasonably be an opportunity to slow down, to consider broadly and openly the implications of caring for others that generate from within oneself, and how those may manifest positively here? Often, in my experience, many gifts arise from such an opening of awareness. — Kate

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Illustration by Tomi Um FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** February 21, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Striking Autoworkers Are Cool to Biden’s Embrace***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:696G-8JK1-DXY4-X03M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 18, 2023 Monday 23:09 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1565 words

**Byline:** Trip Gabriel

**Highlight:** The president has highlighted his pro-union credentials, but inflation has eroded blue-collar livelihoods and chilled support for the president on the picket lines.

**Body**

The president has highlighted his pro-union credentials, but inflation has eroded blue-collar livelihoods and chilled support for the president on the picket lines.

President Biden, who calls himself the most pro-union president ever and has sided with striking United Auto Workers — calling for “record contracts” as the union walked out on Friday — has yet to convince many rank-and-file U.A.W. members that his sentiments are more than just nice-sounding words.

That was the prevailing view in interviews with two dozen striking workers for Ford and Jeep in Michigan and Ohio this weekend. Many, including some who voted for him, said inflation had so undercut their wages that they felt pushed out of the middle class, laying the blame with Mr. Biden.

Despite the president’s “middle class Joe” persona, and his potential 2024 rival Donald J. Trump’s record and rhetoric undermining unions, many autoworkers were not convinced that the current Oval Office occupant was the one more forcefully on their side.

“I can’t tell when he speaks to the public if he’s being told to say it or if he’s genuinely saying it,” Jennifer Banks, a striking worker, said of Mr. Biden’s pro-union remarks on Friday during which [*he unequivocally backed the U.A.W*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/15/us/politics/biden-uaw-strike.html).

Ms. Banks, a 29-year Ford employee, was picketing on Saturday at the company’s vast Michigan Assembly Plant in Wayne. A sign outside Gate 2 warned, “Absolutely no foreign vehicles allowed!”

The ambivalence toward Mr. Biden underscores an ongoing challenge to his re-election, as Democrats try to stanch any more bleeding of blue-collar support after three years of inflation and high interest rates.

Mr. Trump, in the meantime, has continued to appeal to union voters, renewing his attacks on China, immigrants and liberal priorities like renewable energy, issues that fueled his historically large inroads with white, ***working-class*** voters in 2016 and 2020.

Ms. Banks, 50, a political independent who voted for Mr. Trump in 2020, said that in a potential rematch between him and Mr. Biden she would be torn, because she doesn’t like much of what Republicans stand for.

“I think our president is not as strong a president as we need,” she said. “I’m hoping somebody can replace him. I hope it doesn’t leave me no choice but to vote the other way.”

An hour’s drive south of Wayne, Beverly Brown was the strike captain for a team of workers who attach the hoods to Jeeps at the massive Toledo Assembly Complex in Ohio. “No Justice, No Jeeps” was written on a vehicle’s window. Ms. Brown, 65, voted for Mr. Biden but said that when it came to backing working people, “I don’t think he’s doing enough.” Neither did she view Mr. Trump as an ally of working people, saying, “Everything he’s done up until now proves otherwise: He’s for the rich.”

On Friday, 13,000 workers at three Midwest plants, owned by Ford, General Motors and Stellantis — the parent of Jeep and Chrysler — walked out in what the U.A.W. called a targeted strike, demanding nearly 40 percent raises over four years, the end of a two-tier system in which newer workers get lower pay, and the restoration of benefits that the union gave up during the Great Recession in 2008.

Despite Mr. Biden’s decades-long emphasis of his roots in Scranton, Pa., and his well-honed brand as a hero for the middle class, strikers did not necessarily see him as their champion. Their wages, which range from $18 to $32 an hour, have eroded significantly amid rising prices, many said, with an apparent political cost to the White House.

A lengthy strike that reduces the supply of cars and drives up prices could force the Federal Reserve to keep interest rates high, with repercussions for Mr. Biden’s re-election.

“Back when I hired in here, there was a middle class,” Garth Potrykus, 68, a longtime electrician in the Ford plant, said. “The middle class — they’re gone.”

Ford, he said, hires waves of temporary workers who earn below fast-food wages. “They might hang around two or three weeks, then they go down to McDonald’s and they make more money,” he said. “How are those people ever going to afford the, quote, American dream?”

Mr. Biden has centered his re-election campaign around the idea of “Bidenomics,” his record of infrastructure, high tech and clean energy spending aimed at creating good industrial jobs and shrinking income inequality. Despite those broad policies, Mr. Potrykus, eyeing his own expenses, said he didn’t see either Democrats or Republicans as fighting for the ***working class***.

“I don’t think either party is really interested in that,” he said. “It’s a war on us now. You’ve got the super rich and then you’ve got the poor.”

That many union workers don’t automatically align with Democrats and reject Republicans, who often support policies that suppress blue-collar pay, has confounded Democratic strategists since at least the era of the Reagan Democrats of the 1980s. [*Large numbers of Republicans in Congress last year*](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/oct/25/republicans-working-class-voter-unions-worker-protections-organize) sponsored legislation to weaken organized labor by allowing workers in all 50 states to opt out of union dues.

Mr. Trump, who also supports “right to work” laws, has [*a mixed record*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/09/15/us/politics/republican-candidates-2024-labor-unions.html) on organized labor. In office, he renegotiated a North American trade deal to give more protections to American workers. But lately he has attacked U.A.W. leadership, saying in [*an interview*](https://www.nbcnews.com/meet-the-press/video/full-trump-interview-i-don-t-consider-us-to-have-much-of-a-democracy-right-now-193135173825) broadcast Sunday that its leaders, along with the carmakers and the Biden administration, were in cahoots to force a transition to electric vehicles made in China.

While union leaders almost universally endorse Democrats for president because of their pro-labor agendas, a sizable rank-and-file contingent votes Republican, often over conservative social issues.

In 2020, Mr. Trump won about four in 10 voters in union households, according to [*exit polls*](https://www.cnn.com/election/2020/exit-polls/president/national-results) and an [*internal survey*](https://aflcio.org/speeches/trumka-joe-bidens-firewall-was-union-made) by the A.F.L.-C.I.O. Michael Podhorzer, a former longtime A.F.L.-C.I.O. political director, said that was hardly surprising. “The demographics of union members are the ones who’ve been trending away from Democrats for quite some time,” he said. This is particularly true of industrial unions.

Mr. Trump emphasized “a set of issues that union members never agreed with Democrats on,” most prominently immigration, Mr. Podhorzer added. Despite the trend, union members still tend to vote five to 10 points more Democratic than similar voters who are not in unions, he said.

“People don’t join unions because they’re Democrats or liberals,’’ Mr. Podhorzer said. “People are in unions because that’s where they work.” It’s misguided to expect that “they should be voting like MoveOn members,” he added, referring to the progressive policy group and political action committee.

But the union’s membership is not monolithic in its voting patterns. Younger strikers, and particularly nonwhite U.A.W. members, were not as critical of Mr. Biden. Anthony Thompson, 54, said that he, too, struggled to make ends meet, in part because his wife, Uleana, has lupus and medical costs mean the family ends up living paycheck to paycheck.

But Mr. Thompson, who joined Ford two years ago and has worked up to $20 an hour, did not blame the president. “I would say he’s doing the best under the circumstances that he can,’’ Mr. Thompson said.

Jason Grammer-Gold, 42, a striker at Jeep, said that Mr. Trump’s promises to rebuild the industrial heartland “was all talk” and that he left office with little to show for it.

“I don’t feel Trump is for the working American at all,” he said. “His presidency was to get his taxes down.” Mr. Grammer-Gold said that he, his husband and their adopted child recently moved from Ohio across the border to Michigan to live in a state where Democrats control government. “Republicans are passing tons of anti-gay laws,” he said.

Outside Gate 2 at the Jeep plant, two longtime workers who met on the strike line, Ronald Flores and Frank Luvinski, each said their pay didn’t go as far as it used to, but they had opposite views of Mr. Biden and Mr. Trump.

“In 2018, I felt like I had finally gotten ahead,” Mr. Luvinski, 52, a Trump supporter, said. “I finally had money in my bank account. And now, I make more money than ever, and I have less. My energy bill just doubled in June.”

Across the street, Mr. Flores, 56, had parked his white Jeep Gladiator pickup. “We built that right on the line,” he said. Peeling back a piece of interior carpet, he showed where co-workers signed their names on painted steel.

Mr. Flores’s grandfather, son and multiple cousins have been union autoworkers, jobs that helped them build comfortable lives. He drew an analogy between his employer, whom he respects, his truck and what he considers Mr. Trump’s unfulfilled campaign promises.

“If you say you want to make something great again, when you leave, greatness should continue,” he said. “You leave a legacy. Like Jeep has a legacy. The brand speaks for itself.”

PHOTOS: JENNIFER BANKS, a striking worker, said of President Biden’s pro-union remarks on Friday.; BEVERLY BROWN, who was the strike captain for a team of workers who attach the hoods to Jeeps at the massive Toledo Assembly Complex in Ohio.; JASON GRAMMER-GOLD, a striker at Jeep, who said that Donald J. Trump’s promise to rebuild the industrial heartland ‘was all talk.’ (PHOTOGRAPH BY EMILY ELCONIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); President Biden has often tried to build a brand as a champion for the middle class. This article appeared in print on page A17.

**Load-Date:** September 18, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Republicans Push a Northern Border Wall, Too***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B5H-4T01-JBG3-60PD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 23, 2024 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2024 The New York Times Company

**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 13

**Length:** 1473 words

**Byline:** By Jazmine Ulloa

**Body**

Former President Donald J. Trump paved a path to the presidency in 2016 by calling for a ''big, beautiful wall'' along the United States border with Mexico.

His 2024 rivals in the Republican primary election, scrapping for every advantage against him, looked north.

Nikki Haley, the former governor of South Carolina, has frequently told voters that it's not just the southern border that needs stepped-up enforcement -- ''it's the northern border, too.''

''I think we do whatever it takes to keep people out,'' she told reporters on Saturday when asked if her comments meant she supported building a wall. ''If that's what it takes to keep them out, we will do a wall, we will do any sort of border patrol that we need to have.''

Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida, who ended his bid and endorsed Mr. Trump on Sunday after battling with Ms. Haley for second place behind the former president, had recently suggested building a wall along some trouble spots of the U.S.-Canada frontier. Vivek Ramaswamy, a tech entrepreneur, dropped out of the race last week, but not before trekking up to Pittsburg, N.H., a tiny town that sits just below the jagged, 5,500-mile line that divides the United States and Canada, with a camera crew in tow. He later drew criticism from Canadian journalists and pundits when he proclaimed that the United States should not just build one wall, but two.

In Pittsburg, where residents like Beverly Martin, 79, and Chip Jones, 74, sat at the bar in an eclectic, barnlike restaurant on a recent snowy afternoon, the idea of a border wall along New Hampshire's northernmost boundary, an isolated, forested region, was anathema.

''Then you have this armed national army that can be used against you and your rights,'' Mr. Jones, a Republican and retired fire chief from Massachusetts who winters in the town, said in an interview at Full Send Bar and Grill off Route 3. He paused, mulling it over: ''A border wall in Pittsburg -- does it just not feel right?''

''It doesn't,'' replied Ms. Martin, who is also a Republican and taught home economics for 18 years at the Pittsburg School down the road. ''A lot of people in Pittsburg have relatives on either side of the border, and people from the border towns in Canada come here to work.''

Mr. Trump does not talk about that northern dividing line himself. But he has promised to revive some of his most criticized immigration policies and has escalated his rhetoric, echoing the racial hatreds of Adolf Hitler when he said undocumented immigrants were ''poisoning the blood of our country.''

The nation's southern border has loomed large in the psyche of the American electorate. The issue has contributed to President Biden's low approval numbers and threatened his foreign policy platform. It has also entangled Congress and burdened mayors and local leaders grappling with packed shelters and strained social services as more and more migrant families have been bused to cities around the country.

The now-dwindled G.O.P. field united behind calls to end sanctuary policies and advocated for militarized crackdowns on drug cartels and mass deportations of millions of people who have entered the United States under the Biden administration.

Republican warnings of terrorists, criminals and traffickers have drawn a national spotlight to places like New Hampshire's northern edge, frustrating some of the people who live along it. Unlike the largely Latino communities along the U.S.-Mexico border, they are not used to being such a prominent part of the national immigration debate.

Pittsburg, which registered a population of 830 people in the most recent Census Bureau report, is the largest township by area in New England, and is known as a destination for snowmobile and ATV enthusiasts, hunters and fly fishers. Longtime border residents can remember when the dividing line up north was, as their counterparts far down south like to say, but ''a line in the sand'' -- or the snow. As in the border towns of states like Texas and Arizona before any barriers were put up, it was not uncommon, some Pittsburg inhabitants said, to see what appeared to be migrants walking or wading across the border.

And like those southern border towns, Pittsburg sits on land that was once fiercely contested -- first between the French and British and the Abenaki, who used its wilderness to the north as their hunting grounds, and later between the British and the Americans. The Treaty of Paris, which was signed in 1783 and ended the American Revolution, left the dividing line between what is now Quebec and New Hampshire ill-defined. Frustrated over the disagreement, the residents caught between two nations established their own government, the Indian Stream Republic.

In October, Gov. Chris Sununu of New Hampshire, who has endorsed Ms. Haley and has been stumping with her across the state in recent weeks, and other state officials announced a tenfold increase in patrols along the northern line. ''The vast majority of border crossings come from the southern border, but the majority of border crossings of folks on the terrorist watch list come from the northern border,'' Mr. Sununu said in an interview.

The latest statistics from U.S. Customs and Border Protection showed that last year's apprehensions of people entering illegally in the sector that covers New Hampshire, Vermont and parts of upstate New York had reached the highest levels in at least 16 years. Between October 2022 and September 2023, agents intercepted 6,925 people crossing illegally, an increase from 1,065 in that time span one year earlier.

Around the stores and shops that line Route 3, several clerks said they had noticed a few people passing through who did not appear to be locals or the typical winter tourists. But for many, the crossings elicit a shrug. ''People have always been coming through Canada,'' said Carolyn Therrien, who was ringing up customers at Young's General Store. ''I don't think the residents are really worried.''

Inside Pittsburg's town government office on Main Street, a long, wood-paneled building with a pitched roof that also houses its police department, Linda Clogston, the tax collector and treasurer of the local historical association, has worked with community leaders and officials on both sides of the border to set up markers commemorating the Indian Stream Republic and other historical sites. Across the street, the Pittsburg Historical Society Museum houses canoes, drag saws, spiked boots and other artifacts from times when people flowed more easily through the wilderness of the border.

On a recent afternoon, she said Pittsburg residents seemed more concerned with rising property prices than with who was coming across the border.

Around town, there is anecdotal evidence of the Trumpian wave that has hit other rural parts of New Hampshire and the United States. Pro-Trump flags and signs hang from the walls of some homes and stick out of yards. On the side of the road, a ''Build the Wall'' sign was tacked to an evergreen tree. With the primary coming up, immigration was cited by several voters as a top election concern -- but they were usually referring to the southern border.

Wayne Dorman, 71, a conservative Democrat and owner of a concrete business, said he was not opposed to the government stepping up resources along the northern border. But he contended that the harsh wilderness was enough to keep people out. ''I mean, we're not Texas,'' he said.

In New Hampshire, the issue of immigration has gripped the Republican electorate since Patrick J. Buchanan, a conservative commentator, clinched an upset victory in the primary in 1996. Mr. Trump won in 2016 with views on the issue that tapped into the party's base of white ***working-class*** voters who felt alienated from the political system. A recent Boston Globe/USA Today/Suffolk University poll found that a majority of the state's Republican voters said it was the most important issue facing the country.

''It could be the single largest issue in front of us in this election,'' rivaled only by the economy, said Chris Ager, the chairman of the New Hampshire Republican Party.

But nearly two-thirds of those surveyed were not concerned about the state's northern border with Canada.

Ever since state polls showed Ms. Haley cutting into Mr. Trump's lead in New Hampshire, he and his allies have been on the attack -- in particular, going after her record on immigration as governor. Ms. Haley, asked Saturday at a campaign stop in Peterborough, N.H., if she would support a wall along the Canadian border, was noncommittal.

''Whatever it takes to keep people out that are illegal from coming in -- we'll do it,'' she said.

Nicholas Nehamas contributed reporting from Manchester, N.H.Nicholas Nehamas contributed reporting from Manchester, N.H.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/22/us/politics/nikki-haley-border-canada.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/22/us/politics/nikki-haley-border-canada.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Republican presidential candidates are calling for more security along the northern border. The idea does not sit well with some in New Hampshire. From left, Chip Jones, a retired fire chief, spends his winters snowmobiling in Pittsburg, N.H.

Beverly Martin, a retired school teacher, in Pittsburg

Linda Clogston, Pittsburg tax collector and historical society treasurer.

Top, New Hampshire Route 3 ends at the Canadian border in Pittsburg. Above, old photos of hunting camps at the town's historical society. The landscape outside the town is forested and sparsely populated. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN TULLY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A13.

**Load-Date:** January 23, 2024

**End of Document**



[***A New Abortion Access Strategy***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BCX-WGY1-DXY4-X02D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 22, 2024 Thursday 06:37 EST

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1909 words

**Byline:** Pam Belluck Pam Belluck is a health and science reporter, covering a range of subjects, including reproductive health, long Covid, brain science, neurological disorders, mental health and genetics.

**Highlight:** Doctors in a handful of blue states are using shield laws to provide abortions to women in red states.

**Body**

Doctors in a handful of blue states are using shield laws to provide abortions to women in red states.

Doctors in a handful of blue states have found a way to provide abortions to women in red states where it is banned or restricted. They are doing it with a new tool: laws that protect them from prosecutors elsewhere.

These telemedicine shield laws block officials in red states who might prosecute or sue the abortion providers in Massachusetts, New York, California, Vermont, Colorado and Washington State. Those states won’t extradite doctors. They won’t turn over records. They won’t aid in any investigation. It’s a sharp break from the usual pattern of interstate cooperation, [*as I report in a news story today*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html).

I’ve been covering abortion for over a decade. Since the Supreme Court’s Dobbs decision overturned Roe v. Wade and triggered a wave of bans in conservative states, abortion rights advocates have worked to preserve access. They’ve used mobile clinics across the border from red states — and funds that cover the cost of travel to places where abortion is legal. In today’s newsletter, I’ll talk about one of the newest approaches.

A new tool

The providers started mailing abortion pills under the shield laws just last summer. But their reach has surprised even some advocates. They’ve already prescribed and mailed abortion pills to tens of thousands of women in Texas, Idaho and other places that banned abortion after the high court’s 2022 decision. Patients find them online and fill out forms about their medical history. Providers then evaluate whether patients are eligible. They can be up to 12 weeks’ pregnant and must have no disqualifying medical issues like an ectopic pregnancy or a blood-clotting disorder.

Being able to receive abortion medication at their homes by mail saves patients the time, money and difficulty of traveling to a state where abortion is legal. It also avoids the weekslong wait for pills ordered from overseas. Shield law services charge $150 or $250, but they allow poorer patients to pay less or even nothing.

Abortion opponents in conservative states are outraged. The shield laws are “really trying to completely sabotage the governing efforts of their neighboring states,” said John Seago, the president of Texas Right to Life. “It can’t stand, and we can’t be content with this new development.”

The practice has not yet been challenged in court, but observers think it’s only a matter of time. Law enforcement officials in anti-abortion states may be waiting for a case they think will be persuasive. A senior government official in a conservative state told me about one possible strategy: State officials could first file charges or a complaint against a provider in a blue state. Then, when that state refused to cooperate, a red state could sue the shield-law state itself, claiming that the Constitution’s full faith and credit clause prevents one state from interfering with another’s laws.

States with abortion bans will also watch a lawsuit the Supreme Court will hear next month, in which opponents of abortion have sued the Food and Drug Administration to try to bar abortion pills. (My colleague Emily Bazelon has written for The Morning about how much of the abortion struggle now [*revolves around pills*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html).) If the justices uphold [*an appeals court ruling*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html), patients might need in-person doctor visits to obtain the medications.

Doctors tread cautiously

Regardless of the court’s decision in that case, some shield-law providers say they intend to find a way to continue.

Still, they are taking precautions. Most shield-law providers have decided not to travel to states with abortion bans, and some have established trusts to protect their assets from civil suits. Some identify themselves publicly, but others fly under the radar.

I visited one Massachusetts operation in a tiny office behind an unmarked door and watched as Carol, a reproductive health consultant who asked to be identified by her middle name, carefully packaged the two abortion medications, mifepristone and misoprostol. She put them into plain envelopes lined with bubble wrapping so they don’t rattle when they are mailed to patients. I accompanied her to the post office, where she mailed dozens of envelopes across the country.

“We’re a free country,” said Lauren Jacobson, a nurse practitioner at the Massachusetts clinic who sometimes writes 50 prescriptions a day. “So let’s put that to test. Here we are and we’re not going to be intimidated, and we have our states backing us.”

For more

* A major Alabama health system [*paused most I.V.F. procedures*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html) after the state’s Supreme Court ruled that frozen embryos are children, citing antiabortion language in the state constitution.
* “[*Embryos, to me, are babies*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html),” Nikki Haley said in response to the ruling.

THE LATEST NEWS

Politics

* The Supreme Court’s conservative majority seems poised to [*block a Biden administration plan to reduce air pollution*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html). It would be another blow to the E.P.A.’s power.

1. President Biden canceled another [*$1.2 billion in student debt*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html) for about 150,000 borrowers. In total, his administration has canceled $138 billion of such debt.
2. Biden is considering taking executive action to stop [*migrants who illegally enter the U.S.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html) from claiming asylum at times when the border is overwhelmed.
3. Biden’s brother James told members of the House that the president [*wasn’t involved in his business deals*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html), rebutting Republican allegations.
4. Ron DeSantis said he [*didn’t want to be Donald Trump’s running mate*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html) and lamented Trump’s electoral “baggage” in a private call with supporters.
5. A prosecutor in Arizona [*refused to extradite a murder suspect to New York City*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html), saying Alvin Bragg, the Manhattan district attorney, was too lenient on crime.

Israel-Hamas War

* An Israeli organization for survivors of sexual abuse concluded that Hamas’s Oct. 7 attack “[*included brutal acts of violent rape*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html), often involving threats with weapons” and often in front of an audience.

1. At the U.N.’s highest court, [*the U.S. defended Israel’s decades-long occupation*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html) of the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Other nations continued to criticize Israel’s conduct in Gaza.

China

* China is [*using private companies*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html) in campaigns to hack foreign governments in Asia and monitor ethnic minorities at home.

1. Silicon Valley venture capitalists, faced with increasing scrutiny from U.S. lawmakers, are limiting their [*investments in Chinese start-ups*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html).
2. China is trying to develop more-advanced artificial intelligence than the U.S. has. One problem: Its A.I. systems still [*depend on American technology*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html).

More International News

* The success of candidates aligned with the expelled leader Imran Khan in Pakistan’s elections [*shattered the illusion*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html) of the generals’ grip on politics.

1. Britain wants [*more nuclear plants*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html) as a way to help tackle climate change. Delays and soaring costs are complicating the effort.
2. The U.S. and Europe have championed a new pipeline to bring gas to Bosnia and cut supplies from Russia. But feuding ethnic groups have [*stalled the project*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html).

Business

* People are turning to [*news influencers on Instagram*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html), even as the platform tries to de-emphasize “political content.”

1. The head of Boeing’s 737 Max program is [*leaving the company*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html). The jets have been plagued by problems, most recently when a door plug blew off in flight.
2. Nvidia, maker of computer chips that power A.I. systems, reported [*booming profits*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html).
3. Stocks in Japan [*rose to a record high*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html), spurred in part by greater foreign investment and increased shareholder rights.
4. The I.R.S. will crack down on corporate executives who use [*company jets for personal travel*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html).
5. [*BuzzFeed is selling Complex*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html), a media start-up known for coverage of streetwear and pop culture, to pay off more than $60 million in debt.

Education

* Yale will once again [*require standardized test scores for admissions*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html), becoming the second Ivy League university to abandon test-optional policies that were embraced during the pandemic.

1. The University of Arizona, in Tucson, is facing [*a $177 million shortfall*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html). Local residents, many of whom work for the school, worry that budget cuts could lead to layoffs.

Other Big Stories

* Extreme weather is forcing [*animal refuges across the country*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html) to relocate.

1. A private spacecraft, Odysseus, will [*attempt to land on the moon today*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html). It would be the first private spacecraft to do so. [*CNN explained*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html) why, decades after the Apollo missions, it’s still so difficult.
2. A bill to [*abolish daylight saving time in Oregon*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html) failed in the State Senate.

Opinions

Learn the [*lessons of a 17th-century heretic*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html): Combating irrational ideas like racism takes reason, not dogma, Ian Buruma writes.

Amazon’s assertion that the National Labor Relations Board is unconstitutional [*amounts to an attack on the entire labor movement*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html), David Firestone argues.

Ezra Klein believes Democrats should walk away from Biden. His podcast [*explains how they could pick a different nominee*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html).

Here is a column by Thomas Edsall on [*white* ***working-class*** *voters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html).

MORNING READS

Wild skating: Adventure seekers dared to test the [*frozen lakes of Alaska*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html).

“The Great Compression”: With housing prices soaring, the era of the [*400-square-foot subdivision*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html) house is upon us.

Carrying stones: A missing Scottish trophy will be [*awarded again after 95 years*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html).

Never happier: Some older Americans have given up on romantic love and are [*relishing being on their own*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html).

Social Q’s: “My brother’s ex-wife [*won’t return a family heirloom*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html). Help.”

New Orleans: Wildlife authorities seized a man’s pet opossum. [*Thousands have backed a petition to reunite man and marsupial*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html).

Lives Lived: Charles Stendig, an importer, traveled to factories throughout Europe, sometimes behind the Iron Curtain, to introduce avant-garde and modern furniture to American living rooms. He [*died at 99*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html).

SPORTS

College football: Officials are already [*discussing expansion*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html) of the College Football Playoff — which broadened to 12 teams for the upcoming season — to either 14 or 16 in 2026.

Men’s college basketball: St. John’s coach Rick Pitino [*apologized for criticizing his players*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html) over the weekend, saying they “have never failed” him.

Advice: In an interview, W.N.B.A. legend Sue Bird encouraged Iowa star Caitlin Clark [*to turn pro after the season*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html) and said Clark could be an All-Star in her rookie year.

ARTS AND IDEAS

Native objects: The U.S. now requires museums to get consent from tribes before exhibiting certain cultural items from Native groups. As a result, museums across the country are removing objects from cases, covering displays and closing entire halls.

[*See how this looks*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html) at one museum in Chicago.

More on culture

* Alex Cooper, host of the podcast “Call Her Daddy,” has been building a media company with Matt Kaplan, a film producer and her fiancé. [*Read more about it*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html).

1. The essayist Leslie Jamison has become [*known for her careful balancing acts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html) of self-exposure in her writing.

THE MORNING RECOMMENDS …

Assemble [*garlicky shrimp and white beans*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html) on a sheet pan for a quick meal.

Use [*the best headphones*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html).

Eat like a nutritionist does ([*when she’s off the clock*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html)).

Try [*a 3-D printer*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html).

GAMES

Here is [*today’s Spelling Bee*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html). Yesterday’s pangram was flighty.

And here are [*today’s Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html), [*Wordle*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html), [*Sudoku*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html) and [*Connections*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html).

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

[*Sign up here to get this newsletter in your inbox*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html). Reach our team at [*themorning@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/health/abortion-shield-laws-telemedicine.html).

PHOTO: Abortion pills prepared to be sent to patients in states where abortion is illegal. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Sophie Park for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** February 22, 2024

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[***For Stephanie Land, College Was the School of Hard Knocks; nonfiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69JW-SSF1-DXY4-X3P3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 6, 2023 Monday 14:13 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 957 words

**Byline:** Nelson Lichtenstein

**Highlight:** In her second memoir, the author of “Maid” recounts the struggle of getting educated in America below the poverty line.

**Body**

In her second memoir, the author of “Maid” recounts the struggle of getting educated in America below the poverty line.

CLASS: A Memoir, by Stephanie Land

The last time we encountered Stephanie Land, the author of the best-selling “Maid,” she was a single mother who cleaned houses in the Pacific Northwest to get away from an abusive boyfriend, stay out of a homeless shelter and sustain a seemingly far-fetched dream of one day returning to college to become a writer.

“Class” finds Land at the University of Montana, where she is an almost- 35-year-old English major juggling classes and child care, rent payments and maxed-out credit cards.

Millions of others, in school or out, have shared Land’s economically fraught experience; too often we know them only as statistics. But Land bares her soul and psyche, offering readers a look at her inner life with excruciating honesty. We get an intimate, utterly revealing sense of the anxiety generated by a bare kitchen cupboard or the guilt the author feels when deciding to squirrel away $50 to pay a grad school application fee rather than provide Emilia, her 6-year-old daughter, with an after-school snack of anything more than stale crackers and juice.

Land grew up in a middle-class household, but by the time of the memoir’s setting, she receives no support — emotional or financial — from either of her long-divorced parents. The courts have mandated that Jamie, her ex-partner, pay child support and take care of Emilia for a few weeks each year, but that lifeline is hardly reliable. Jamie calls her selfish for staying in college when, instead, she could be working a job that would provide Emilia with a life of more than Walmart clothes and Happy Meals.

The government seems in agreement, slashing Land’s food stamp allowance when Emilia turns 6 — since, with a child of school age, the mother is now expected to take a full-time job. “Nothing made me question my life choices more than knowing that my hours spent cleaning other people’s toilets to put myself through college weren’t enough — and that my hours spent earning a degree didn’t matter,” she writes. By removing her food voucher, “they were telling me that higher education was something I simply could not afford.”

Land makes a valiant effort to introduce a modicum of order and predictability to her life. She keeps a meticulous daybook planner and an accurate budget listing income and expenses. She commands a resourceful capacity to navigate the state’s welfare bureaucracy and the university’s degree requirements. She gets her papers in on time and plans her rare vacations well in advance. A professor calls both her writing and her personality “relentless.” It’s not meant as a compliment — but Land claims it as one.

Nevertheless, Land’s life remains one of chaos and insecurity. On a snowy Montana morning her car might not start; cleaning work proves unpredictable; child care remains chancy; housemates abscond; lovers and friends are here today and gone tomorrow. She feels a profound sense of isolation.

“Nothing had any sense of safety or permanence,” Land writes. “The possibility of losing the home where my child slept was always at the forefront of my mind and caused a constant, mind-buzzing anxiety attack. Repeatedly, whenever things started to feel secure, the floor would drop out from under me.” The fight to make rent, eat and find child care was constant. “I never got a break from it.”

The one financial obligation Land tried her best to ignore was the $50,000 in student debt she was piling up — a debt that she assumed would take decades to pay off, and could foreclose her purchase of a house, making Land one of America’s 44 million “indentured students,” a phrase coined by the historian Elizabeth Shermer. “Long-term financial planning is for people who aren’t living in poverty,” Land writes.

No book about what it means to be at the bottom of the ***working class*** can ignore the way our politics and culture have racialized poverty. Land knows that her whiteness affords Emilia and her a sort of “camouflage.” Except for the grocery store clerks who take her food stamps, few understand she is living on a desperate financial edge.

Indeed, throughout the book Land is enraged when those who do know of her precarity pronounce her “resilient” or “a survivor,” as if such a compliment elevates her status to that of the deserving poor — which might be another word for white. Moreover, an endorsement of the fortitude of those with so little is yet another way of ignoring the real problem: the absence of the cold, hard cash to buy the material goods and peace of mind necessary to ameliorate Land’s “constant, crushing panic.”

Land ends the book with her status unresolved — although it would have been easy enough for her to conclude on a far more gratifying note. Instead, we are left seething at the inequalities of our system.

It didn’t have to be this way. Enacted during the pandemic, the American Rescue Plan’s Child Tax Credit provided almost all American families with at least $3,000 for every dependent under 18. After reading Land’s memoir, one can guess with fair accuracy where this mother and child would spend that money and the impact it would have on their lives. Indeed, child poverty was cut nearly in half while the credit lasted.

As for the author, as we all know, she did become the celebrated writer of her youthful ambition, publishing a first memoir that became a wildly successful Netflix series. But Land knows that not one in 1,000 single mothers arrives at such a Hollywood ending.

CLASS: A Memoir | By Stephanie Land | Atria/One Signal | 273 pp. | $28

PHOTO: Stephanie Land and her daughter. (PHOTOGRAPH VIA STEPHANIE LAND) This article appeared in print on page BR17.

**Load-Date:** December 15, 2023

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[***A Border Wall to the North? Republicans Want to Discuss.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B59-HX81-JBG3-6033-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 22, 2024 Monday 12:05 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1572 words

**Highlight:** Presidential candidates, warning of terrorists, criminals and traffickers, have drawn a national spotlight to the nation’s border with Canada. But proposals for a southern-style wall have not exactly appeared to catch on.

**Body**

Former President Donald J. Trump paved a path to the presidency in 2016 by calling for a “big, beautiful wall” along the United States border with Mexico.

His 2024 rivals in the Republican primary election, scrapping for every advantage against him, looked north.

Nikki Haley, the former governor of South Carolina, has frequently told voters that it’s not just the southern border that needs stepped-up enforcement — “it’s the northern border, too.”

“I think we do whatever it takes to keep people out,” she told reporters on Saturday when asked if her comments meant she supported building a wall. “If that’s what it takes to keep them out, we will do a wall, we will do any sort of border patrol that we need to have.”

Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida, who ended his bid and endorsed Mr. Trump on Sunday after battling with Ms. Haley for second place behind the former president, had recently suggested building a wall along some trouble spots of the U.S.-Canada frontier. Vivek Ramaswamy, a tech entrepreneur, dropped out of the race last week, but [*not before trekking up*](https://www.conwaydailysun.com/berlin_sun/news/local/ramaswamy-talks-security-on-northern-border-visit/article_37bec59e-6852-11ee-8d9d-a36299525ab5.html) to Pittsburg, N.H., a tiny town that sits just below the jagged, 5,500-mile line that divides the United States and Canada, with a camera crew in tow. He later [*drew criticism*](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-67372909) from Canadian journalists and pundits when he proclaimed that the United States should not just build one wall, but two.

In Pittsburg, where residents like Beverly Martin, 79, and Chip Jones, 74, sat at the bar in an eclectic, barnlike restaurant on a recent snowy afternoon, the idea of a border wall along New Hampshire’s northernmost boundary, an isolated, forested region, was anathema.

“Then you have this armed national army that can be used against you and your rights,” Mr. Jones, a Republican and retired fire chief from Massachusetts who winters in the town, said in an interview at Full Send Bar and Grill off Route 3. He paused, mulling it over: “A border wall in Pittsburg — does it just not feel right?”

“It doesn’t,” replied Ms. Martin, who is also a Republican and taught home economics for 18 years at the Pittsburg School down the road. “A lot of people in Pittsburg have relatives on either side of the border, and people from the border towns in Canada come here to work.”

Mr. Trump does not talk about that northern dividing line himself. But he has promised to revive some of his most [*criticized immigration policies*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/11/us/politics/trump-2025-immigration-agenda.html) and has [*escalated his rhetoric*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/05/us/politics/trump-immigration-rhetoric.html), echoing the racial hatreds of Adolf Hitler when he said undocumented immigrants were “poisoning the blood of our country.”

The nation’s southern border has loomed large in the psyche of the American electorate. The issue has contributed to President Biden’s [*low approval numbers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/19/us/politics/biden-immigration-ukraine.html) and threatened his foreign policy platform. It has also entangled Congress and burdened [*mayors and local leaders*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/04/us/politics/biden-immigration-republicans-democrats.html) grappling with packed shelters and strained social services as more and more migrant families have been bused to cities around the country.

The now-dwindled G.O.P. field united behind calls to [*end sanctuary policies*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/04/us/politics/nikki-haley-immigration.html) and advocated for [*militarized crackdowns on drug cartels*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/24/us/immigration-republican-debate.html) and [*mass deportations of millions of people*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/01/us/politics/immigration-desantis-trump.html) who have entered the United States under the Biden administration.

Republican warnings of terrorists, criminals and traffickers have drawn a national spotlight to places like New Hampshire’s northern edge, frustrating some of the people who live along it. Unlike the largely Latino communities along the U.S.-Mexico border, they are not used to being such a prominent part of the national immigration debate.

Pittsburg, which registered a population of 830 people in the most recent Census Bureau report, is the largest township by area in New England, and is known as a destination for snowmobile and ATV enthusiasts, hunters and fly fishers. Longtime border residents can remember when the dividing line up north was, as their counterparts far down south like to say, but “a line in the sand” — or the snow. As in the border towns of states like Texas and Arizona before any barriers were put up, it was not uncommon, some Pittsburg inhabitants said, to see what appeared to be migrants walking or wading across the border.

And like those southern border towns, Pittsburg sits on land that was once fiercely contested — first between the French and British and [*the Abenaki*](https://www.nhmagazine.com/walking-new-hampshires-northern-border/), who used its wilderness to the north as their [*hunting grounds*](https://www.nhmagazine.com/walking-new-hampshires-northern-border/), and later between the British and the Americans. The Treaty of Paris, which was signed in 1783 and ended the American Revolution, left the dividing line between what is now Quebec and New Hampshire ill-defined. Frustrated over the disagreement, the residents caught between two nations established their own government, the Indian Stream Republic.

In October, Gov. Chris Sununu of New Hampshire, who has endorsed Ms. Haley and has been stumping with her across the state in recent weeks, and other state officials announced a [*tenfold increase*](https://apnews.com/article/new-hampshire-northern-border-security-5b11643a667f1fabce852be5367b0ea1) in patrols along the northern line. “The vast majority of border crossings come from the southern border, but the majority of border crossings of folks on the [*terrorist watch list*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/19/us/politics/republicans-mexico-border-israel.html) come from the northern border,” Mr. Sununu said in an interview.

The latest statistics from U.S. Customs and Border Protection showed that last year’s apprehensions of people entering illegally in the sector that covers New Hampshire, Vermont and parts of upstate New York had reached the highest levels in at least 16 years. Between October 2022 and September 2023, agents intercepted 6,925 people crossing illegally, an increase from 1,065 in that time span one year earlier.

Around the stores and shops that line Route 3, several clerks said they had noticed a few people passing through who did not appear to be locals or the typical winter tourists. But for many, the crossings elicit a shrug. “People have always been coming through Canada,” said Carolyn Therrien, who was ringing up customers at Young’s General Store. “I don’t think the residents are really worried.”

Inside Pittsburg’s town government office on Main Street, a long, wood-paneled building with a pitched roof that also houses its police department, Linda Clogston, the tax collector and treasurer of the local historical association, has worked with community leaders and officials on both sides of the border to set up markers commemorating the Indian Stream Republic and other historical sites. Across the street, the Pittsburg Historical Society Museum houses canoes, drag saws, spiked boots and other artifacts from times when people flowed more easily through the wilderness of the border.

On a recent afternoon, she said Pittsburg residents seemed more concerned with rising property prices than with who was coming across the border.

Around town, there is anecdotal evidence of the Trumpian wave that has hit other rural parts of New Hampshire and the United States. Pro-Trump flags and signs hang from the walls of some homes and stick out of yards. On the side of the road, a “Build the Wall” sign was tacked to an evergreen tree. With the primary coming up, immigration was cited by several voters as a top election concern — but they were usually referring to the southern border.

Wayne Dorman, 71, a conservative Democrat and owner of a concrete business, said he was not opposed to the government stepping up resources along the northern border. But he contended that the harsh wilderness was enough to keep people out. “I mean, we’re not Texas,” he said.

In New Hampshire, the issue of immigration has gripped the Republican electorate since [*Patrick J. Buchanan*](https://www.thecrimson.com/article/1996/2/21/buchanan-takes-new-hampshire-primary-in/), a conservative commentator, [*clinched an upset victory*](https://www.nytimes.com/1996/02/21/us/politics-the-overview-buchanan-a-narrow-victor-over-dole-in-new-hampshire.html) in the primary in 1996. [*Mr. Trump won in 2016*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/06/us/politics/donald-trumps-immigration-message-may-resound-in-new-hampshire.html) with views on the issue that tapped into the party’s base of white ***working-class*** voters who felt alienated from the political system. A recent [*Boston Globe/USA Today/Suffolk University poll*](https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/01/19/metro/new-hampshire-immigration-border-primary-gop/) found that a majority of the state’s Republican voters said it was the most important issue facing the country.

“It could be the single largest issue in front of us in this election,” rivaled only by the economy, said Chris Ager, the chairman of the New Hampshire Republican Party.

But [*nearly two-thirds of those surveyed*](https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/01/09/metro/new-hampshire-primary-poll-border-security-immigration-globe-poll/) were not concerned about the state’s northern border with Canada.

Ever since state polls showed Ms. Haley cutting into Mr. Trump’s lead in New Hampshire, he and his allies have been on the attack — in particular, going after her record on immigration as governor. Ms. Haley, asked Saturday at a campaign stop in Peterborough, N.H., if she would support a wall along the Canadian border, was noncommittal.

“Whatever it takes to keep people out that are illegal from coming in — we’ll do it,” she said.

Nicholas Nehamas contributed reporting from Manchester, N.H.

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PHOTOS: Republican presidential candidates are calling for more security along the northern border. The idea does not sit well with some in New Hampshire. From left, Chip Jones, a retired fire chief, spends his winters snowmobiling in Pittsburg, N.H.; Beverly Martin, a retired school teacher, in Pittsburg; Linda Clogston, Pittsburg tax collector and historical society treasurer.; Top, New Hampshire Route 3 ends at the Canadian border in Pittsburg. Above, old photos of hunting camps at the town’s historical society. The landscape outside the town is forested and sparsely populated. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN TULLY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A13.

**Load-Date:** January 23, 2024

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[***A Principal Confronted a Teenage Girl. Now He Could Face Time in Prison.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BSB-PY61-JBG3-6005-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 11, 2024 Thursday 09:45 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 3063 words

**Byline:** John Leland John Leland is a reporter covering life in New York City for The Times.

**Highlight:** Behind the “maelstrom” at a high-achieving, racially diverse school in a liberal New Jersey suburb.

**Body**

In a high school lobby in New Jersey, the principal saw a student heading toward a stairway and moved to cut her off. There was physical contact between them, though no blows.

The interaction lasted less than a minute.

The student filed an affirmative action complaint against the principal, saying that he had grabbed her and “slammed” her against a wall. The student is Black; the principal is white and Latino.

The principal, reporting the episode later that day, said he was preventing an altercation between the student and three others, who said she had threatened them.

Over the months that followed, those roughly 60 seconds, captured partially on video, have divided neighbors across two towns, spawned two investigations and set off a legal process that could end with the principal in prison.

On March 11, almost exactly a year after the encounter, the principal, Frank Sanchez, was taken into custody and charged with assault and endangering a minor.

What happened that day last spring at Columbia High School, a high-performing school that serves the towns of Maplewood and South Orange, N.J., has become a Rorschach test for a liberal school district with a racially mixed population.

Did Mr. Sanchez use unlawful force against a vulnerable 15-year-old in his care? Or was he simply protecting students from harm?

The answers hinge on Mr. Sanchez’s state of mind and the student’s intentions — unknowable elements into which community members have projected their own experiences and assumptions. In a district that is both diverse and divided, the assumptions do not fall neatly along racial or political lines.

A lawyer for the student, who is no longer at the school, said the case revealed a side of the community that many residents did not want to face. The lawyer, James H. Davis III, is chairman of the Black Parents Workshop, an organization that has sued the school district over racial disparities in the past, including unequal punishments for Black students.

“How many other Black students have been ignored over the years that something’s happened to them, in violation of their rights and privileges?” he asked.

But many in the school district tell a different story, of a popular principal simply intervening to prevent a fight and being targeted by people inside and outside the school who opposed his philosophy for running it.

Within days of the arrest, students at the high school held a walkout in support of Mr. Sanchez, and parents and teachers rallied at the town hall, where one demonstrator held up a sign that read, “Who’s Next?”

Charges of bad faith abound.

“Fundamentally, this story is about something having gone horribly awry in our school community,” said Rhea Mokund-Beck, a parent who supports Mr. Sanchez. “There has been such a breakdown of trust. Such a breakdown of good will. Such a breakdown of even understanding what public education is for. And then one layers that with all of the dynamics of race and class, and, you know, this is about a real maelstrom that we’ve made for ourselves.”

Inequality in a Proudly Diverse Community

South Orange and Maplewood, situated about 20 miles west of New York City, are liberal towns with a mix of affluent professionals and ***working-class*** families. The high school, a colossal, century-old Gothic Revival edifice serving a racially diverse student body of 2,000, ranks in the [*Top 10 percent*](https://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools/new-jersey/districts/south-orange-maplewood-school-district/columbia-high-school-12765#:~:text=Columbia%20High%20School%20is%20ranked,Columbia%20High%20School%20is%2068%25.) of schools statewide, according to U.S. News and World Report, and routinely sends students to elite colleges.

The two towns, sometimes abbreviated SOMA, trumpet their progressive colors in their multiple social justice organizations, including [*SOMA Justice*](https://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools/new-jersey/districts/south-orange-maplewood-school-district/columbia-high-school-12765#:~:text=Columbia%20High%20School%20is%20ranked,Columbia%20High%20School%20is%2068%25.), [*SOMA Action*](https://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools/new-jersey/districts/south-orange-maplewood-school-district/columbia-high-school-12765#:~:text=Columbia%20High%20School%20is%20ranked,Columbia%20High%20School%20is%2068%25.) and [*Community Coalition on Race*](https://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools/new-jersey/districts/south-orange-maplewood-school-district/columbia-high-school-12765#:~:text=Columbia%20High%20School%20is%20ranked,Columbia%20High%20School%20is%2068%25.), and in a 40-foot mural, “[*I Am Maplewood*](https://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools/new-jersey/districts/south-orange-maplewood-school-district/columbia-high-school-12765#:~:text=Columbia%20High%20School%20is%20ranked,Columbia%20High%20School%20is%2068%25.),” depicting a child’s face divided into six sections, each conveying a different racial identity.

But the school system has long had an achievement gap between white and Black students, with Black students graduating and attending college at lower rates, despite years of lawsuits and programs to fix the disparities. A former superintendent, citing the lack of progress, told the school board in 2018, “We have open and visible segregation in the elementary schools, and classroom segregation at the high school level.”

The [*Black Parents Workshop*](https://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools/new-jersey/districts/south-orange-maplewood-school-district/columbia-high-school-12765#:~:text=Columbia%20High%20School%20is%20ranked,Columbia%20High%20School%20is%2068%25.), which [*formed in 2014*](https://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools/new-jersey/districts/south-orange-maplewood-school-district/columbia-high-school-12765#:~:text=Columbia%20High%20School%20is%20ranked,Columbia%20High%20School%20is%2068%25.), [*sued the district*](https://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools/new-jersey/districts/south-orange-maplewood-school-district/columbia-high-school-12765#:~:text=Columbia%20High%20School%20is%20ranked,Columbia%20High%20School%20is%2068%25.) in 2018, charging that Black students were routinely assigned to less rigorous academic tracks and were suspended more frequently than white students for the same acts. The suit was [*settled*](https://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools/new-jersey/districts/south-orange-maplewood-school-district/columbia-high-school-12765#:~:text=Columbia%20High%20School%20is%20ranked,Columbia%20High%20School%20is%2068%25.) in 2020, with the district agreeing to an outside monitor and a complete audit of its practices and outcomes.

Frank Sanchez, who started at Columbia High School that fall, was not an obvious candidate to repair the school’s racial disparities. His previous job was at [*Mountain Lakes High School*](https://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools/new-jersey/districts/south-orange-maplewood-school-district/columbia-high-school-12765#:~:text=Columbia%20High%20School%20is%20ranked,Columbia%20High%20School%20is%2068%25.) in Mountain Lakes, N.J., where the student body is less than 2 percent Black.

The Black Parents Workshop opposed his hiring, citing the economic and demographic differences between Mountain Lakes and Columbia, as did an outspoken parent named Elissa Malespina, who would soon join the school board.

Mr. Sanchez arrived at Columbia to find a starkly divided student body. “Some students spent Covid in Aspen,” he said, “and some went to a White Castle or a Burger King to get Wi-Fi because they didn’t have it at home.” He hoped his background, as a son of Cuban immigrants, would help him connect with students from the district’s sizable Haitian American community.

A New Approach to School Discipline

Mr. Sanchez made a point to greet students by name in the mornings and to walk the halls between periods, and he called on administrators to do the same. He also introduced changes to the school’s disciplinary processes, which met resistance from some at the school and on the board.

He wanted to cut back on student suspensions, which fell disproportionately on Black students, and to reduce police access to students, which he felt abetted a “school-to-prison pipeline.”

These measures, he said in an interview, put him at odds with some of the “law and order” administrators at the school, as well as the local Police Department. They also drew opposition from the Black Parents Workshop. “Our position has always been, if students are committing crimes, they need to be held accountable,” said Walter Fields, the group’s founder. If students do not feel safe at school, he added, it “creates systemic barriers to learning for Black children.”

It was against this backdrop that Mr. Sanchez encountered a ninth grader in the school lobby last March 9.

Mr. Sanchez, school officials, the student, the prosecutor and the police all declined to discuss the episode. Teachers were instructed by the district not to talk with the news media.

According to an outside investigation commissioned by the school, several students had filed complaints that the girl had threatened and bullied them over the previous days. She was among roughly 50 students assigned a special [*one-day workshop*](https://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools/new-jersey/districts/south-orange-maplewood-school-district/columbia-high-school-12765#:~:text=Columbia%20High%20School%20is%20ranked,Columbia%20High%20School%20is%2068%25.) designed to build empathy and connection, held in the gym.

But at 1:27 p.m., she was in the lobby and heading toward the stairway to the cafeteria, where the students who filed the complaints against her were eating lunch. Mr. Sanchez moved to stop her. Three video cameras captured parts of the scene, but each missed key actions.

The videos, which have no sound, show the two making contact in front of the stairway doors, Mr. Sanchez slightly taller and considerably stockier. Their hands are mostly obscured. For about 20 seconds they jostle in front of the doors, then move through them, as other students gather to look.

Mr. Sanchez, holding a laptop in his right arm, appears to block or hold the student with his left, as they move toward a wall not visible to two of the cameras. For the last 20 seconds of the interaction the only view is from a lower camera, which shows only their feet. Finally another student seems to lead the girl back through the doors and away from the scene. Mr. Sanchez returns to the lobby.

In her affirmative action complaint, filed a month after the encounter, the student wrote that she had left the workshop to use the restroom when Mr. Sanchez grabbed her and accused her of bullying other students. When she tried to get out of his grip, she wrote, “he pushed me against the wall.” She added: “Mr. Sanchez should be held accountable for wrongly accusing me, and physically grabbing me. This should not be the way he disciplines students.”

Mr. Sanchez’s union lawyer, Robert Schwartz, said, “The video is the best evidence, and it doesn’t support the charges.” He added: “I’ve been doing this for a long time, and it’s not unusual for an administrator who breaks up a fight to then have the kid accuse him of something. That happens.”

The New Jersey Department of Education leaves it up to school districts to set policies for when school officials may physically engage students. In the South Orange-Maplewood district, staff members may use “reasonable and necessary” force to “quell a disturbance” that threatens physical harm to others, according to the district’s policy manual.

Police documents from Mr. Sanchez’s arrest describe him “pushing and/or shoving and/or grabbing” the girl, “causing her to sustain injury.” In her statement to the prosecutor, she said she was bruised during the encounter.

Mr. Fields, from the Black Parents Workshop, said the circumstances leading up to the confrontation were beside the point. “I don’t care where the young lady was going,” he said. “No adult has a right to physically accost a student. I think those are excuses being made for Mr. Sanchez’s behavior.”

As the academic year wound down, Ms. Malespina and the Black Parents Workshop campaigned against renewing Mr. Sanchez’s contract, citing the student’s affirmative action complaint, along with an “increasing number of fights” and students feeling unsafe, according to an email Ms. Malespina sent to the superintendent and school board president.

At a packed year-end board meeting last May, a few dozen students and parents, including a current and former mayor of Maplewood, argued for retaining Mr. Sanchez. “Frank Sanchez is the best thing to happen to our district in the 13 years I’ve lived here,” said one mother, Stephanie Nasteff Pilato. A decision to fire him, she said, “would be a catastrophe.”

Mr. Davis, who spoke against retaining Mr. Sanchez at the meeting, sees the support for him, and the unwillingness to believe a Black student, as revealing. “These towns purport to be extremely progressive and extremely inclusive,” he said in an interview. “So they’re saying this girl was in a fight. She was a troublemaker. She was a thug. And I said, ‘What does that matter?’” He added: “They’re so determined to protect this principal that for whatever reason, they will put their — I’ll call it pseudo-progressive liberalism — aside to meet their own objectives.”

The board voted in May to retain Mr. Sanchez, but the showdown left wounds in the community. Several Black parents said that Mr. Davis’s group did not speak for them.

“This is an effort to advocate for Black children by burning up the entire system,” said Khalil Gibran Muhammad, a parent who supports Mr. Sanchez. “These folks have played very aggressively and unfairly with people’s lives to try to score political points. And this is an escalation, in my opinion, that is very dangerous and crosses the line.”

A Flawed Investigation, Then Another

In fall 2023, the school hired an outside law firm, Cooper Levenson, to investigate the student’s affirmative action complaint. It delivered its report last December, nine months after the confrontation, finding that Mr. Sanchez had used “excessive” force to restrain the girl, and that he seemed “to have lost his temper and escalated rather than de-escalated the situation.” The report noted that two assistant principals and two students told investigators that Mr. Sanchez had a pattern of “taking harsher disciplinary measures against females, and particularly Black females.” It recommended that the district “consider appropriate consequences” for Mr. Sanchez.

But there was a problem with the report, said Courtney Winkfield, who was on the school board at the time. “The investigator’s supervisor personally called our board attorney and told them to halt on doing anything with this report,” Ms. Winkfield said. “He said specifically that the investigator did not follow standard operating procedure, did not submit his draft report for review to him.”

Nonetheless, on Dec. 27, according to police records, Ms. Malespina called the police to share the report’s findings. The Maplewood Police Department gathered the videos and incident reports from the school and began its own investigation — this time not into civil charges of bias but criminal charges of assault. Ms. Malespina, whose term on the school board ended in January, declined an interview request.

The school district commissioned Cooper Levenson to do a second investigation, and placed Mr. Sanchez on administrative leave pending its results.

On March 7, Cooper Levenson delivered its revised report, noting that the first one “should have been deemed a draft report only and subject to revision, change and further peer review.” The revised report cleared Mr. Sanchez of all charges from the affirmative action complaint and recommended that he be reinstated. It found Mr. Sanchez’s description of the episode credible, and cast doubt on the student’s, adding that there was no record to support the charges of bias in his treatment of Black girls. “Security video,” the investigator wrote, “does not demonstrate that Principal Sanchez engaged in behavior unbecoming a public school official.”

The report also noted that Mr. Sanchez “could have engaged in better de-escalation techniques,” for which it recommended that the school provide more training.

But if the report seemed to vindicate Mr. Sanchez, it brought him little comfort. On the same day he learned of the findings, he was called to turn himself in to the county prosecutor. If convicted of assault and endangering a child, he faces a prison term of up to 10 years.

At a school board meeting two weeks later, a half-dozen mothers, wearing red to support Mr. Sanchez, held up signs and took turns reading aloud from the report of the second outside investigation, to rounds of applause from other supporters. Gwyneth Brown, a student representative on the board, said students felt “unconnected” and “very, very lost.”

No one spoke against Mr. Sanchez.

The Teachers’ Dilemma

For educators everywhere, the criminal prosecution of Mr. Sanchez for an action that schools typically handle using their own disciplinary codes opens up new levels of potential risk. Fights are part of high school life. If a school official can be not just disciplined but also jailed for intervening to break up or prevent a fight, what are teachers supposed to do?

In an interview, Mr. Sanchez mentioned a fight last year in which a teacher told the students to stop but did not physically separate them. “And the parent was just so upset when they saw the video, like, ‘Why isn’t this person stopping it?’” he said. “And to be honest, I was a little upset, too. I didn’t say that to the parent, but I did say, ‘Well, because sometimes people are worried about liability.’”

The implications of Mr. Sanchez’s arrest extend far beyond South Orange and Maplewood, said [*Christopher Emdin*](https://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools/new-jersey/districts/south-orange-maplewood-school-district/columbia-high-school-12765#:~:text=Columbia%20High%20School%20is%20ranked,Columbia%20High%20School%20is%2068%25.), a professor of science education at Teachers College, Columbia University, who has [*written extensively about race and education*](https://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools/new-jersey/districts/south-orange-maplewood-school-district/columbia-high-school-12765#:~:text=Columbia%20High%20School%20is%20ranked,Columbia%20High%20School%20is%2068%25.).

“The nature of schools is that uncomfortable interactions happen,” Dr. Emdin said. In districts with a history of racial litigation, he added, “there’s a tendency to blow things out of proportion and to attach what happens oftentimes during the school day to race and racism. And that’s dangerous for Black kids who are undergoing legitimate racist practices in contemporary schools. Teachers can’t act effectively if they’re fearful that their actions are going to be misconstrued as racist.”

Other students at the school may feel a different effect, said Monique Couvson, author of “[*Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools*](https://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools/new-jersey/districts/south-orange-maplewood-school-district/columbia-high-school-12765#:~:text=Columbia%20High%20School%20is%20ranked,Columbia%20High%20School%20is%2068%25.),” who cites research that Black girls’ conduct is disproportionately likely to be met with force. For those who witness such uses of force, she said, “it sends a message that their anger or their quote-unquote attitude is not a valid expression of a form of harm that they might be experiencing.”

In South Orange and Maplewood, bright red “Friends of Frank” signs have sprung up on neighborhood lawns. A crowdfunding campaign to pay Mr. Sanchez’s legal bills has raised more than $60,000.

At Columbia High School, the Board of Education’s lawyer met for two hours with faculty members after Mr. Sanchez’s arrest to discuss what teachers could and could not do when students are fighting or are threatening to. “The entire room was on pins and needles,” said Amy Biasucci, who has taught A.P. biology and environmental science at the school for 15 years. The meeting was clarifying, she said, but did not dispel teachers’ fears.

“We make tens of thousands of micro-decisions on a daily basis,” she said. “And it is very scary to think that someone could take a micro-decision out of context and you could now go to jail for that. Your life could be ruined after literally giving your entire life to public service. It’s excruciating.”

Mr. Sanchez remains on paid administrative leave, with his next court date scheduled for June.

Taylor Robinson contributed reporting.

Audio produced by Jack D’Isidoro.

Taylor Robinson contributed reporting. Audio produced by Jack D’Isidoro.

PHOTOS: Frank Sanchez, the principal of Columbia High School in Maplewood, N.J., has been charged with assault for an encounter that he had with a student in March 2023. (MB1); Clockwise from top: Columbia High School, where Frank Sanchez is the principal, serves students from the towns of Maplewood and South Orange; James H. Davis III, is the chairman of an organization that has sued the school district over racial disparities; signs supporting Mr. Sanchez dot lawns; Rhea Mokund-Beck, left, and Mia Charlene White support Mr. Sanchez; at a recent board meeting, a parent read statements from students who back Mr. Sanchez. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRYAN ANSELM FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (MB7) This article appeared in print on page MB1, MB7.

**Load-Date:** May 15, 2024

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[***Pennsylvania Race Narrows, Testing Fetterman's Blue-Collar Allure***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66JV-M101-DXY4-X481-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 8, 2022 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1691 words

**Byline:** By Trip Gabriel

**Body**

John Fetterman, the Democratic nominee for Senate, says he can win over ***working-class*** voters in deep-red counties. Some evidence suggests he can, but partisan loyalties may prove more powerful.

MURRYSVILLE, Pa. -- ''I don't have to tell you that it is hard to be a Democrat in Westmoreland County.''

So began the chairwoman of the Westmoreland Democratic Party, Michelle McFall, as she introduced Lt. Gov. John Fetterman of Pennsylvania to supporters this week in the deep-red exurbs of Pittsburgh.

About 100 people were gathered in a parking lot behind the Fetterman campaign bus, emblazoned with the slogan ''Every County, Every Vote.'' That is the strategy on which Mr. Fetterman has built his Senate candidacy -- announced last year with a video reminiscent of a Springsteen song, showing small towns where people ''feel left behind'' and promising that ''Fetterman can get a lot of those voters.''

Now, in the final weeks before Election Day, with polls showing a narrowing race in a pivotal contest for control of the Senate, the premise that Mr. Fetterman can win over rural voters, including some who supported former President Donald J. Trump, is under strain.

Mr. Fetterman has limited his campaign schedule as he recovers from a stroke, unable to visit ''every county.'' He is facing fierce Republican attacks that appear to be hitting home with voters, particularly over his record on crime. The share of voters who view Mr. Fetterman unfavorably has risen, while many Republicans have grudgingly rallied behind their nominee, Mehmet Oz. Because Mr. Fetterman had a double-digit lead in polling over the summer, the race's tightening, while typical in a battleground state, has caused Democrats' anxiety to rise.

In a speech lasting just five minutes, Mr. Fetterman told supporters in Westmoreland County, which Mr. Trump won by 28 percentage points in 2020, that ''we must jam up red counties'' by running up votes. Still recovering from his stroke in May, Mr. Fetterman spoke fluently but haltingly, with gaps between words. It typified how his campaign has been forced to pivot from relying on Mr. Fetterman's charisma before crowds, in stump appearances during the spring, to a strategy focused heavily on social media and television ads. A single debate with Dr. Oz is scheduled for Oct. 25.

In Pennsylvania's vast rural areas, the Fetterman campaign aims to improve upon the 2020 performance of President Biden, another candidate who banked on his Everyman appeal, and who narrowly carried the state.

Exceeding Mr. Biden in red counties may be necessary if Mr. Fetterman does not match the blowout Biden victories in the Philadelphia suburbs, where the foil of Mr. Trump in 2020 repelled college-educated voters.

Much of Mr. Fetterman's appeal to rural and ***working-class*** places goes beyond his policy ideas to expand broadband or ''make more stuff in America.'' His power is his brand -- encapsulated in the casual attire, the shaved head and tattoos, conveying that he is not a conventional politician.

Larry Maggi, a Democratic commissioner of Washington County, a blue-collar region of southwest Pennsylvania, said Mr. Fetterman was making inroads with ***working-class*** voters who had abandoned Democrats.

''What I see is people like the Democratic union guy or gal who voted for Donald Trump who is coming back because they like Fetterman, what he stands for, he looks like them -- the tattoos and a little bit of pot smoking,'' Mr. Maggi said. ''He excites them.'' (Though Mr. Fetterman favors legalizing recreational marijuana, he has said that he does not use it himself.)

Polling broadly supports the idea that Mr. Fetterman has a common-touch image with voters. In a Monmouth University survey this week, 57 percent of Pennsylvania voters said that Mr. Fetterman understood the day-to-day concerns of people like them. Only 39 percent said the same of Dr. Oz, a former heart surgeon and celebrity TV host.

But Ms. McFall, the Democratic chairwoman in Westmoreland County, said a new attack ad against Mr. Fetterman on local radio sought to puncture his common-man image.

''What I've been hearing on the radio now is that John Fetterman lived off his parents and is a spoiled rich kid who pretends to be a man of the people,'' Ms. McFall said, adding that the aim of the attacks is to elicit ***working-class*** resentment: '''I don't have what this person has, and it's not fair.'''

Mr. Fetterman grew up affluent near York, Pa. For 13 years, he was the mayor of Braddock, a town outside Pittsburgh devastated by industrial collapse. The job paid $150 a year, and his family supported him until he became lieutenant governor at age 49.

Mr. Fetterman said in an interview that his family had backed his life choice to work ''in a community that was abandoned.'' He has not hidden his family's help, although it is not widely known.

It is unclear if attacks on his privileged background, which Dr. Oz has said makes him ''a pretend populist,'' are turning off ***working-class*** voters.

In interviews this week with a dozen self-identified independent voters in Westmoreland and other red counties, none brought up Mr. Fetterman's background, or Dr. Oz's dubious medical advice on his TV show, or other fleeting issues that both campaigns have tried to seize on.

The issue most commonly raised by voters, including some Oz supporters, was that Dr. Oz was not a ''real'' Pennsylvanian because he moved to the state only in 2020. The most common objection to Mr. Fetterman was that he had pushed for clemency for some long-incarcerated men serving life sentences for murder, who prison authorities said posed no threat to public safety.

''What upsets me about Oz is I don't feel he's really a Pennsylvanian,'' said Michael Lyter, who lives in Mifflin County, in the central part of the state. Nonetheless, he plans to vote for Dr. Oz.

A retired drug and alcohol counselor, Mr. Lyter, 66, said: ''I definitely don't want Fetterman in there. He's too much pro-crime.''

He was unpersuaded by Mr. Fetterman's dress code. ''Do you know what he looks like to me?'' Mr. Lyter said. ''He looks like a heroin addict. They're the only ones who wear hoodies in the summertime.''

It was rare to find anyone in the interviews who had voted for Republicans recently and now favored Mr. Fetterman. And it was equally rare to find recent Democratic voters swinging to Dr. Oz.

The interviews were anecdotal, though polling indicates that Mr. Fetterman has an edge among one large cohort of voters in red counties -- white ***working-class*** women. A Fox News survey last month showed him winning white women without a college degree by eight percentage points. There was also a yawning gender gap: White men without a college degree preferred Dr. Oz by 15 points.

One of the rare party switchers was Paul Amalong, a security guard who was leaving a farmer's market in Latrobe with a bag of zucchinis.

''Tell you the truth, I was a Republican all my life until Jan. 6, and I switched to the Democratic Party after that,'' Mr. Amalong said.

A former truck driver, Mr. Amalong, 74, said Mr. Fetterman had his vote, though mainly because he believes Republicans have become the party of insurrection. ''When I was a Republican, I didn't vote straight Republican,'' he said. ''But since Jan. 6 came, I don't look. I just punch in straight Democrat.''

Latrobe, in central Westmoreland County, is a brewing and manufacturing city where the first banana split was created in 1904. Its population has fallen steadily since 1970. It might have served as one of the communities in the Fetterman announcement video whose ''best days were a generation ago.''

''Downtown Latrobe, it was wall-to-wall people,'' recalled Carol Dziak, 69, who was also shopping at the farmer's market. Ms. Dziak's husband worked for 45 years at the brewery that formerly made Rolling Rock beer. For a while, the couple owned a Hallmark card shop, but customers abandoned it for mall stores.

''I'm a Democrat, but I don't vote Democrat,'' Ms. Dziak said. She didn't like what she had seen about Mr. Fetterman in TV ads calling him soft on crime. ''The convicts, letting them get out of jail and stuff -- that, I think, is my top thing,'' she said.

In 2016, a house outside Latrobe painted like an American flag with a towering cutout of Mr. Trump drew hundreds of people to pose for selfies. Now the owner of what became known as the ''Trump House,'' Leslie Rossi, is Latrobe's Republican state representative. She said Mr. Fetterman had no chance of picking up lapsed Democratic supporters in the county.

''Voters who are now voting red do not have any plans of switching back to the party they feel has let them down,'' Ms. Rossi said.

Brendan McPhillips, Mr. Fetterman's campaign manager, said he expected that Mr. Fetterman would win a higher percentage of votes in red counties than Mr. Biden did two years ago.

''There's real enthusiasm for John out in these red counties in a way I've never seen before,'' said Mr. McPhillips, who also ran Mr. Biden's 2020 campaign in Pennsylvania. ''People see John at Costco, at Aldi. He's real and one of them. Even if they might not agree with him on everything.''

Jayanna Shirey, a 28-year-old college student who lives with her parents in Frenchville, Pa., and is studying criminal justice, defended Mr. Fetterman's approach. The prison system locks up too many people ''who won't be reoffending,'' she said. ''Something got out of hand back in the '80s. The American taxpayers had to fork out hard-earned cash to pay for men or women to sit their whole life in prison.''

A coal-miner's daughter, Ms. Shirey said she was proud of her rural roots in central Pennsylvania and her political independence. ''Hell yes, I think I'm a redneck, but hell no, I'm not a Democrat or a Republican,'' she said.

She was not overly enthusiastic about either Senate candidate, but said she planned to vote for Mr. Fetterman.

She wants to become a state game warden.

''Unless Fetterman says, 'I'm going to come into your house and take your .30-06 so you can't hunt your whitetail deer,''' she said, ''I'm going to vote for him.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/07/us/politics/fetterman-pennsylvania-senate-race.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/07/us/politics/fetterman-pennsylvania-senate-race.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Lt. Gov. John Fetterman's campaign is hoping to improve on President Biden's 2020 performance in Pennsylvania's rural areas. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JUSTIN MERRIMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Many Republicans have grudgingly rallied behind Mehmet Oz. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HANNAH BEIER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

The ''Trump House'' in the manufacturing city of Latrobe, Pa. (PHOTOGRAPH BY NATE SMALLWOOD FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** October 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[***As Obscure as an Extra, She Has a Lead Role in Hollywood’s Labor Fight***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:691S-5XM1-DXY4-X00C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 27, 2023 Sunday 22:53 EST

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**Section:** BUSINESS

**Length:** 1505 words

**Byline:** Brooks Barnes and John Koblin

**Highlight:** Carol Lombardini, the studio voice in union talks, values a low profile. That hasn’t kept striking writers and actors from casting her as a villain.

**Body**

Carol Lombardini, the studio voice in union talks, values a low profile. That hasn’t kept striking writers and actors from casting her as a villain.

As the Hollywood union strikes have dragged on, key characters have taken turns in the spotlight.

There is [*Fran Drescher*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/13/business/media/fran-drescher-screen-actors-guild.html), the comedic actress who, with surprising [*ferocity*](https://www.msnbc.com/alex-wagner-tonight/watch/-complete-disrespect-fran-drescher-sag-aftra-president-rages-at-media-execs-over-impasse-188373061828), has rallied the actors’ union against television and film companies, and enraged studio executives in the process. Robert A. Iger, who leads Disney, [*publicly pushed back*](https://variety.com/2023/tv/news/bob-iger-writers-actors-strike-disney-ceo-1235669169/) against the striking workers, and found himself jeered on picket lines as a robber baron.

But one crucial participant has remained an enigma: Carol Lombardini, 68, the top union negotiator for studios and a 41-year veteran of Hollywood labor battles.

For someone who sits at the center of two increasingly bitter strikes — writers [*walked off the job*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/01/business/media/hollywood-writers-strike.html) on May 2, [*followed by actors*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/13/business/media/sag-aftra-writers-strike.html) on July 14 — very little is known about her. Ms. Lombardini has not given an interview of more than a few words since 2009, when she ascended from the No. 2 job to [*become president*](https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2009-nov-11-fi-ct-lombardini11-story.html) of the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers, the organization that bargains on behalf of the eight largest entertainment companies.

Until now, her tenure had been marked by labor peace. Studios [*reached an agreement*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/04/business/media/hollywood-directors-guild-deal.html) with the directors’ union in June; the writers last struck in 2008, the actors in 1980. Over the years, she has told colleagues that cultivating a public persona would only undercut her effectiveness at the bargaining table. Or at least it would not help. She declined to comment for this article.

Wanted or not, the spotlight has found her. Many union members blame her for the negotiating logjam that has brought almost all movie and television production in Hollywood to a halt. Partly because of her woman-of-mystery persona and partly because she’s an easy target, Ms. Lombardini has become an avatar for the grievances of tens of thousands of striking workers. “Carol can go kick rocks,” Caroline Renard, a striking writer, said this month on X, the social media platform formerly known as Twitter.

With her public personality absent, actors and writers have invented one. In May, someone started a [*parody account*](https://twitter.com/ItsMeCarolAMPTP) on X that has portrayed Ms. Lombardini as a crass tyrant declaring, “I’m a goddess of chaos!” (Yes, she has seen it, an associate said. No, she is not amused.)

Another group of screenwriters have mocked Ms. Lombardini online as a fuddy-duddy who [*hangs out*](https://twitter.com/joerussotweets/status/1686593570965504000) at chain restaurants, the taunt being that no Hollywood person would be caught dead in one. (Her office is near a Cheesecake Factory in suburban Los Angeles.)

Other union members seem to have simply grown curious about the Oz-like negotiator behind the curtain. “Will we ever find out what Carol Lombardini is in the flesh?!” Maridia Minor, a writer, asked on X last week.

A few facts are known about Ms. Lombardini. She is a devoted baseball fan. She grew up in a ***working-class*** town outside Boston. And of course, she has enormous power. Ms. Lombardini is responsible for negotiating all 58 of Hollywood’s union agreements, from contracts with the Writers Guild of America and SAG-AFTRA, as the actors’ union is known, to ones with the American Federation of Musicians and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. How she handles herself — union officials who have negotiated with her describe her as blunt yet cordial — can make the difference between smooth talks and a strike.

Jeff Ruthizer, who spent 40 years as a labor negotiator at Disney, ABC and NBC and recently wrote a book, “Labor Pains,” drawing on that experience, called Ms. Lombardini “a funny person” who “knows how to read a room and is tough when she needs to be.”

At the end of the day, however, Ms. Lombardini is an employee, albeit one whose duties require deft ego management. She answers to moguls like Mr. Iger of Disney and Ted Sarandos of Netflix, who are not used to managing by committee. The other alliance members are NBCUniversal, Apple, Warner Bros. Discovery, Amazon, Paramount Global and Sony Pictures. Ms. Lombardini advises them on a course of action, but they ultimately decide on a strategy and then she does their bidding.

In late July, for instance, some company leaders pressed Ms. Lombardini to reopen negotiations with the Writers Guild. (The two sides had not met since early May.) While not adamantly opposed, Ms. Lombardini expressed skepticism; she was not convinced that the Writers Guild was ready to soften its stance, according to two studio chiefs and one studio labor lawyer involved in the talks, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss private conversations. Ultimately, the companies directed her to [*re-engage with the writers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/02/business/media/writers-guild-hollywood-strike.html).

The subsequent talks have gone poorly, with the Writers Guild holding firm to demands related to staffing minimums in television writers’ rooms and transparency into streaming-service viewership, among others. Frustrated, studio leaders told Ms. Lombardini on Tuesday to [*release the details*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/23/business/media/hollywood-writers-strike-negotiations.html) of their sweetened proposal — which included higher wages, a pledge to share some viewership data and additional protections around the use of artificial intelligence — to the news media. It was essentially a strategy to go around the guild’s negotiating committee and appeal to rank-and-file members.

In a message to its 11,500 members on Thursday, the Writers Guild said it was “undeterred by this latest tactic.”

The Writers Guild declined to discuss Ms. Lombardini. Other unions did the same. (SAG-AFTRA, whose contract covers tens of thousands of movie and television actors, has not returned to the bargaining table in more than six weeks.) It appears, however, that union leaders have a grudging respect for her.

“She’s been around a long time, and she knows what she’s doing, and she commands a lot of respect as well,” Lindsay Dougherty, the lead Teamsters organizer in Hollywood, said in an [*interview*](https://deadline.com/2022/09/lindsay-dougherty-teamsters-local-399-interview-union-plans-1235118419/) with an entertainment trade news publication last year.

“I think she’s a fair individual,” Ms. Dougherty added. (Teamsters represent drivers, casting directors and animal handlers, among other Hollywood specialties.)

Ms. Lombardini, an avid Red Sox and Dodgers fan, had a ***working-class*** upbringing in Framingham, Mass., and was inspired to become a lawyer by reading articles about [*F. Lee Bailey*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/03/us/f-lee-bailey-dead.html), according to an associate. After getting a bachelor’s degree in Renaissance history from the University of Chicago and a law degree from Stanford, she started her career at law firms in Los Angeles, specializing in labor by happenstance after one firm moved her from its quiet trusts and estates department to its bustling labor one.

She has worked at the studio alliance since its creation in 1982 and is married to [*William Cole*](https://www.msk.com/attorneys-William_Cole#News), a prominent labor lawyer whose clients have often included studios.

“Carol has one of the most complicated jobs in Hollywood — and it’s growing even more so — but I think she clearly understands and appreciates the challenge,” said Barry M. Meyer, a former Warner Bros. chairman who worked closely with Ms. Lombardini. “It’s actually been an integral part of her life’s work.”

By all accounts, Ms. Lombardini knows various union contracts cold, which is no small feat; the most recent Writers Guild contract ran 740 pages. Ms. Lombardini is not a zealot in the negotiating room, according to union officials who have sat across the table from her, but she can be brusque and unyielding. In a letter to its members this month, the Writers Guild said Ms. Lombardini would not engage on certain topics. “Carol’s response — something she repeated three times during the meeting: ‘People just want to get back to work.’”

In the past, studio leaders have prized her efficiency. “Carol has done a very good job this past year,” Kevin Tsujihara, who was the Warner Bros. chairman, wrote in a 2014 email that was made public as part of the [*Sony Pictures hack*](https://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/31/business/media/sony-attack-first-a-nuisance-swiftly-grew-into-a-firestorm-.html), noting that she had recently concluded six negotiations.

“There was no public drama and all were concluded within parameters we had established,” [*Mr. Tsujihara wrote*](https://wikileaks.org/sony/emails/emailid/140307). He recommended a bonus of $365,000, or 30 percent of her salary, which he listed as $1.2 million.

The job has become much more difficult. For a start, the studio alliance’s relatively recent additions of Apple, Netflix and Amazon have made its priorities more varied and unwieldy than in the past. The unions have grown more aggressive. And bargaining issues — the rise of artificial intelligence, for instance, and its potential to disrupt the creative process — have become more complex.

“She has to unify the various views of the studios and get everyone to agree,” Mr. Ruthizer, the labor lawyer, said. “And then she has the other job of negotiating with the other side of the table.”

“The challenge now is greater than she’s ever seen,” he added. “It’s bigger than anybody has ever seen.”

PHOTO: Carol Lombardini in 2014. Until the two strikes this year, her tenure had been marked by labor peace. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MIKE WINDLE/GETTY IMAGES) (B3) This article appeared in print on page B1, B3.

**Load-Date:** August 28, 2023

**End of Document**



[***DeSantis Financial Disclosure Puts Him in the Millionaires Club***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68KH-V811-DXY4-X53P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 30, 2023 Friday 19:45 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 490 words

**Byline:** Nicholas Nehamas

**Highlight:** The Florida governor, who has spent almost his entire career in public service, made more than $1 million from his best-selling memoir.

**Body**

The Florida governor, who has spent almost his entire career in public service, made more than $1 million from his best-selling memoir.

Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida, who often speaks of his blue-collar roots, is now a millionaire, thanks to a $1.25 million book deal that he signed with HarperCollins in anticipation of his run for president.

Mr. DeSantis saw his net worth skyrocket to $1.17 million by the end of 2022, up from roughly $319,000 in 2021, according to a financial disclosure filed on Friday with the Florida Commission on Ethics. The governor’s memoir, “The Courage to Be Free,” was published in late February as a prelude to the presidential campaign he announced in May. It became a New York Times nonfiction best seller, with more than 94,000 copies [*sold*](https://www.cnbc.com/2023/03/10/desantis-memoir-sales-outpace-trump-pence-clinton-obama-books.html#:~:text=Ron%20DeSantis'%20new%20book%20sold,first%20week%2C%20according%20to%20BookScan.) in its first week. (Literary reviews were [*less kind*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/27/books/review/ron-desantis-book.html).)

Before declaring that he would run for president, Mr. DeSantis took a series of trips around the country to meet local Republicans and promote his book. “And so my book, I think it’s out there, just so you know, No. 1 book in America for nonfiction,” a smiling Mr. DeSantis said at one such stop in Iowa this spring. “There’s a lot of people that aren’t happy about that, I can tell you.”

Mr. DeSantis, a former congressman, had seen his personal wealth hold relatively steady in the years since he was first elected governor in 2018. At the end of that year, he reported his net worth at around $284,000.

As governor, Mr. DeSantis received an annual salary of $141,400.20 last year. Besides his salary and the book deal, he reported receiving no other income in 2022, according to his state financial disclosure. His assets included a USAA bank account with slightly more than $1 million, as well as a federal Thrift Savings Plan and a state retirement account. Mr. DeSantis, a Navy veteran, has spent almost all of his career in government service. His only liability is listed as nearly $19,000 in student loan debt.

Mr. DeSantis’s straightforward finances offer a contrast to the [*sprawling commercial empire*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/14/us/politics/trump-personal-financial-disclosure.html) of his main rival for the Republican nomination, Donald J. Trump, who is well ahead of Mr. DeSantis in national polls. Mr. Trump, whose father was a successful real estate developer, grew up wealthy.

On the campaign trail, Mr. DeSantis highlights his far humbler roots.

“I was a blue-collar kid growing up. My parents were ***working class***,” he told a crowd in North Carolina this month, adding that he had worked low-wage jobs to put himself through school.

“And I only did that because I believe in America,” Mr. DeSantis continued. “You work hard and you make the most of your God-given ability, you’re going to have the chance to do big things. And I wonder how many people believe that nowadays.”

PHOTO: Gov. Ron DeSantis, who spoke at a Moms for Liberty event in Philadelphia this week, reported a net worth of more than $1 million. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Haiyun Jiang for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** June 30, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Gilded-Age Mansion Wakes Up to a New Era***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69N1-49S1-DXY4-X3WX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 16, 2023 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2023 The New York Times Company

**Section:** Section C; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. 5

**Length:** 1006 words

**Byline:** By Eve M. Kahn

**Body**

The renovated Gilded Age mansion of beer makers in Newark is filled with surprises: a Black history from the 19th century that has been largely invisible.

Sumptuous gilded ornamentation still teems throughout the brick home of the Ballantine family of beer makers in Newark, built in 1885. But objects and artworks newly incorporated into the period rooms show how underappreciated strivers maneuvered in Newark society during the Ballantines' heyday.

The Ballantine House, long used as an annex to the adjacent Newark Museum of Art on Washington Street, is reopening to the public Nov. 17, after a two-year, $12 million restoration -- and rethink. The goal of the overhaul was ''to wake it up and shake it up,'' said Linda C. Harrison, the museum's director since 2019. The building, she added, was ''not forgotten but just not able to get the attention that it deserved.''

Amy Simon Hopwood, the museum's associate curator of decorative arts, who helped spearhead the new installations, said that visitors are encouraged to wonder, ''Who's doing the work to keep the room glittering?''

In the entrance hall, alongside a towering wooden mantelpiece carved with the family's ''B'' initial, paintings have been added that depict ***working-class*** Newark life. In an 1870s street scene, firefighters race to quench a blaze, in a carriage full of firefighting equipment steered by a Black driver named Lorenzo Dowd Trent. There are tableaus of Italian Americans celebrating a religious festival in the 1920s, and factory workers from the 1930s pouring molten metal. In an upstairs bedroom, a honey-colored Victorian bedstead has been updated with a red-and-white patchwork quilt, made in the 1930s for Dorothy O. Smith, New Jersey's first Black female podiatrist.

Headless mannequins, which the British-Nigerian artist Yinka Shonibare created for the museum in 2009, are feasting at the dining room table, piled with punchbowls and candelabra. Ballantine family heirlooms, newly scattered around the house, show signs of servants' grueling labor: dazzlingly polished silver vessels from Tiffany & Company, a crisply ironed pillowcase, a recipe book singed by a cooking pot and stained with grease.

An entire gallery has been devoted to the artist and historian Noelle Lorraine Williams's installation, ''Stay: The Black Women of 19th-Century Newark,'' part of an ongoing series called ''Black Power! 19th Century.''

Williams, a longtime Newark resident, has combed archives and online sources, including eBay, to research the Ballantine neighborhood's unsung residents and visitors. She has assembled portraits and documentation of the acclaimed soprano Marie Selika Williams; the teacher Ellen King, whose family home was an Underground Railroad station; the businesswoman and music teacher Sara O'Fake Evans; and the church leader Hannah Mandeville, who had been born enslaved. There are images of the 20th-century activist Louise Epperson; Eloise Spellman, a seamstress and mother of 11 killed by police or National Guard forces in 1967; and Sakia Gunn, a lesbian teenager murdered in 2003 in a hate crime a few blocks from the museum. (This fall a nearby street was named in Gunn's honor.)

Williams said that ''the long history of Blacks in Newark'' has been ''often invisible.'' The community was historically far larger, prosperous and accomplished than is commonly believed, ''helping to build this city,'' she added. Black women residents of the 19th century have gone particularly unnoticed, and few depictions of them had been known to exist. In ''Stay,'' she said, ''All of the images are hot off the press. This history is 'new' to most folks.''

John Ballantine, a second-generation beer maker, and his wife Jeannette commissioned the building from the architect George Edward Harney, who worked for various plutocrats including the Roebling family of bridgebuilders. Many of the construction workers were immigrants from Italy and Germany. In the family's 27 rooms, silks and velvets were draped along the windows, walls and furniture upholstery, and paneling and fireplaces were carved from a rainbow of wood types including mahogany and cherry. Tastemakers from Manhattan were brought in to add more eye-catchers; in the library's window by Louis Comfort Tiffany's team, a windblown blond maiden basks in rays from an opalescent sun.

After John Ballantine's death in 1895, Jeannette remained in the house with the couple's only surviving daughter, Alice Young, who raised her family there. (Four of John and Jeannette's eight children had died young of disease, and in 1905, one of their three surviving sons, Robert Ballantine, died by suicide at the house, after being blackmailed by a lover.)

In 1919, an insurance company acquired the building and adapted it gently into offices. The museum took over the property in 1937 and has been undertaking phase after phase of restoration and décor improvements. In the last two years, crews rebuilt crumbling exterior masonry, rotting window frames and leaky roof sections. They cleaned and repaired the interior; some of the damage was caused by curious visitors, picking at the dining room wallpaper.

The halls now echo with newly-recorded sounds of the Ballantine era: billiard balls thudding, teacups clinking, newspapers rustling, horses' hooves clopping on pavement, pianists practicing ragtime and classical music. Display cases have been filled with vintage glass vessels for Ballantine beer and bejeweled cigarette lighters manufactured in Newark.

Plans are afoot to open more parts of the house to the public. The treasures to be unveiled Friday amount to ''the launching pad of many future stories,'' Hopwood, the associate curator, said. A recurring question among her colleagues is, ''What can we look at with new eyes in our collection?''

The Ballantine House

Opens Nov. 17, 49 Washington Street, Newark, N.J., 973-596-6550; newarkmuseumart.org/exhibitionBallantine HouseReopens on Friday at 49 Washington Street in Newark; 973-596-6550, newarkmuseumart.org.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/15/arts/design/ballantine-house-newark-overhaul.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/15/arts/design/ballantine-house-newark-overhaul.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: The Ballantine House, top, part of the Newark Museum of Art, is reopening after a renovation that added context, such as Yinka Shonibare's ''Party Time: Re-Imagine America,'' above center, and Dmitri Wright's ''Black Couple in Bed Looking at TV,'' above left. Above right, ''The Rigger'' (1917) by Mahonri Mackintosh Young adorns a hallway. Top left, Linda C. Harrison is the museum's director. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRYAN ANSELM FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page C5.

**Load-Date:** November 16, 2023

**End of Document**



[***America's Monster***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C39-FHD1-JBG3-64RT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 23, 2024 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 5694 words

**Byline:** By Azam Ahmed, Matthieu Aikins and Bryan Denton

**Body**

How the United States backed kidnapping, torture and murder in Afghanistan.

The convoy rumbled into the Taliban heartland, a white desert littered with stones. Over the loudspeakers at the local mosque, the Afghan police officers ordered everyone to gather: The commander was here.

Dozens assembled in the mud square to listen as Abdul Raziq, one of America's most important partners in the war against the Taliban, stood before the crowd, gesturing at two prisoners he had brought along to make his point.

The prisoners knelt with their hands bound as Raziq spoke to his men. A pair of his officers raised their rifles and opened fire, sending the prisoners into spasms on the reddening earth. In the silence that followed, Raziq addressed the crowd, three witnesses said.

''You will learn to respect me and reject the Taliban,'' Raziq said after the killings, which took place in the winter of 2010, according to the witnesses and relatives of both men. ''Because I will come back and do this again and again, and no one is going to stop me.''

For years, American military leaders lionized Raziq as a model partner in Afghanistan, their ''if only'' ally in the battle against the Taliban: If only everyone fought like Raziq, we might actually win this war, American commanders often said.

He ruled over the crucial battleground of Kandahar during a period when the United States had more troops on the ground than in any other chapter of the war, ultimately rising to lieutenant general thanks to the backing of the United States. American generals cycling through Afghanistan made regular pilgrimages to visit him, praising his courage, his ferocious war fighting and the loyalty he commanded from his men, who were trained, armed and paid by the United States and its allies.

The Americans were by his side until the very end. When he was gunned down by an undercover Taliban assassin in 2018, he was walking next to the top American commander in Afghanistan, Gen. Austin S. Miller, who celebrated him as a ''great friend'' and ''patriot.''

But to countless Afghan civilians under his reign, Raziq was something else entirely: America's monster.

His battlefield prowess was built on years of torture, extrajudicial killings and the largest-known campaign of forced disappearances during America's 20-year war in Afghanistan, a New York Times investigation into thousands of cases during his rule found.

The Times obtained hundreds of pages of documents written by the former American-backed government, more than a decade's worth of hidden ledgers bearing clues to his campaign of abuse. He transformed the police into a fearsome combat force without constraints, and his officers abducted hundreds, if not thousands, of people to be killed or tortured in secret jails, The Times found. Most were never seen again.

The culture of lawlessness and impunity he created flew in the face of endless promises by American presidents, generals and ambassadors to uphold human rights and build a better Afghanistan.

And it helps explain why the United States lost the war.

For nearly two decades, the American public saw only part of the war in Afghanistan. Large parts of the country and its people were off limits to outsiders, impossible to chronicle fully during the fighting. Now that it's over, the Taliban are no longer planting roadside bombs, and many have swapped their AK-47s for three-ring binders and a stifling bureaucracy.

The Times spent more than a year visiting parts of Afghanistan that were once active battlefields, trying to figure out what really happened during America's longest war.

We interviewed many hundreds of people who said their fathers, husbands, sons and brothers had disappeared under Raziq, the police chief responsible for security across Kandahar Province, the birthplace of the Taliban. They saw his rule as little more than a brutal campaign against civilians, underwritten by the United States.

His acts not only discredited the American war effort -- breeding profound resentment that pushed people to support the Taliban -- but embodied it in many ways as well. Across Afghanistan, the United States elevated and empowered warlords, corrupt politicians and outright criminals to prosecute a war of military expediency in which the ends often justified the means.

The Taliban committed countless atrocities of their own against civilians, including suicide attacks, assassinations and kidnappings for ransom.

But it was a mistake to ''keep a really bad criminal because he was helpful in fighting worse criminals,'' said Gen. John R. Allen, who said he tried to limit cooperation with Raziq when he was overseeing coalition forces in the Afghan war from 2011 to 2013.

While Raziq's tactics worked in some respects, beating back the Taliban in Kandahar and earning him the admiration of many who opposed them, the strategy came at a clear cost. It stirred such enmity in parts of the population that the Taliban turned his cruelty into a recruiting tool, broadcasting it to attract new fighters. Many Afghans came to revile the American-backed government and everything it represented.

''None of us supported the Taliban, at least not at first,'' said Fazul Rahman, whose brother was abducted in front of witnesses during Raziq's reign. ''But when the government collapsed, I ran through the streets, rejoicing.''

Even some who cheered the ruthlessness Raziq wielded against his enemies lamented the broader corruption and criminality he helped enshrine, a key part of why the Afghan government collapsed in 2021. After his death, his commanders expanded their predation further, extorting ordinary people and stealing from their own men's wages and supplies.

''What they brought under the name of democracy was a system in the hands of a few mafia groups,'' said Qari Mohammad Mubarak, who ran a girls' school in Kandahar and initially supported the government. ''The people came to hate democracy.''

Many American commanders, diplomats and their allies in Afghanistan knew at the time they were bankrolling a war that strayed far outside international law.

''Sometimes we asked Raziq about incidents of alleged human rights abuses, and when we got answers we would be like, 'Whoa, I hope we didn't implicate ourselves in a war crime just by hearing about it,''' said Henry Ensher, a State Department official who held multiple posts on Afghanistan, including as the top civilian representative in Kandahar in 2010 and 2011, when he worked with Raziq.

''We knew what we were doing, but we didn't think we had a choice,'' Ensher said.

Most American leaders -- including more than a dozen interviewed by The Times -- said that Raziq had been seen as the only partner capable of beating back the Taliban in the heartland of the insurgency, where a pitched battle for dominance was underway.

''In the moment, we might have succeeded, but so what?'' Ensher said. ''The entire enterprise was flawed.''

Many Afghans say Raziq used the Americans and their military might to pursue a personal vendetta, taking vengeance against the rivals his tribe had been fighting for decades.

In interviews, many former senior American officials acknowledged that they never grasped that dynamic. It was a defining characteristic over a generation of combat -- how little the United States understood about the war it was waging.

The United Nations, human rights groups and news outlets raised serious concerns about Raziq and his forces, but independent investigations were limited, especially with the region so impenetrable during the war.

To determine the extent of the abuses, The Times combed through more than 50,000 handwritten complaints that had been scrawled into the Kandahar governor's ledgers from 2011 through the end of the war in 2021. In them, we found the rudimentary details of almost 2,200 cases of suspected disappearances.

From there, we went to hundreds of homes across Kandahar and tracked down nearly 1,000 people who said their loved ones had disappeared, been killed or been taken by government security forces.

All together, The Times collected detailed evidence of 368 cases of forced disappearances and dozens of extrajudicial killings attributed to American-backed forces in Kandahar. We counted only cases that were corroborated by at least two people, many of them eyewitnesses to the abductions, and they were often documented with police reports, affidavits and other government records as well.

In all of the cases of forced disappearances, the person is still missing.

These figures are almost certainly a gross undercount of the atrocities during Raziq's reign. We could not canvas all of Kandahar, home to more than a million people. And the more than 2,000 suspected cases we found in the government's ledgers were most likely just an inkling of what really happened. Most of the families we interviewed had never formally reported their loved ones missing, out of fear of retribution or the danger of traveling during the war.

Beyond that, the police destroyed many of their records as the Taliban reached the outskirts of Kandahar City in 2021, former senior officials said. The exact number who were abducted and never seen again may be impossible to know.

What is clear, however, is who was responsible: Only the American-backed government consistently engaged in forced disappearances in Kandahar, former officials, combatants and families of the victims said.

''The Taliban didn't need to disappear people -- they just killed them where they found them,'' said Hasti Mohammad, a former government official in charge of the Panjwai district in Kandahar. ''The government disappeared people because what they were doing was illegal. They were hiding from the law.''

The cases confirmed by The Times amount to the largest campaign of forced disappearances in Afghanistan since tens of thousands went missing after the Soviet-backed communist coup in 1978, an assessment of previous atrocities shows.

As the victims mourned their loved ones, they confronted their own powerlessness. Raziq was untouchable, thanks to the ironclad support of the United States and its NATO allies.

''We would ask ourselves: 'Are we creating something here that we may regret later?''' said Col. Robert Waltemeyer, a former Special Forces officer who worked with Raziq.

But there was no one better at fighting the Taliban, he said, adding that he never witnessed Raziq do anything illegal. When the United States sent tens of thousands of American soldiers to Afghanistan during the so-called surge announced in 2009, hoping to wrest control of the south, Raziq was central to the effort.

''He was probably the most important person in the entire surge,'' Waltemeyer said.

The United States pushed for Raziq to lead the police forces who fought alongside American troops, he said, because ''he showed up, and his troops showed up, to fight, not just to watch the Americans fight.''

In effect, Waltemeyer said, ''We created Raziq.''

''You look at every U.S. war and it's the same,'' he said. ''We create regrets.''

'Abdul Raziq's work'

Fazul Rahman raced to the grease-stained motorcycle shop the moment he got the call: His brother, a mechanic, had just been kidnapped.

In a panic, the shop workers told him that three men in civilian clothes had pulled up in an unmarked Toyota Corolla on the morning of Sept. 3, 2016, asking his brother to take a look at a generator in the trunk.

Then, in full view of a crowd of onlookers, they said, the men wrestled Fazul's brother, Ahmad, 28, into the car and sped away.

To Fazul and everyone else present, the culprits were obvious: the police. Under Raziq, Kandahar's security forces had become notorious for snatching anyone they suspected of working with Taliban insurgents. Many simply disappeared. Others turned up as mutilated corpses, discarded in the streets. A lucky few were released alive, bearing wounds and accounts of torture.

Some of the missing were, in fact, Taliban, their families said. Others, their relatives insisted, were not. Many were simply part of the ***working class***: mechanics, tailors and taxi drivers who had nothing to do with the war, their families said.

Desperate to find his brother, Fazul gathered elders and hurried to the local police station. The officers denied arresting his brother, so he headed to the palace of the American-backed governor, joining the line to submit complaints.

The handwritten government ledgers reviewed by The Times show his plea: Volume 4 from 2016, Entry No. 591 -- Ahmad, son of Abdur Rahman.

There were thousands of families just like his, all with the same burning question. What had the government done with their loved ones?

After filing his complaint, Fazul worried. What would happen if he pushed too hard? The police were abducting and disappearing people on mere suspicions, never mind someone openly accusing them of kidnapping.

''The police were getting angry,'' he said. ''They'd beat us and say, 'Why do you keep coming?'''

Still, another force, more potent than fear, was driving him: his mother, Malika.

Women were rarely seen or heard making public demands in conservative Afghanistan, especially in the south. But Fazul and Ahmad were all their mother had; their father had died of cancer more than 20 years earlier, leaving her to raise them on her own.

''For months, from morning to night, I went from the police to the governor's offices and waited for someone to see me,'' she said.

Outside the offices, scribes charged a small fee to write out complaints for people who, like Fazul and his mother, were illiterate. Many of the petitions were in Malika's name, and the family provided copies of them to The Times.

''Please help find and release my innocent son,'' one said. It carried the signatures of 11 local elders, all attesting that her son was not in the Taliban.

Soon, Fazul and his mother got to know other families searching for missing people. Having a relative arrested on suspicion of being an insurgent tarred them with the same brush. But the presence of women gave them some license to make demands.

Aliyah's son, Salahuddin, a rickshaw driver, had been snatched from outside his home as he walked to the mosque.

''There was nowhere that I wouldn't go to find my son,'' Aliyah said. ''But we had no idea whether he was dead or alive.''

A third man, Daud, had been taken in 2015. With no immediate family to look for him, a neighbor, Seema, became his advocate.

Frustrated by how often the families returned, an employee at the governor's palace told Fazul to put together a list of the missing. A scribe helped Fazul take down the names in his impromptu group: 17 families, at first.

The list, scribbled on a sheet of plain white paper, was soon expanded, passed around, photocopied and texted.

Like Ahmad, many of the victims had been grabbed off the streets or from workplaces by armed men in plainclothes in front of witnesses. Some had simply vanished, like Abdul Wahid, whose brother, a butcher, last saw him when he sent him home with some meat for dinner. Others, like Habib Rahman, had been arrested by uniformed officers while out with friends.

Their relatives clung to the hope that they might still be alive in one of the many unofficial detention sites, often called ''private prisons,'' maintained by Raziq's forces.

The families went to the Red Cross to study photos of unidentified bodies that had been collected and buried, and then to the morgue to see the newly discovered corpses. Some had been suffocated, shot in the head or dumped with their hands still tied.

The group paid bribes to find answers. Most had already shelled out money to unscrupulous police officers, to no avail. Then, in late 2016, a break: One of their missing was returned, finally offering a clear account of what was happening to their loved ones.

Nisar Ahmad, 23, had been abducted a month earlier, not long after a bomb attack targeting one of Raziq's commanders left the area on edge. Two men in plainclothes took him at gunpoint.

Inside a shipping container, a group of men, some in police uniform, took turns beating him, he said. They stuffed a plastic bag into his mouth and poured water over his face, nearly suffocating him. Most shamefully, he said, they twisted his genitals, permanently damaging them.

The police told him to make a confession, and recorded it, he said: ''After I confessed, they didn't torture me anymore.''

That night, he was blindfolded and driven to another location. Through a barred window, he saw a spindly mountaintop and the green, red and black flag of Afghanistan, he said. (A former police detective said the site appeared to be the District 9 station in Kandahar City.)

Eventually, Nisar's father, Mohammad Fazluddin, received a phone call from a police officer, he said, demanding the equivalent of $900 -- a staggering amount -- to release his son. Mohammad agreed, dropping off the money at an auto repair shop as instructed, and his son was let go, he said.

''It's a miracle,'' he said, taking the release as a sign that the police knew his son was innocent.

In private, the families said, some of the police acknowledged they had taken their loved ones. So, Fazul and the others buttonholed every official possible.

They insisted there was nothing they could do, he said.

''They all knew exactly what was happening,'' Fazul said. ''They said: 'We have nothing to do with this. This is Abdul Raziq's work.'''

Finally, Fazul got a meeting with the governor of Kandahar. The mothers joined more than a dozen men to plead and scold for the missing on their list.

Malika, Fazul's mother, was furious, accusing the officials of corruption and cowardice, of robbing her of the most precious thing in life. At one point, they recalled, the governor's guards warned her not to speak so bluntly.

''You people have taken my son,'' she responded, looking at the governor, people in the room recalled. ''If you want to kill me, then kill me, but I won't hold my tongue.''

The hectoring paid off. Their list landed on the desk of Raziq himself.

He summoned them for a meeting.

The other war

Disappearances were hardly new in Kandahar, a place ravaged by more than four decades of war. Even Raziq had lost someone.

His father had been a driver, often going to the border with Pakistan. One day, while Raziq was still a boy, his father disappeared on a routine trip, vanishing in the vast desert.

His family, members of the Achakzai tribe, blamed their longtime rivals: the Noorzai. The two tribes had been locked in a deadly feud that stretched back decades, long before the Taliban came to power.

''He was killed because he was Achakzai,'' Tadin Khan, Raziq's younger brother, told The Times. ''His body disappeared.''

Raziq went on to author the most brutal campaign of enforced disappearances in his country in decades. And it often targeted this rival tribe, the Noorzai, many of whom supported the Taliban.

That is something the Americans generally failed to understand: A tribal and family dynamic, not just a hatred of the Taliban, animated Raziq's war. In fact, the cluster of villages where Raziq summoned the crowd, killed the two prisoners and then threatened the onlookers was mostly made up of Noorzai.

''He killed them like dogs,'' said Haji Dilbar, a villager who described being in the crowd that Raziq had assembled to witness the killings.

As his friends tell it, Raziq first picked up a gun as a teenager, fighting under his uncle during the civil war that came after the collapse of the Soviet-backed government. In 1994, his uncle was killed by the Taliban, who hanged his body from the barrel of a tank.

When the U.S. invasion began in 2001, Raziq started fighting on the American side, joining a militia to clear the Taliban out of Kandahar. Later, those same forces became the border police and served under Raziq, still in his 20s at the time.

Largely illiterate, he compensated with his intelligence and charisma, distinguishing himself as a fearless fighter who knew the deserts straddling the border, as his father did.

By 2010, as the Taliban gained ground across the south, Raziq had held back the insurgents in the areas around his home district, called Spin Boldak. American commanders knew he was corrupt, running a mafia-style racket on trade across the border. He was suspected of being involved in the poppy trade.

Allegations of extrajudicial killings also dogged Raziq for years, dating back to the early days of the American-backed government. Noorzai elders said they had complained of murders to American military officials, but were ignored.

Lt. Col. Andrew Green, who worked closely with Raziq in 2010 and 2011, said that confirming the allegations had been impossible because the events happened deep in Taliban territory.

Moreover, he said, law enforcement in Afghanistan was barely functional. The courts were corrupt, and most people could pay their way out of jail, leaving the police with few options.

''In Afghanistan, the police shoot people,'' he said. ''While you can't say it's a good thing, it's sort of what is done.''

The worries about Raziq spread. A State Department report documented a 2006 episode in which he executed 16 men he accused of being Taliban. In 2009, he was accused of torture and keeping private prisons by the Afghan human rights commission.

The so-called surge became a major turning point for him. In 2009, hoping to beat back a resurgent Taliban, President Barack Obama announced that he would send thousands of additional troops to Afghanistan, focusing on Kandahar and Helmand Provinces, two Taliban strongholds.

The Americans wanted a partner who was unafraid to confront the Taliban head-on, like Raziq. Yet they were also debating what to do about ''bad actors'' who undermined the legitimacy of the Afghan government, also like Raziq.

''There were lots of conversations about whether we should mentor Raziq or imprison him,'' recalled Green, the American officer, who had investigated him for other issues, including graft.

The Americans chose the former. They needed him.

After the police chief of Kandahar was assassinated in 2011, Raziq was given the job. He became a general and appointed commanders from his Achakzai tribe to key positions in Kandahar.

United Nations investigators called four of them -- three of whom were his relatives -- the ''four horsemen'' for the many allegations of torture and extrajudicial killings against them. One of them, a Raziq family member, was responsible for organizing death squads, according to police officers who worked with him. His men roved the city in unmarked cars, wearing plainclothes.

Deeming the court system corrupt, Raziq ordered his commanders to kill suspected Taliban, former officers and officials said. Those who refused to kill captives were dismissed.

''He told me: 'Why are you bringing these Taliban to the station? Why aren't you killing them? What are you afraid of?''' said one former city district chief who, like some others, spoke on the condition of anonymity out of fear of retribution.

The victims were taken for a ''sand picnic'' and dumped in remote areas, down wells or where the shifting desert sands would cover them, according to former police officers and internal United Nations reports.

One senior police officer said he had complained to Raziq about finding bodies dumped in his district.

''I told him, 'They're in my area; it's going to be blamed on me,''' the officer said. He recalled Raziq laughing before agreeing to tell his men to be more careful.

A 2013 United Nations report noted a surge in unidentified bodies, some still handcuffed, dumped in Kandahar City and dozens of reported disappearances, citing the ''increased level of brutality'' and torture under Raziq.

Within two months of his appointment as police chief, the Americans stopped transferring detainees to Afghan security forces in Kandahar because of reports of abuses and executions.

''I pulled the intel on the guy and it was pretty horrific,'' Allen, the American general, said.

Still, American support continued to flow to Raziq, who was popular with U.S. officers and considered vital to winning the war.

While Col. Bill Carty, the head of U.S. Special Forces in Kandahar, was visiting Raziq in 2012, a suicide bomber struck. Carty threw himself on top of Raziq to shield him, and then gave the general his own body armor to wear, according to an account Carty gave in the book, ''One Hundred Victories,'' and confirmed to The Times.

''Why did you give me your vest?'' Raziq asked.

''There are thousands of me,'' Carty recalled replying, emphasizing the importance of Raziq's role as police chief. ''But there is only one of you.''

Guests of the general

At his headquarters, Raziq greeted Fazul and the other family members in his white civilian robes. Because he couldn't read, his secretary said aloud the names on the list Fazul had provided for him.

Getting the meeting was no easy feat. By then, the Taliban had made so many attempts on the general's life that he joked to friends that he had lost count.

But in person, Raziq was polite, several of the attendees recalled, and allowed each of them to speak their minds. When everyone finished, the general spoke.

He did not trust the courts, the families recounted him saying. The judges let criminals go free, the prosecutors were ineffective, and justice could always be bought for a price. He preferred to administer his own justice.

He spoke to a few family members directly, including Shah Mohammad, whose brother, Neda, was on Fazul's list. The general told him that Neda had been involved in the murder of police officers, an accusation he struggled to believe; Neda sold vegetables from a pushcart in the market.

Before the meeting ended, the general turned to Seema, whose adoptive son Daud had disappeared months earlier. He would be returned, the general said without explanation.

Not long after, Daud was set free.

After getting out, Daud told the families how he had been kept in a dark cell for months at an unofficial detention site. He was beaten and abused regularly, until, after the general's intervention, he was transferred to a formal prison before being let go. He told the others that he had not seen any of their loved ones.

Still, a painful wave of hope washed over the families. They began to dream that, perhaps, their children might still be alive. But that is the problem with hope, and not knowing: Without the closure of death, they could never properly grieve.

For the perpetrators, disappearances carry a cruel logic. Though they can be crimes against humanity, there is little evidence without a body, especially when someone is snatched without witnesses or by officers in civilian clothes and cars.

Yet the disappearances inflicted unique wounds for many Afghans. Often, wives were told they could not remarry until their husbands were proved dead. Some with young children were left unable to support themselves.

''What General Raziq did in terms of killing and disappearing was worse than everything else that happened in the rest of Afghanistan,'' said Sayed Abdul Karim, the father of one of the young men on Fazul's list. ''I wish that we could bury his bones somewhere. If we had a grave, we could go there and pray.''

The cruelty bred other cruelties, like the cottage industry of hustlers that emerged to take advantage of parents' desperation. Fazul and his mother fell victim to a scam, traveling to Kabul to pay an intelligence official several thousand dollars for Ahmad's return, a trip that nearly ended with Fazul himself getting kidnapped. Others paid more.

Some decided their families should be joined by more than tragedy alone. Fazul's cousin married the son of the missing rickshaw driver, Salahuddin.

He had been gone so long that, by then, his son was of marrying age.

The insurgents rise

The shock came on Oct. 18, 2018: Raziq was gunned down by a Taliban assassin who had infiltrated the governor's guards.

The Taliban crowed.

They had long used Raziq's brutality to recruit fighters and whip up anger in videos and pamphlets that showcased his abuses.

But his death allowed the insurgents to broadcast their ability to kill even the most protected commanders -- one who was walking just paces away from Miller, the top American commander in Afghanistan, at the time of his death.

The Taliban said they had chosen to target Raziq over anyone else at the meeting, including the American four-star general, who escaped injury.

''He was more important to us than Scott Miller,'' said Maulavi Ebrar Ahmad Habib, a Taliban commander who oversaw assassinations in Kandahar during those years.

Fazul and the others hoped things would change with Raziq's death. For the most part, nothing did.

Raziq's brother, Tadin, took over as police chief of Kandahar. He told The Times that neither he nor his brother had waged campaigns of forced disappearances. Officials said he simply continued the system his brother had built.

When the war began, Fazul and the others imagined the Americans would bring investment and opportunity. They envisioned good jobs, better homes, prosperity. But their good will evaporated quickly as their loved ones disappeared.

It was not that everyone embraced the Taliban, residents said; they just came to detest the Afghan government and the Americans who propped it up.

That erosion of support -- not just among the families of the missing, but also among many Afghans disenchanted by the broader corruption and unchecked abuses of the Americans and their Afghan partners -- was part of the collapse of Kandahar, as it was elsewhere in the country.

The impunity and criminality that Raziq fostered metastasized after his death, eating away at Kandahar from within. As the Taliban grew stronger, wage and supply theft within government forces devastated morale, as did infighting among his commanders, paralyzing their ability to fight.

Fazul's group prayed for an insurgent victory, clinging to the hope that once the government was toppled, they might discover what had become of their relatives.

And once the United States withdrew from Afghanistan, leading to the collapse of the Afghan government in 2021, the Taliban went from prison to prison, emptying cells.

Thousands of people from across the province flooded into Kandahar City. Fazul heard that hundreds of prisoners had been extracted from the basement of the police headquarters. Huge crowds gathered outside of the governor's compound, jostling for a look at those who exited.

Fazul joined them, racing downtown to scour public facilities. Having no luck in Kandahar City, he and others descended on Spin Boldak, where Raziq got his start. Hundreds waited there, too, scanning the crowds for their missing loved ones. Fazul counted the people freed from unofficial detention sites. His brother wasn't one of them.

Rohullah Akhunzada, who was part of Fazul's group, looked for his own brother in a basement prison, its dank, low ceilings a harrowing indication of what so many Afghans had been forced to endure. He found no sign of him.

''We still don't know,'' he said.

Having looked everywhere, another of Fazul's compatriots, Fazl Raheem, approached the Taliban to ask for news of his brother.

The Taliban told him that all of the prisons had been emptied. Everyone still alive is already with their families, he recalled them saying.

The crowds drifted, hoping for one more place their loved ones could materialize. Many went to the crowded bus station in Kandahar City to scan the prisoners returning from Bagram Air Base, where the Americans, and later the Afghans, had kept thousands of detainees.

The urgency and desperation rose like a fever. So, too, did the familiar despondence when Fazul's brother was nowhere to be found.

A legacy ignored

Since the collapse, mass graves have turned up in Kandahar, prompting renewed searches from relatives who show up at desert sites and hospital morgues, or share photographs of skeletal remains. But there is no organized search for the missing in Kandahar.

After years of pressure from the United States, prosecutors at the International Criminal Court have said they are de-prioritizing investigations into abuses committed by American-backed forces. The United Nations has focused on abuses carried out by the new Taliban government, accusing it of its own campaign of extrajudicial killings and torture.

The Times sued the American government for its files on Raziq. Nearly a year later, the military and the State Department have turned over only a handful of documents. Few military leaders from that era had any interest in revisiting his legacy, and what it reveals about the American war effort.

''The reason you have insurgencies is because of injustice, and Raziq represented the very worst,'' said Allen, the American general. He added: ''Raziq created the very injustice that gave the Taliban its edge on us.''

To commemorate Raziq, the former Afghan government had begun erecting a mausoleum for him, a giant, mosque-like structure beside the governor's palace, a memorial fit for a national hero. Many see him that way, as a champion of those who oppose the Taliban.

Rather than destroy it, the Taliban have surrounded the edifice with concrete blast walls, careful not to antagonize the large swathe of the population that still reveres the general. It is blocked but visible, its dome and minarets peeking over the barrier.

There are no monuments to the missing. Of the 17 people on his original list, Fazul knows of only three who came home alive.

''I still have hope that he will return, even though I know he is probably dead,'' said Malika, Fazul and Ahmad's mother. ''My tears have not dried since he disappeared.''

Abdul Nafi and Shir Ali Farhad contributed reporting from Kandahar. Produced by Sean Catangui, Leo Dominguez and Rumsey Taylor.Abdul Nafi and Shir Ali Farhad contributed reporting from Kandahar. Produced by Sean Catangui, Leo Dominguez and Rumsey Taylor.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/22/world/asia/afghanistan-abdul-raziq.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/22/world/asia/afghanistan-abdul-raziq.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: When the U.S. pulled out of Afghanistan, it left secrets in the desert. The New York Times identified hundreds of civilians abducted in the largest campaign of forced disappearances of the war. It all led back to one man. (A1)

The Missing: The New York Times documented 368 cases of forced disappearances and dozens of extrajudicial killings attributed by families, witnesses and official records to Americanbacked forces under General Raziq. The actual toll is most likely far higher. The Times only logged cases that were corroborated by at least two people. Many of the families who had reported missing loved ones were impossible to locate, and many others never filed complaints.

Abdul Raziq, one of America's most important partners in the war against the Taliban for years, at his home in Kandahar City in 2015.

The grave of a man killed at a checkpoint in Boldak, Kandahar Province, set up by the Afghan Border Police, whose forces began as a militia. (A8)

Top, the repair shop in Kandahar City where Ahmad Rahman was abducted in 2016. Above, his brother Fazul Rahman last year. He was nearly kidnapped himself in an attempt to find Ahmad. (A9)

Top, the missing-person complaint paperwork and passport pictures for Salahuddin, a rickshaw driver who disappeared in 2016. Above, Aliyah and Ghawsudin, Salahuddin's mother and brother. (A10)

A mausoleum in the center of Kandahar that the former Afghan government built to commemorate Raziq. The Taliban encased it in blast walls. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRYAN DENTON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A11) This article appeared in print on page A1, A8, A9, A10, A11.

**Load-Date:** May 23, 2024

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[***The Spirit of '45***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67T0-2SV1-DXY4-X55P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 17, 2023 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; Movies, Performing Arts/Weekend Desk; Pg. 8

**Length:** 347 words

**Byline:** By Ben Kenigsberg

**Body**

A documentary from Ken Loach sees the end of World War II as a brief moment of possibility for socialism in Britain.

''The Spirit of '45'' is, atypically, a documentary from Ken Loach, whose tireless chronicles of Britain's ***working class*** (''Kes,'' ''Sorry We Missed You'') have generally been dramas.

It is also not new. The documentary had its premiere at the Berlin International Film Festival in 2013 and opened in Britain shortly after that. Released for the first time in the United States, it is relevant in a perennial sense but somewhat dated. The people interviewed in this movie could not know that their despised Tories would still hold power today. (The 2016 Brexit vote -- indeed, any mention of the European Union -- is also conspicuous by its absence.)

[Video: Watch on YouTube.]

The film's central idea is that Britain had reached a rare moment of possibility after World War II and the general election of 1945, when the Labour leader Clement Attlee became prime minister with an avowedly socialist agenda. Loach charts the nationalization of Britain's health service, transportation sectors and coal mines. Britons who remember the changes share stories of how those shifts and new plans for quality housing almost universally improved their lives (although there is mention of some missed opportunities with the mines). ''The Spirit of '45'' then flashes forward to show how the conservative prime minister Margaret Thatcher and her successors rolled those policies back.

As in much of his recent fiction work (including the Palme d'Or-winning ''I, Daniel Blake''), Loach largely ignores counterarguments. Even viewers sympathetic to his politics may roll their eyes at how infrequently the film acknowledges trade-offs and price tags, except when the costs relate to the inefficiencies of privatization. There is a powerful historical case to be made here, but it requires engaging with nuance, not merely expressing conviction.

The Spirit of '45Not rated. Running time: 1 hour 34 minutes. In theaters.Not rated. Running time: 1 hour 34 minutes. In theaters.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/16/movies/the-spirit-of-45-review.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/16/movies/the-spirit-of-45-review.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page C8.

**Load-Date:** March 17, 2023

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[***The Democrats Are Their Own Worst Enemies***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69J7-BBR1-JBG3-6028-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 3, 2023 Friday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2023 The New York Times Company

**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 21; PAMELA PAUL

**Length:** 987 words

**Byline:** By Pamela Paul

**Body**

This should be the Democratic Party's moment. Donald Trump's stranglehold has lurched the G.O.P. toward the fringe. Republican congressional behavior echoes that of an intemperate toddler and the party's intellectual and ideological foundations have become completely unmoored.

But far from dominant, the Democratic Party seems disconnected from the priorities, needs and values of many Americans.

Current polls show a 2024 rematch between Trump and Joe Biden too close for true comfort; the same is true should Nikki Haley or Ron DeSantis be the Republican nominee. Many constituents who were once the Democratic Party's reliable base -- the ***working class***, middle-class families, even Black and Latino Americans and other ethnic minorities -- have veered toward the G.O.P. In a development that has baffled Democrats, a greater share of those groups voted for Republican candidates in recent elections.

Something worrisome has happened to the party of the people.

This worry isn't entirely new. In 2004, Thomas Frank's book asked, ''What's the Matter With Kansas?'' Why, Frank wondered, did working- and middle-class Americans vote Republican when Democratic policies were more attuned to their needs?

The question to ask now is: Why isn't the Democratic Party serving their needs either?

John B. Judis and Ruy Teixeira, authors of 2002's hugely influential ''The Emerging Democratic Majority,'' might seem like the last people to have an answer, given that book's failed prophecy that America would be majority Democratic by 2010 given shifts in the electorate and the population.

But in ''Where Have All the Democrats Gone?'' they give a pretty persuasive explanation -- one that should be read as a warning.

If the answer to Frank's question was that cultural issues can trump issues of class in ways that favor Republicans, Judis's and Teixeira's answer looks doubly troubling to Democrats: Not only is the Democratic Party increasingly failing in matters of culture (despite its strength on abortion rights), it's also seen as failing in matters of class. In a country that has become more overtly populist in its values and needs, Democrats are the ones who look like the party of out-of-touch elitists.

''We've had this peculiar situation where the reigning power in the Democratic Party has been between progressive social organizations and the neoliberal business elite,'' Judis told me when I spoke to him last week. The majority of Americans are feeling left behind.

This bodes ill for Democrats. As he and Teixeira write in the book, ''The Democratic Party has had its greatest success when it sought to represent the common man and woman against the rich and powerful, the people against the elite and the plebeians against the patricians.''

When it comes to economics, the authors say, Democrats have too often pursued the interests of their own elites and donors. Since the 1990s, the party has pursued policies that worsen the economic plight of Americans who are not well off. President Bill Clinton, for example, supported NAFTA and China's entry into the World Trade Organization, which undermined American manufacturing; the administration also endorsed the Banking Act of 1999, which accelerated the financialization of the American economy. While Barack Obama conveyed a populist message on the campaign trail, as president, they say, he became captive to neoliberal Washington.

Much of the Democratic Party's agenda has been set by what Judis and Teixeira call the ''shadow party,'' a mix of donors from Wall Street, Hollywood and Silicon Valley, wealthy foundations, activist groups, the media, lobbyists and scholars.

Democratic leaders seem too willing to settle for a kind of cheap progressivism -- a carbon-neutral, virtue-signaling, box-checking update on what was once called limousine liberalism. But the Democratic Party cannot win and America cannot flourish if it doesn't prioritize the economic well-being of the American majority over the financial interests and cultural fixations of an elite minority.

Biden has curtailed some of its shadow party's economic agenda -- but less so its cultural and social policies. There, Judis and Teixeira argue, the party seems bent on imposing a narrow progressive stance on issues like race, ''sexual creationism'' (commonly known as gender ideology), immigration and climate, at the expense of more broadly shared beliefs within the electorate.

The moral values may differ at each extreme of the two parties, but their efforts to moralize can sound an awful lot alike to many Americans. Even though Democrats themselves are adopting ''a pretty aggressive way to change the culture,'' Teixeira told me, the Democratic Party acts as if anyone who reacts against the assumptions of its progressive wing is completely off base.

''There's a certain amount of chutzpah among Democrats to assume that it's only the other side pursuing a culture war,'' he said.

For too long, the Democratic Party depended on shifting demographics to shore up its side. Then it relied on the horror show of the G.O.P. to scare people onto its side. Both have been an effective and damaging distraction. As Judis and Teixeira put it, Democrats ''need to look in the mirror and examine the extent to which their own failures contributed to the rise of the most toxic tendencies on the political right.''

We can no longer afford to avoid the hard truths. If the Democratic Party doesn't focus on what it can deliver to more Americans, it won't have to wonder anymore where all the Democrats went.

Source images by John McKeen and phanasitti/Getty Images.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/02/opinion/democrats-elite-judis-teixeira.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/02/opinion/democrats-elite-judis-teixeira.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY SAM WHITNEY/THE NEW YORK TIMES

JOHN MCKEEN AND PHANASITTI/GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page A21.

**Load-Date:** November 3, 2023

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[***Trump Doesn’t Actually Speak for the Silent Majority; Jamelle Bouie***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B1Y-2TH1-DXY4-X01V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 6, 2024 Saturday 09:10 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1366 words

**Highlight:** 2016 is not the only election that matters.

**Body**

I can’t fit everything that I think into a single piece, especially when I’m writing on deadline. My column this week, for example, was on the effort to disqualify Trump from the 2024 ballot using Section 3 of the 14th Amendment. Although the piece is not exactly brief, it’s by no means exhaustive of my thoughts on the matter.

There was one point in particular that I couldn’t quite fit into the flow. It concerns an assumption that, in my view, undergirds much of the discourse around Trump and his voters.

It’s for good reason that the results of the 2016 presidential race shocked, surprised and unsettled many millions of Americans, including the small class of people who write about and interpret politics for a living. There was a strong sense, in the immediate aftermath of the election, that journalists were woefully out of touch with the people at large. Otherwise, they would not have missed the groundswell of support for Trump.

One inadvertent consequence of this understandable bout of introspection was, I think, to validate Trump’s claim that he spoke for a silent majority of forgotten Americans. It was easy enough to look at the new president’s political coalition — disproportionately blue-collar and drawn almost entirely from the demographic majority of the country — and conclude that this was basically correct. And even if it wasn’t, the image of the blue-collar (although not necessarily ***working-class***) white man or white woman has been, for as long as any of us have been alive, a synecdoche for the “ordinary American” or the “Middle American” or the “average American.”

You may remember the constant discussion, while Trump was in office, over the effect his chaos and corruption might have on voters. Would they care? Where this “they” often meant the blue-collar voters associated with Trump’s victory. And if they didn’t care, could we say with any confidence that the American people cared?

They did!

What’s been lost — or if not lost then obscured — in the constant attention to Trump’s voters, supporters and followers is that the overall American electorate is consistently anti-MAGA. Trump lost the popular vote in 2016. The MAGA-fied Republican Party lost the House of Representatives in 2018. Trump lost the White House and the Republican Party lost the Senate in 2020. In 2022, Trump-like or Trump-lite candidates lost competitive statewide elections in Georgia, Nevada, Arizona and Pennsylvania. Republicans vastly underperformed expectations in the House, winning back the chamber with a razor-thin margin, and Democrats secured governorships in Kansas, Michigan and Wisconsin, among other states. Democrats overperformed again the following year, in Kentucky and Virginia.

“Since 2016,” wrote Michael Podhorzer, a former political director for the A.F.L.-C.I.O., [*in a post for his newsletter last summer*](https://www.weekendreading.net/p/the-emerging-anti-maga-majority), “Republicans have lost 23 of the 27 elections in the five states everyone agrees Democratic hopes in the Electoral College and the Senate depend on.”

He continues:

When Trump was sworn in, Republicans held four of those five states’ governorships, and six of the ten Senate seats. Moreover, Republicans defied history by losing nearly across the board in those states last year, the only time anything like that has happened to a Party running against such an unpopular president in a midterm.

Too many commentators have spent too much time fretting over Trump’s voters — and how they might react to the effort to remove the former president from the ballot — and not enough time thinking about the tens of millions of voters who have said, again and again, that they do not want this man or his movement in American politics.

Because 2016 was not the only election that mattered. Trump’s voters are not the only ones who count. There’s been no shortage of critics of the disqualification effort who have asked us to consider the consequences for American democracy if Trump’s supporters believe he was cheated out of a chance to run for president a third time. It’s a fair point. But I think we should also consider the consequences for American democracy if the nation’s anti-MAGA majority comes to believe, with good reason, that the rules — and the Constitution — don’t apply to Trump.

What I Wrote

I’m back from break with [*a single column*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/05/opinion/trump-insurrections-disqualification-14th-amendment.html) — an essay, really — on why it is not anti-democratic, or even all that objectionable, to disqualify Donald Trump from the ballot under Section 3 of the 14th Amendment.

What unites Trump with the former secessionists under the disqualification clause is that like them, he refused to listen to the voice of the voting public. He rejected the bedrock principle of democratic life, the peaceful transfer of power.

And in [*the latest episode*](https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/crimson-tide-feat-tony-gilroy/id1592411580?i=1000640161017) of my podcast with John Ganz, we were joined by the writer-director Tony Gilroy to discuss “Crimson Tide.”

Now Reading

[*Elizabeth Anderson*](https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/the-struggle-for-meaningful-work/) on work for Dissent.

[*Michael Meltsner*](https://prospect.org/justice/2024-01-02-election-lawsuit-14th-amendment-trump/) on Section 2 of the 14th Amendment for The American Prospect.

[*Moeko Fujii*](https://www.nybooks.com/online/2023/12/31/songs-of-convenience/) on Yasujiro Ozu for The New York Review of Books.

[*Andrea Brady*](https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v46/n01/andrea-brady/victory-by-simile) on Phillis Wheatley for The London Review of Books.

[*Loic Wacquant*](https://newleftreview.org/issues/ii144/articles/loic-wacquant-afropessimism-s-radical-abdication) on Afropessimism for New Left Review.

Photo of the Week

I thought I would start this new year of the newsletter — year five, if you can believe it! — with a moment of Zen. Here is Lake Placid, taken last summer during a brief trip to upstate New York. I am pretty sure I have shared this photo before, but you can consider that part of the vibe of serene contemplation.

Now Eating: Roasted Butternut Squash With Lentils and Feta

This newsletter comes after the New Year, so I’m not going to include a recipe for black-eyed peas or collards — although I hope you had plenty of both to ring in 2024 — but I do want to share this wonderful recipe for lentils and roasted squash, [*from New York Times Cooking*](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1021467-roasted-butternut-squash-with-lentils-and-feta).

What I like about this dish is that it is easy to make additions and substitutions. Prefer an acorn or delicata squash? Go for it. Would you rather use maple or date syrup than pomegranate molasses? That works, too. You can add some crumbled bacon to the mix or toss in some pickled red onions. Pretty much anything works! Be sure to serve the lentils with warm bread — I like freshly made pita with this dish.

Ingredients

* \xC2 cup black or green lentils

1. 1 (3-inch) cinnamon stick
2. 4 garlic cloves, peeled and smashed
3. kosher salt
4. 1 (1-pound) butternut squash
5. 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
6. \xC2 teaspoon black pepper
7. ¼ cup crumbled feta
8. 4 scallions, trimmed and thinly sliced
9. 2 tablespoons roasted, salted pumpkin seeds
10. ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil or grapeseed oil
11. 2 tablespoons pomegranate molasses
12. 1 tablespoon honey
13. \xC2 teaspoon ground cumin, toasted
14. ¼ teaspoon ground cayenne
15. \xC2 teaspoon black pepper
16. kosher salt

Directions

Heat oven to 400 degrees. Pick any debris from the lentils, then rinse the lentils under running water. Transfer them to a medium saucepan, then add the cinnamon, garlic and 1 teaspoon salt.

Add enough water to cover everything by 1 inch. Bring the water to a rolling boil over medium-high heat, then reduce to low and let simmer until the lentils are tender but not mushy, about 20 minutes. Drain the lentils, discard the cinnamon and garlic, then transfer the lentils to a large bowl.

While the lentils cook, prepare the squash: Trim and discard the top and bottom ends of the squash. Peel the squash, halve it lengthwise, and remove and discard the strings and seeds. Slice the squash crosswise ¼-inch thick and place the pieces on a baking sheet. Drizzle with 1 tablespoon olive oil and season with salt and pepper.

Roast the squash until completely tender, slightly caramelized and golden brown, about 30 minutes. Remove from the oven, and let cool for 10 minutes. Once cool, add to the lentils.

While the squash cooks, prepare the dressing: In a small bowl, whisk the olive oil, pomegranate molasses, honey, cumin, cayenne and black pepper. Taste and season to taste with salt.

Sprinkle the feta, scallions and pumpkin seeds over the lentils and squash. Pour 2 to 3 tablespoons of the dressing over the lentils and squash. Serve warm or at room temperature, with the remaining dressing on the side.

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

**Load-Date:** January 7, 2024

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[***America’s Monster***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C33-VKM1-JBG3-645Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 22, 2024 Wednesday 09:54 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; asia

**Length:** 5906 words

**Byline:** Azam Ahmed, Matthieu Aikins and Bryan Denton Azam Ahmed is international investigative correspondent for The Times. He has reported on Wall Street scandals, the War in Afghanistan and violence and corruption in Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean. Matthieu Aikins is a contributing writer for The New York Times Magazine and a fellow at Type Media Center who, since 2008, has been covering conflicts in Afghanistan and the Middle East, the U.S. military&#39;s operations overseas, forced migration and human rights.

**Highlight:** How the United States backed kidnapping, torture and murder in Afghanistan.

**Body**

How the United States backed kidnapping, torture and murder in Afghanistan.

The convoy rumbled into the Taliban heartland, a white desert littered with stones. Over the loudspeakers at the local mosque, the Afghan police officers ordered everyone to gather: The commander was here.

Dozens assembled in the mud square to listen as Abdul Raziq, one of America’s most important partners in the war against the Taliban, stood before the crowd, gesturing at two prisoners he had brought along to make his point.

The prisoners knelt with their hands bound as Raziq spoke to his men. A pair of his officers raised their rifles and opened fire, sending the prisoners into spasms on the reddening earth. In the silence that followed, Raziq addressed the crowd, three witnesses said.

“You will learn to respect me and reject the Taliban,” Raziq said after the killings, which took place in the winter of 2010, according to the witnesses and relatives of both men. “Because I will come back and do this again and again, and no one is going to stop me.”

For years, American military leaders lionized Raziq as a model partner in Afghanistan, their “if only” ally in the battle against the Taliban: If only everyone fought like Raziq, we might actually win this war, American commanders often said.

He ruled over the crucial battleground of Kandahar during a period when the United States had more troops on the ground than in any other chapter of the war, ultimately rising to lieutenant general thanks to the backing of the United States. American generals cycling through Afghanistan made regular pilgrimages to visit him, praising his courage, his ferocious war fighting and the loyalty he commanded from his men, who were trained, armed and paid by the United States and its allies.

The Americans were by his side until the very end. When he was [*gunned down*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/02/world/asia/taliban-attack-raziq-alliance.html) by an undercover Taliban assassin in 2018, he was walking next to the top American commander in Afghanistan, Gen. Austin S. Miller, who celebrated him as a “great friend” and “patriot.”

But to countless Afghan civilians under his reign, Raziq was something else entirely: America’s monster.

His battlefield prowess was built on years of torture, extrajudicial killings and the largest-known campaign of forced disappearances during America’s 20-year war in Afghanistan, a New York Times investigation into thousands of cases during his rule found.

The Times obtained hundreds of pages of documents written by the former American-backed government, more than a decade’s worth of hidden ledgers bearing clues to his campaign of abuse. He transformed the police into a fearsome combat force without constraints, and his officers abducted hundreds, if not thousands, of people to be killed or tortured in secret jails, The Times found. Most were never seen again.

The culture of lawlessness and impunity he created flew in the face of endless promises by American presidents, generals and ambassadors to uphold human rights and build a better Afghanistan.

And it helps explain why the United States lost the war.

For nearly two decades, the American public saw only part of the war in Afghanistan. Large parts of the country and its people were off limits to outsiders, impossible to chronicle fully during the fighting. Now that it’s over, the Taliban are no longer planting roadside bombs, and many have swapped their AK-47s for three-ring binders and a stifling bureaucracy.

The Times spent more than a year visiting parts of Afghanistan that were once active battlefields, trying to figure out what really happened during America’s longest war.

We interviewed many hundreds of people who said their fathers, husbands, sons and brothers had disappeared under Raziq, the police chief responsible for security across Kandahar Province, the birthplace of the Taliban. They saw his rule as little more than a brutal campaign against civilians, underwritten by the United States.

His acts not only discredited the American war effort — breeding profound resentment that pushed people to support the Taliban — but embodied it in many ways as well. Across Afghanistan, the United States elevated and empowered warlords, corrupt politicians and outright criminals to prosecute a war of military expediency in which the ends often justified the means.

The Taliban committed countless atrocities of their own against civilians, including suicide attacks, assassinations and kidnappings for ransom.

But it was a mistake to “keep a really bad criminal because he was helpful in fighting worse criminals,” said Gen. John R. Allen, who said he tried to limit cooperation with Raziq when he was overseeing coalition forces in the Afghan war from 2011 to 2013.

While Raziq’s tactics worked in some respects, beating back the Taliban in Kandahar and earning him the admiration of many who opposed them, the strategy came at a clear cost. It stirred such enmity in parts of the population that the Taliban turned his cruelty into a recruiting tool, broadcasting it to attract new fighters. Many Afghans came to revile the American-backed government and everything it represented.

“None of us supported the Taliban, at least not at first,” said Fazul Rahman, whose brother was abducted in front of witnesses during Raziq’s reign. “But when the government collapsed, I ran through the streets, rejoicing.”

Even some who cheered the ruthlessness Raziq wielded against his enemies lamented the broader corruption and criminality he helped enshrine, a key part of why the Afghan government collapsed in 2021. After his death, his commanders expanded their predation further, extorting ordinary people and stealing from their own men’s wages and supplies.

“What they brought under the name of democracy was a system in the hands of a few mafia groups,” said Qari Mohammad Mubarak, who ran a girls’ school in Kandahar and initially supported the government. “The people came to hate democracy.”

Many American commanders, diplomats and their allies in Afghanistan knew at the time they were bankrolling a war that strayed far outside international law.

“Sometimes we asked Raziq about incidents of alleged human rights abuses, and when we got answers we would be like, ‘Whoa, I hope we didn’t implicate ourselves in a war crime just by hearing about it,’” said Henry Ensher, a State Department official who held multiple posts on Afghanistan, including as the top civilian representative in Kandahar in 2010 and 2011, when he worked with Raziq.

“We knew what we were doing, but we didn’t think we had a choice,” Ensher said.

Most American leaders — including more than a dozen interviewed by The Times — said that Raziq had been seen as the only partner capable of beating back the Taliban in the heartland of the insurgency, where a pitched battle for dominance was underway.

“In the moment, we might have succeeded, but so what?” Ensher said. “The entire enterprise was flawed.”

Many Afghans say Raziq used the Americans and their military might to pursue a personal vendetta, taking vengeance against the rivals his tribe had been fighting for decades.

In interviews, many former senior American officials acknowledged that they never grasped that dynamic. It was a defining characteristic over a generation of combat — how little the United States understood about the war it was waging.

The United Nations, human rights groups and news outlets raised serious concerns about Raziq and his forces, but independent investigations were limited, especially with the region so impenetrable during the war.

To determine the extent of the abuses, The Times combed through more than 50,000 handwritten complaints that had been scrawled into the Kandahar governor’s ledgers from 2011 through [*the end of the war*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/02/world/asia/taliban-attack-raziq-alliance.html) in 2021. In them, we found the rudimentary details of almost 2,200 cases of suspected disappearances.

From there, we went to hundreds of homes across Kandahar and tracked down nearly 1,000 people who said their loved ones had disappeared, been killed or been taken by government security forces.

All together, The Times collected detailed evidence of 368 cases of forced disappearances and dozens of extrajudicial killings attributed to American-backed forces in Kandahar. We counted only cases that were corroborated by at least two people, many of them eyewitnesses to the abductions, and they were often documented with police reports, affidavits and other government records as well.

In all of the cases of forced disappearances, the person is still missing.

These figures are almost certainly a gross undercount of the atrocities during Raziq’s reign. We could not canvas all of Kandahar, home to more than a million people. And the more than 2,000 suspected cases we found in the government’s ledgers were most likely just an inkling of what really happened. Most of the families we interviewed had never formally reported their loved ones missing, out of fear of retribution or the danger of traveling during the war.

Beyond that, the police destroyed many of their records as the Taliban reached the outskirts of Kandahar City in 2021, former senior officials said. The exact number who were abducted and never seen again may be impossible to know.

What is clear, however, is who was responsible: Only the American-backed government consistently engaged in forced disappearances in Kandahar, former officials, combatants and families of the victims said.

“The Taliban didn’t need to disappear people — they just killed them where they found them,” said Hasti Mohammad, a former government official in charge of the Panjwai district in Kandahar. “The government disappeared people because what they were doing was illegal. They were hiding from the law.”

The cases confirmed by The Times amount to the largest campaign of forced disappearances in Afghanistan since tens of thousands went missing after the Soviet-backed communist coup in 1978, an assessment of previous atrocities shows.

As the victims mourned their loved ones, they confronted their own powerlessness. Raziq was untouchable, thanks to the ironclad support of the United States and its NATO allies.

“We would ask ourselves: ‘Are we creating something here that we may regret later?’” said Col. Robert Waltemeyer, a former Special Forces officer who worked with Raziq.

But there was no one better at fighting the Taliban, he said, adding that he never witnessed Raziq do anything illegal. When the United States sent tens of thousands of American soldiers to Afghanistan during the [*so-called surge*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/02/world/asia/taliban-attack-raziq-alliance.html) announced in 2009, hoping to wrest control of the south, Raziq was central to the effort.

“He was probably the most important person in the entire surge,” Waltemeyer said.

The United States pushed for Raziq to lead the police forces who fought alongside American troops, he said, because “he showed up, and his troops showed up, to fight, not just to watch the Americans fight.”

In effect, Waltemeyer said, “We created Raziq.”

“You look at every U.S. war and it’s the same,” he said. “We create regrets.”

‘Abdul Raziq’s work’

Fazul Rahman raced to the grease-stained motorcycle shop the moment he got the call: His brother, a mechanic, had just been kidnapped.

In a panic, the shop workers told him that three men in civilian clothes had pulled up in an unmarked Toyota Corolla on the morning of Sept. 3, 2016, asking his brother to take a look at a generator in the trunk.

Then, in full view of a crowd of onlookers, they said, the men wrestled Fazul’s brother, Ahmad, 28, into the car and sped away.

To Fazul and everyone else present, the culprits were obvious: the police. Under Raziq, Kandahar’s security forces had become notorious for snatching anyone they suspected of working with Taliban insurgents. Many simply disappeared. Others turned up as mutilated corpses, discarded in the streets. A lucky few were released alive, bearing wounds and accounts of torture.

Some of the missing were, in fact, Taliban, their families said. Others, their relatives insisted, were not. Many were simply part of the ***working class***: mechanics, tailors and taxi drivers who had nothing to do with the war, their families said.

Desperate to find his brother, Fazul gathered elders and hurried to the local police station. The officers denied arresting his brother, so he headed to the palace of the American-backed governor, joining the line to submit complaints.

The handwritten government ledgers reviewed by The Times show his plea: Volume 4 from 2016, Entry No. 591 — Ahmad, son of Abdur Rahman.

There were thousands of families just like his, all with the same burning question. What had the government done with their loved ones?

After filing his complaint, Fazul worried. What would happen if he pushed too hard? The police were abducting and disappearing people on mere suspicions, never mind someone openly accusing them of kidnapping.

“The police were getting angry,” he said. “They’d beat us and say, ‘Why do you keep coming?’”

Still, another force, more potent than fear, was driving him: his mother, Malika.

Women were rarely seen or heard making public demands in conservative Afghanistan, especially in the south. But Fazul and Ahmad were all their mother had; their father had died of cancer more than 20 years earlier, leaving her to raise them on her own.

“For months, from morning to night, I went from the police to the governor’s offices and waited for someone to see me,” she said.

Outside the offices, scribes charged a small fee to write out complaints for people who, like Fazul and his mother, were illiterate. Many of the petitions were in Malika’s name, and the family provided copies of them to The Times.

“Please help find and release my innocent son,” one said. It carried the signatures of 11 local elders, all attesting that her son was not in the Taliban.

Soon, Fazul and his mother got to know other families searching for missing people. Having a relative arrested on suspicion of being an insurgent tarred them with the same brush. But the presence of women gave them some license to make demands.

Aliyah’s son, Salahuddin, a rickshaw driver, had been snatched from outside his home as he walked to the mosque.

“There was nowhere that I wouldn’t go to find my son,” Aliyah said. “But we had no idea whether he was dead or alive.”

A third man, Daud, had been taken in 2015. With no immediate family to look for him, a neighbor, Seema, became his advocate.

Frustrated by how often the families returned, an employee at the governor’s palace told Fazul to put together a list of the missing. A scribe helped Fazul take down the names in his impromptu group: 17 families, at first.

The list, scribbled on a sheet of plain white paper, was soon expanded, passed around, photocopied and texted.

Like Ahmad, many of the victims had been grabbed off the streets or from workplaces by armed men in plainclothes in front of witnesses. Some had simply vanished, like Abdul Wahid, whose brother, a butcher, last saw him when he sent him home with some meat for dinner. Others, like Habib Rahman, had been arrested by uniformed officers while out with friends.

Their relatives clung to the hope that they might still be alive in one of the many unofficial detention sites, often called “private prisons,” maintained by Raziq’s forces.

The families went to the Red Cross to study photos of unidentified bodies that had been collected and buried, and then to the morgue to see the newly discovered corpses. Some had been suffocated, shot in the head or dumped with their hands still tied.

The group paid bribes to find answers. Most had already shelled out money to unscrupulous police officers, to no avail. Then, in late 2016, a break: One of their missing was returned, finally offering a clear account of what was happening to their loved ones.

Nisar Ahmad, 23, had been abducted a month earlier, not long after a bomb attack targeting one of Raziq’s commanders left the area on edge. Two men in plainclothes took him at gunpoint.

Inside a shipping container, a group of men, some in police uniform, took turns beating him, he said. They stuffed a plastic bag into his mouth and poured water over his face, nearly suffocating him. Most shamefully, he said, they twisted his genitals, permanently damaging them.

The police told him to make a confession, and recorded it, he said: “After I confessed, they didn’t torture me anymore.”

That night, he was blindfolded and driven to another location. Through a barred window, he saw a spindly mountaintop and the green, red and black flag of Afghanistan, he said. (A former police detective said the site appeared to be the District 9 station in Kandahar City.)

Eventually, Nisar’s father, Mohammad Fazluddin, received a phone call from a police officer, he said, demanding the equivalent of $900 — a staggering amount — to release his son. Mohammad agreed, dropping off the money at an auto repair shop as instructed, and his son was let go, he said.

“It’s a miracle,” he said, taking the release as a sign that the police knew his son was innocent.

In private, the families said, some of the police acknowledged they had taken their loved ones. So, Fazul and the others buttonholed every official possible.

They insisted there was nothing they could do, he said.

“They all knew exactly what was happening,” Fazul said. “They said: ‘We have nothing to do with this. This is Abdul Raziq’s work.’”

Finally, Fazul got a meeting with the governor of Kandahar. The mothers joined more than a dozen men to plead and scold for the missing on their list.

Malika, Fazul’s mother, was furious, accusing the officials of corruption and cowardice, of robbing her of the most precious thing in life. At one point, they recalled, the governor’s guards warned her not to speak so bluntly.

“You people have taken my son,” she responded, looking at the governor, people in the room recalled. “If you want to kill me, then kill me, but I won’t hold my tongue.”

The hectoring paid off. Their list landed on the desk of Raziq himself.

He summoned them for a meeting.

The other war

Disappearances were hardly new in Kandahar, a place ravaged by more than four decades of war. Even Raziq had lost someone.

His father had been a driver, often going to the border with Pakistan. One day, while Raziq was still a boy, his father disappeared on a routine trip, vanishing in the vast desert.

His family, members of the Achakzai tribe, blamed their longtime rivals: the Noorzai. The two tribes had been locked in a deadly feud that stretched back decades, long before the Taliban came to power.

“He was killed because he was Achakzai,” Tadin Khan, Raziq’s younger brother, told The Times. “His body disappeared.”

Raziq went on to author the most brutal campaign of enforced disappearances in his country in decades. And it often targeted this rival tribe, the Noorzai, many of whom supported the Taliban.

That is something the Americans generally failed to understand: A tribal and family dynamic, not just a hatred of the Taliban, animated Raziq’s war. In fact, the cluster of villages where Raziq summoned the crowd, killed the two prisoners and then threatened the onlookers was mostly made up of Noorzai.

“He killed them like dogs,” said Haji Dilbar, a villager who described being in the crowd that Raziq had assembled to witness the killings.

As his friends tell it, Raziq first picked up a gun as a teenager, fighting under his uncle during the civil war that came after the collapse of the Soviet-backed government. In 1994, his uncle was killed by the Taliban, who hanged his body from the barrel of a tank.

When the U.S. invasion began in 2001, Raziq started fighting on the American side, joining a militia to clear the Taliban out of Kandahar. Later, those same forces became the border police and served under Raziq, still in his 20s at the time.

Largely illiterate, he compensated with his intelligence and charisma, distinguishing himself as a fearless fighter who knew the deserts straddling the border, as his father did.

By 2010, as the Taliban gained ground across the south, Raziq had held back the insurgents in the areas around his home district, called Spin Boldak. American commanders knew he was corrupt, running a mafia-style racket on trade across the border. He was suspected of being involved in the poppy trade.

Allegations of extrajudicial killings also dogged Raziq for years, dating back to the early days of the American-backed government. Noorzai elders said they had complained of murders to American military officials, but were ignored.

Lt. Col. Andrew Green, who worked closely with Raziq in 2010 and 2011, said that confirming the allegations had been impossible because the events happened deep in Taliban territory.

Moreover, he said, law enforcement in Afghanistan was barely functional. The courts were corrupt, and most people could pay their way out of jail, leaving the police with few options.

“In Afghanistan, the police shoot people,” he said. “While you can’t say it’s a good thing, it’s sort of what is done.”

The worries about Raziq spread. A State Department report documented a 2006 episode in which he executed 16 men he accused of being Taliban. In 2009, he was accused of torture and keeping private prisons by the Afghan human rights commission.

The so-called surge became a major turning point for him. In 2009, hoping to beat back a resurgent Taliban, President Barack Obama [*announced*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/02/world/asia/taliban-attack-raziq-alliance.html) that he would send thousands of additional troops to Afghanistan, focusing on Kandahar and Helmand Provinces, two Taliban strongholds.

The Americans wanted a partner who was unafraid to confront the Taliban head-on, like Raziq. Yet they were also debating what to do about “bad actors” who undermined the legitimacy of the Afghan government, also like Raziq.

“There were lots of conversations about whether we should mentor Raziq or imprison him,” recalled Green, the American officer, who had investigated him for other issues, including graft.

The Americans chose the former. They needed him.

After the police chief of Kandahar was assassinated in 2011, Raziq was given the job. He became a general and appointed commanders from his Achakzai tribe to key positions in Kandahar.

United Nations investigators called four of them — three of whom were his relatives — the “four horsemen” for the many allegations of torture and extrajudicial killings against them. One of them, a Raziq family member, was responsible for organizing death squads, according to police officers who worked with him. His men roved the city in unmarked cars, wearing plainclothes.

Deeming the court system corrupt, Raziq ordered his commanders to kill suspected Taliban, former officers and officials said. Those who refused to kill captives were dismissed.

“He told me: ‘Why are you bringing these Taliban to the station? Why aren’t you killing them? What are you afraid of?’” said one former city district chief who, like some others, spoke on the condition of anonymity out of fear of retribution.

The victims were taken for a “sand picnic” and dumped in remote areas, down wells or where the shifting desert sands would cover them, according to former police officers and internal United Nations reports.

One senior police officer said he had complained to Raziq about finding bodies dumped in his district.

“I told him, ‘They’re in my area; it’s going to be blamed on me,’” the officer said. He recalled Raziq laughing before agreeing to tell his men to be more careful.

A 2013 United Nations report noted a surge in unidentified bodies, some still handcuffed, dumped in Kandahar City and dozens of reported disappearances, citing the “increased level of brutality” and torture under Raziq.

Within two months of his appointment as police chief, the Americans stopped transferring detainees to Afghan security forces in Kandahar because of reports of abuses and executions.

“I pulled the intel on the guy and it was pretty horrific,” Allen, the American general, said.

Still, American support continued to flow to Raziq, who was popular with U.S. officers and considered vital to winning the war.

While Col. Bill Carty, the head of U.S. Special Forces in Kandahar, was visiting Raziq in 2012, a suicide bomber struck. Carty threw himself on top of Raziq to shield him, and then gave the general his own body armor to wear, according to an account Carty gave in the book, “[*One Hundred Victories*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/02/world/asia/taliban-attack-raziq-alliance.html),” and confirmed to The Times.

“Why did you give me your vest?” Raziq asked.

“There are thousands of me,” Carty recalled replying, emphasizing the importance of Raziq’s role as police chief. “But there is only one of you.”

Guests of the general

At his headquarters, Raziq greeted Fazul and the other family members in his white civilian robes. Because he couldn’t read, his secretary said aloud the names on the list Fazul had provided for him.

Getting the meeting was no easy feat. By then, the Taliban had made so many attempts on the general’s life that he joked to friends that he had lost count.

But in person, Raziq was polite, several of the attendees recalled, and allowed each of them to speak their minds. When everyone finished, the general spoke.

He did not trust the courts, the families recounted him saying. The judges let criminals go free, the prosecutors were ineffective, and justice could always be bought for a price. He preferred to administer his own justice.

He spoke to a few family members directly, including Shah Mohammad, whose brother, Neda, was on Fazul’s list. The general told him that Neda had been involved in the murder of police officers, an accusation he struggled to believe; Neda sold vegetables from a pushcart in the market.

Before the meeting ended, the general turned to Seema, whose adoptive son Daud had disappeared months earlier. He would be returned, the general said without explanation.

Not long after, Daud was set free.

After getting out, Daud told the families how he had been kept in a dark cell for months at an unofficial detention site. He was beaten and abused regularly, until, after the general’s intervention, he was transferred to a formal prison before being let go. He told the others that he had not seen any of their loved ones.

Still, a painful wave of hope washed over the families. They began to dream that, perhaps, their children might still be alive. But that is the problem with hope, and not knowing: Without the closure of death, they could never properly grieve.

For the perpetrators, disappearances carry a cruel logic. Though they can be crimes against humanity, there is little evidence without a body, especially when someone is snatched without witnesses or by officers in civilian clothes and cars.

Yet the disappearances inflicted unique wounds for many Afghans. Often, wives were told they could not remarry until their husbands were proved dead. Some with young children were left unable to support themselves.

“What General Raziq did in terms of killing and disappearing was worse than everything else that happened in the rest of Afghanistan,” said Sayed Abdul Karim, the father of one of the young men on Fazul’s list. “I wish that we could bury his bones somewhere. If we had a grave, we could go there and pray.”

The cruelty bred other cruelties, like the cottage industry of hustlers that emerged to take advantage of parents’ desperation. Fazul and his mother fell victim to a scam, traveling to Kabul to pay an intelligence official several thousand dollars for Ahmad’s return, a trip that nearly ended with Fazul himself getting kidnapped. Others paid more.

Some decided their families should be joined by more than tragedy alone. Fazul’s cousin married the son of the missing rickshaw driver, Salahuddin.

He had been gone so long that, by then, his son was of marrying age.

The insurgents rise

The shock came on Oct. 18, 2018: Raziq was [*gunned down by a Taliban assassin*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/02/world/asia/taliban-attack-raziq-alliance.html) who had infiltrated the governor’s guards.

The Taliban crowed.

They had long used Raziq’s brutality to recruit fighters and whip up anger in videos and pamphlets that showcased his abuses.

But his death allowed the insurgents to broadcast their ability to kill even the most protected commanders — one who was walking just paces away from Miller, the top American commander in Afghanistan, at the time of his death.

The Taliban said they had chosen to target Raziq over anyone else at the meeting, including the American four-star general, who escaped injury.

“He was more important to us than Scott Miller,” said Maulavi Ebrar Ahmad Habib, a Taliban commander who oversaw assassinations in Kandahar during those years.

Fazul and the others hoped things would change with Raziq’s death. For the most part, nothing did.

Raziq’s brother, Tadin, took over as police chief of Kandahar. He told The Times that neither he nor his brother had waged campaigns of forced disappearances. Officials said he simply continued the system his brother had built.

When the war began, Fazul and the others imagined the Americans would bring investment and opportunity. They envisioned good jobs, better homes, prosperity. But their good will evaporated quickly as their loved ones disappeared.

It was not that everyone embraced the Taliban, residents said; they just came to detest the Afghan government and the Americans who propped it up.

That erosion of support — not just among the families of the missing, but also among many Afghans disenchanted by the broader corruption and unchecked abuses of the Americans and their Afghan partners — was part of the collapse of Kandahar, as it was elsewhere in the country.

The impunity and criminality that Raziq fostered metastasized after his death, eating away at Kandahar from within. As the Taliban grew stronger, wage and supply theft within government forces devastated morale, as did infighting among his commanders, paralyzing their ability to fight.

Fazul’s group prayed for an insurgent victory, clinging to the hope that once the government was toppled, they might discover what had become of their relatives.

And once the United States withdrew from Afghanistan, leading to [*the collapse*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/02/world/asia/taliban-attack-raziq-alliance.html) of the Afghan government in 2021, the Taliban went from prison to prison, emptying cells.

Thousands of people from across the province flooded into Kandahar City. Fazul heard that hundreds of prisoners had been extracted from the basement of the police headquarters. Huge crowds gathered outside of the governor’s compound, jostling for a look at those who exited.

Fazul joined them, racing downtown to scour public facilities. Having no luck in Kandahar City, he and others descended on Spin Boldak, where Raziq got his start. Hundreds waited there, too, scanning the crowds for their missing loved ones. Fazul counted the people freed from unofficial detention sites. His brother wasn’t one of them.

Rohullah Akhunzada, who was part of Fazul’s group, looked for his own brother in a basement prison, its dank, low ceilings a harrowing indication of what so many Afghans had been forced to endure. He found no sign of him.

“We still don’t know,” he said.

Having looked everywhere, another of Fazul’s compatriots, Fazl Raheem, approached the Taliban to ask for news of his brother.

The Taliban told him that all of the prisons had been emptied. Everyone still alive is already with their families, he recalled them saying.

The crowds drifted, hoping for one more place their loved ones could materialize. Many went to the crowded bus station in Kandahar City to scan the prisoners returning from Bagram Air Base, where the Americans, and later the Afghans, had kept thousands of detainees.

The urgency and desperation rose like a fever. So, too, did the familiar despondence when Fazul’s brother was nowhere to be found.

A legacy ignored

Since the collapse, mass graves have turned up in Kandahar, prompting renewed searches from relatives who show up at desert sites and hospital morgues, or share photographs of skeletal remains. But there is no organized search for the missing in Kandahar.

After years of pressure from the United States, prosecutors at the International Criminal Court have said they are de-prioritizing investigations into abuses committed by American-backed forces. The United Nations has focused on abuses carried out by the new Taliban government, accusing it of its own campaign of extrajudicial killings and torture.

The Times sued the American government for its files on Raziq. Nearly a year later, the military and the State Department have turned over only a handful of documents. Few military leaders from that era had any interest in revisiting his legacy, and what it reveals about the American war effort.

“The reason you have insurgencies is because of injustice, and Raziq represented the very worst,” said Allen, the American general. He added: “Raziq created the very injustice that gave the Taliban its edge on us.”

To commemorate Raziq, the former Afghan government had begun erecting a mausoleum for him, a giant, mosque-like structure beside the governor’s palace, a memorial fit for a national hero. Many see him that way, as a champion of those who oppose the Taliban.

Rather than destroy it, the Taliban have surrounded the edifice with concrete blast walls, careful not to antagonize the large swathe of the population that still reveres the general. It is blocked but visible, its dome and minarets peeking over the barrier.

There are no monuments to the missing. Of the 17 people on his original list, Fazul knows of only three who came home alive.

“I still have hope that he will return, even though I know he is probably dead,” said Malika, Fazul and Ahmad’s mother. “My tears have not dried since he disappeared.”

Abdul Nafi and Shir Ali Farhad contributed reporting from Kandahar. Produced by Sean Catangui, Leo Dominguez and Rumsey Taylor. Photo Editing by Craig Allen, Mikko Takkunen and Gaia Tripoli.

Abdul Nafi and Shir Ali Farhad contributed reporting from Kandahar. Produced by Sean Catangui, Leo Dominguez and Rumsey Taylor. Photo Editing by Craig Allen, Mikko Takkunen and Gaia Tripoli.

PHOTOS: When the U.S. pulled out of Afghanistan, it left secrets in the desert. The New York Times identified hundreds of civilians abducted in the largest campaign of forced disappearances of the war. It all led back to one man. (A1); The Missing: The New York Times documented 368 cases of forced disappearances and dozens of extrajudicial killings attributed by families, witnesses and official records to Americanbacked forces under General Raziq. The actual toll is most likely far higher. The Times only logged cases that were corroborated by at least two people. Many of the families who had reported missing loved ones were impossible to locate, and many others never filed complaints.; Abdul Raziq, one of America’s most important partners in the war against the Taliban for years, at his home in Kandahar City in 2015.; The grave of a man killed at a checkpoint in Boldak, Kandahar Province, set up by the Afghan Border Police, whose forces began as a militia. (A8); Top, the repair shop in Kandahar City where Ahmad Rahman was abducted in 2016. Above, his brother Fazul Rahman last year. He was nearly kidnapped himself in an attempt to find Ahmad. (A9); Top, the missing-person complaint paperwork and passport pictures for Salahuddin, a rickshaw driver who disappeared in 2016. Above, Aliyah and Ghawsudin, Salahuddin’s mother and brother. (A10); A mausoleum in the center of Kandahar that the former Afghan government built to commemorate Raziq. The Taliban encased it in blast walls. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRYAN DENTON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A11) This article appeared in print on page A1, A8, A9, A10, A11.

**Load-Date:** May 28, 2024

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[***In New York, the Trump Brand Is Costing Some Condo Owners***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BC2-RTC1-JBG3-62BB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 18, 2024 Sunday 16:06 EST

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**Section:** REALESTATE

**Length:** 1796 words

**Byline:** Rukmini Callimachi Rukmini Callimachi is a three-time Pulitzer Prize finalist. Before joining The Times in 2014, she spent seven years as a correspondent and bureau chief reporting from Africa for The Associated Press.

**Highlight:** When Donald J. Trump became president, condominiums in buildings emblazoned with his name began selling for less, according to an analysis.

**Body**

When Donald J. Trump became president, condominiums in buildings emblazoned with his name began selling for less, according to an analysis.

In the world of real estate, Donald J. Trump’s name has long been synonymous with luxury. At one of his buildings in Manhattan, a [*five-story waterfall*](https://www.nytimes.com/1983/08/07/business/the-empire-and-ego-of-donald-trump.html) slides down a wall of [*Breccia Perniche*](https://www.nytimes.com/1983/08/07/business/the-empire-and-ego-of-donald-trump.html) marble. White-gloved doormen, cascading chandeliers and panoramic views of the city’s skyline are the hallmarks of another.

It’s that image of luxury, which he turned into a brand, that the former president held up as a rebuttal to the recent lawsuit that he lost on Friday after a judge determined that Mr. Trump fraudulently inflated the value of his real estate holdings, ordering him to pay [*a penalty that will exceed $450 million*](https://www.nytimes.com/1983/08/07/business/the-empire-and-ego-of-donald-trump.html).

“My client is worth hundreds and hundreds of millions,” said one of Mr. Trump’s lawyers, Alina Habba, during closing arguments at the trial, adding, “let alone the brand, which is worth billions.”

But up and down the spine of Manhattan, condominiums in high-rise buildings emblazoned with Mr. Trump’s name have underperformed, according to sales data from two real estate tracking firms, and an analysis of the data by the Columbia University economist Stijn Van Nieuwerburgh.

The line in the sand is the year 2016, when Mr. Trump was elected president.

In a one-year window, condos in buildings that had the Trump logo went from selling at a 1 percent premium compared with similar units, to selling for 4 percent less, meaning that Trump condos became a “bargain” among the city’s luxury units, said Mr. Van Nieuwerburgh, a professor of real estate.

Even the Trump Tower on Fifth Avenue, one of the crowning achievements of the Trump brand, whose [*80-foot cascade*](https://www.nytimes.com/1983/08/07/business/the-empire-and-ego-of-donald-trump.html) flowing down a wall of peach marble was reportedly built with slabs [*handpicked*](https://www.nytimes.com/1983/08/07/business/the-empire-and-ego-of-donald-trump.html) at a quarry in Italy by Mr. Trump’s ex-wife, saw the average price per square foot of its condominiums tumble 49 percent since 2013, according to Ondel Hylton, the senior director of content and research at CityRealty. The building’s age, growing competition from the ultra-luxurious condos on nearby Billionaires’ Row and regular protests have all dampened interest, Mr. Hylton said.

By contrast, condominiums in four buildings where the Trump logo was removed at the behest of residents — sometimes after a [*legal battle*](https://www.nytimes.com/1983/08/07/business/the-empire-and-ego-of-donald-trump.html) — have seen their value shoot back up.

“This analysis cleanly identifies that it is the Trump brand that is responsible for the value deterioration,” Mr. Van Nieuwerburgh said. “Removing the Trump name from the building removes the loss associated with the name.”

A review of the price per square foot of condominiums in the seven buildings in Manhattan that still carry the Trump name found that the value dropped 23 percent between 2013 and 2023, according to CityRealty, a real estate listing website. An analysis using a slightly different methodology by ATTOM, a property data analytics company, showed that the drop was 17 percent.

By contrast, the four buildings that removed the gold-hued Trump logo ended the decade from 2013 to 2023 up 9 percent, outpacing the Manhattan condominium market, which was up 8 percent over the same time period, according to City Realty.

Mr. Van Nieuwerburgh started with the same data, then combed through the sales figures, making sure that he was comparing apples to apples: a three-bedroom condo in a doorman-serviced Trump building on the Upper West Side, for example, was compared to a three-bedroom unit in the same neighborhood in a building that also had a doorman.

He found that the Trump-branded buildings collapsed in value by 25 percent compared with similar properties from their peak in 2013. “It’s huge,” he said.

The data that was analyzed is exclusively for Manhattan. It is possible that Mr. Trump’s brand is faring better in parts of the country where the former president’s politics are more aligned with a majority of voters, including in Florida, which is home to his Mar-a-Lago resort, as well as numerous towers in Sunny Isles Beach and Hollywood, Fla., that are adorned with his name.

In an email, Eric Trump, the former president’s son and the de facto chief executive of the Trump Organization, questioned the analyses.

“Data can be manipulated to tell any story you want, but the fact remains that our buildings sell for the highest prices per square foot of any properties in the world. That is undeniable,” he wrote. “This year alone, Trump International Hotel &amp; Tower New York closed on a $17 million unit, exceeding the prices at Time Warner, Essex House and the most prestigious properties in the city.”

But the $17 million condo sale at 1 Central Park West, also known as the Trump International Hotel, is a far cry from the top-selling condos in the city, which included a $52 million sale for a West Village penthouse. The Trump condo sold for over $4,600 per square foot; the penthouse sold for more than $11,400 per square foot, according to CityRealty.

A review of the top 100 sales in 2023 found that the best-selling condo in a Trump-branded building placed No. 47 on the list, while the second-best-selling unit placed No. 77, CityRealty found.

“I just crunched the numbers in the past half hour, and I’m still trying to wrap my head around it,” said Mr. Hylton, CityRealty’s senior director of content and research, who expressed surprise at how much value Trump-branded condos had lost.

Defining ‘Most Expensive’

Even Mr. Trump’s critics say he deserves credit for the way he has parlayed family wealth, boldly expanding his father’s empire from a portfolio that included [*thousands of mostly* ***working-class*** *apartments*](https://www.nytimes.com/1983/08/07/business/the-empire-and-ego-of-donald-trump.html) in the outer boroughs into the heart of Manhattan.

In the 1970s, when even the [*Chrysler Building was in foreclosure*](https://www.nytimes.com/1983/08/07/business/the-empire-and-ego-of-donald-trump.html), Mr. Trump bought the aging Commodore Hotel, turning it into a shiny Grand Hyatt, which in turn revitalized an area that was considered blighted at the time. Mr. Trump bet on the location — situated next to Grand Central Terminal, the hotel was at the mouth of one of the main arteries into the city, the point through which commuters were coming from upscale suburbs.

“It was ingenious,” said Barbara Corcoran, who sold her real estate firm for an estimated [*$70 million*](https://www.nytimes.com/1983/08/07/business/the-empire-and-ego-of-donald-trump.html) in 2001 and is now a judge on “Shark Tank.” “Forty-second Street was a street that you could not walk down.”

The transformation was palpable.

“He totally rewrote the way people see living in New York,” Ms. Corcoran said.

Other deals followed, but Mr. Trump’s calculations were often rooted more in marketing than in fact.

Ms. Corcoran was in her 30s and a newcomer to real estate when she launched her namesake “Corcoran Report” in 1981. Written on her typewriter and copied on a Xerox machine, the report ranked the top-selling properties in the city. Four years later, when she launched her “Top Ten Condominiums Report,” she discovered that Mr. Trump’s assertion that his Trump Tower condos on Fifth Avenue were the most expensive in the world was wrong. (The future president’s apartments appeared on her list, she said, just not at the top.)

Before she put out her news release, she set up a meeting so he could respond to her findings. Nervous, she could not sleep the night before and showed up in his office in a power suit, she said.

The meeting did not go well. Mr. Trump objected to her methodology. On the spot, Ms. Corcoran said, she proposed a solution: If she recalculated the value of Mr. Trump’s condos based on the price per room, or the price per square foot, rather than the overall sales price, he would come out on top. The rooms in his building were small, and therefore more expensive, she said.

“I didn’t want to make an enemy of the man,” she said. “I was a young broker.”

By late 1980s, Mr. Trump’s newspaper ads cited Ms. Corcoran’s report as proof that his units were the city’s most expensive.

But Mr. Trump ran into financial and legal challenges, with his companies filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection [*at least six times*](https://www.nytimes.com/1983/08/07/business/the-empire-and-ego-of-donald-trump.html) in the 1990s and 2000s. As he clawed his way back from financial failure, he hit on something new: He began leasing out his name for a fee, which appeared on buildings he had not built, and only some of which his company managed.

The move, ahead of its time, reversed and modified the usual real estate formula, which stipulates that location plus floor plan equals value, said one longtime Manhattan developer. Now, there was location, floor plan and, also, a brand — the Trump name, which had an aspirational quality to it, said the developer, one of three major Manhattan developers who discussed Trump’s brand, all of whom requested anonymity for fear of retaliation.

‘Embarrassed’

In 2012, Linda Gottlieb, the producer of the film “Dirty Dancing” didn’t think much about having to walk under a Trump sign every time she entered her building. Her high-rise at 160 Riverside Boulevard was part of “Trump Place,” a group of six towers — three of them rentals, and three of them condos — that stretched over multiple blocks overlooking the Hudson River at 120, 140, 160, 180, 200 and 220 Riverside Boulevard.

In some of the buildings, everything from the doormats to the staff’s uniforms was branded with the Trump name.

But as the 2016 presidential election approached, and the crude remarks that Mr. Trump had made about women and immigrants dominated the news cycle, Ms. Gottlieb felt ashamed.

“I was embarrassed,” she said, describing how she felt when she passed maintenance staff born outside the United States. “Every time I looked at them, I thought, how can they be working in a building like that, and how can I not try to do something about it?”

She helped draft a petition to remove the Trump name from the building, slipping it under the doors of the more than 450 units. By the fall of 2016, three of the buildings — all of them rentals — had removed the Trump name and measured staff members for new uniforms. The condo buildings, including the one that had a legal tussle, removed the name in 2018 and 2019.

These days, Ms. Gottlieb returns to a building that has a sign spelling out 1-6-0, her address on Riverside Boulevard.

“Now, I just enjoy the view of the river when I come home,” she said, “and I think, it’s so nice to be in a building with just a boring number on it.”

Jonah E. Bromwich and Charles V. Bagli contributed reporting from New York. Susan C. Beachy and Kitty Bennett contributed research.

Jonah E. Bromwich and Charles V. Bagli contributed reporting from New York. Susan C. Beachy and Kitty Bennett contributed research.

PHOTOS: Some condos that removed the Trump logo at the behest of residents have seen their value spike. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHANG W. LEE/THE NEW YORK TIMES); PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY PROQUEST HISTORICAL NEWSPAPERS: THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A16) This article appeared in print on page A1, A16.

**Load-Date:** February 21, 2024

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[***Girls to the Front!; nonfiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68FR-WBW1-JBG3-61PK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 13, 2023 Tuesday 14:30 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 1186 words

**Byline:** Garance Franke-Ruta

**Highlight:** In “Young and Restless,” Mattie Kahn returns young women and girls to their rightful role in the history books: as forces for change.

**Body**

In “Young and Restless,” Mattie Kahn returns young women and girls to their rightful role in the history books: as forces for change.

YOUNG AND RESTLESS: The Girls Who Sparked America’s Revolutions, by Mattie Kahn

American girls are in crisis — on that much we can all agree. In a 2021 study of young women’s mental health, a vast number of respondents between ages 12 and 19 answered that they had felt “persistently sad or hopeless”; rates of sexual assault and violence in the same population are alarmingly high. As caregivers, many of us are looking for ways to shore up our children’s well-being, self-esteem and happiness. And although it is not the aim of a historical survey to be prescriptive, heartening inspiration can be found in “Young and Restless,” Mattie Kahn’s thoroughgoing examination of the role of young women and girls in America’s uprisings.

Her subjects have agitated on behalf of labor and voting rights, racial dignity and equality, sexual and reproductive freedom, freedom of speech and against climate change. The solutions she illustrates include objecting, resisting — and, yes, acting up, rather than sinking into sadness and accepting the unacceptable. By taking direct action in the service of shared values, in alliance with beloved communities for a better future, girls throughout American history have discovered a sense of personal agency, often during eras when their opportunities were sharply circumscribed. Sometimes they even changed history.

Kahn, whose stated aim is to write girls back into the historical record, also considers her subjects’ lives before and after their time in the trenches. Many of the young women who took on activist roles — especially those who lived before the mid-20th century — faced intense blowback, even as they inspired others to their causes. The book also examines the place of childhood itself as a battleground on which America’s culture wars have historically been fought.

The author maintains an admirable ability to complicate her own assertions — girls have been a force for progressive change, for instance, but also a force in reactionary movements. And, delightfully, she brings a onetime women’s magazine editor’s attentiveness to the importance of style and theatricality in the lives of young women whose sashes and hats, hairstyles and armbands and, finally, pants, have marked their movements for change.

She opens with the story of the Lowell mill, a type of “philanthropic manufacturing college,” as Anthony Trollope described it, that eased the burden on ***working-class*** families by educating their daughters. Like so many flash points in American history, this story is often taught at the diorama-level; but it’s a crucial one, and not just because it’s one of the earliest to be documented by the young female participants themselves. Lowell gave the country its first teen girl culture, even if the word “teenager” would not be invented, as Kahn notes, until 1941. “Before Lowell — with the exception of the wealthiest women’s tearooms and parlors — there were almost no spaces in which girls could gather as a group,” she writes. Daughters of rich men had finishing schools; with the establishment of the mills, the daughters of the ***working class*** would have the factories.

Lowell was, at first, a place where Ralph Waldo Emerson and Edgar Allan Poe would come to lecture, where girls could mix work and study, smuggling John Locke treatises onto the factory floors and founding the first all-female-staffed magazine in American history. It was a place that freed them from “domestic subjugation” in an era when there “were no ladders to climb or balances to strike between work and home.” Dickens himself could find nothing to criticize in these institutions. But as the milling industry grew, downward pressure on wages meant that the model environment of the early years degraded, leading to an uprising.

Among the more than 1,000 young women who went on strike between 1834 and 1837 was Harriet Hanson, who started factory work in 1835 in order to support her widowed mother and three siblings, and, with what she later described as “childish bravado,” led a walkout at age 11.

The book is packed with stories of young women like her, girls whose efforts were documented but have not been popularized, and whose introductions leave you wanting more. There’s Mabel Ping-Hua Lee, who at 17 led 17,000 people up New York City’s Fifth Avenue on horseback in the 1912 march for women’s suffrage, while her mother “rode in a car at the march along with a delegation of Chinese women who could not march because their feet had been bound.” “America’s Joan of Arc,” Anna Elizabeth Dickenson, gained fame as an abolitionist orator in her teens and would become the first woman to address the House of Representatives.

After World War II came a generation of youthful reproductive rights activists. We meet Heather Tobis (later Booth), who, at 19, founded the legendary abortion referral service Jane out of her dorm room. Clyde Marie Perry, 17, and Emma Jean Wilson, 14, integrated their Grenada, Miss., schools in 1966 and then successfully sued to stop expulsions of pregnant students like themselves.

Some of the activists were forgotten because later laws, like Title IX, overrode the significance of their achievements: like Faye Ordway, 18, who was expelled for pregnancy in 1971 and took the school board of her Massachusetts town to court, winning for herself and other pregnant minors the right to an education; and Alice de Rivera, the 13-year-old “crusader in miniskirts” who fought for the right to take the entrance exam to Stuyvesant High School in New York, which in 1969 had never admitted a woman.

Others have seen their stories more recently resurrected and achieved some measure of recognition. Claudette Colvin was arrested at 15, in 1955, for refusing to give up her Montgomery, Ala., bus seat to a white passenger, nine months before Rosa Parks — the leader of Colvin’s local N.A.A.C.P. Youth Council chapter — did the same. “She didn’t want to be soothed. She wanted change,” Kahn writes of the Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg, one of the most famous young voice of our own era.

“I felt that I belonged to the world, that there was something for me to do in it, though I had not yet found out what,” wrote Lucy Larcom in her memoir of her time in the Lowell mills. “Something to do; it might be very little, but still it would be my own work.” Today, in the book’s words, stories of remarkable girls “abound.” But, as Kahn deftly shows, that’s been the story of these revolutionaries from the start.

Garance Franke-Ruta is a writer and editor based in New York.

YOUNG AND RESTLESS: The Girls Who Sparked America’s Revolutions | By Mattie Kahn | Illustrated | 435 pp. | Viking | $29

PHOTOS: Above: Alice de Rivera, at 14, after winning her battle to attend the then all-male Stuyvesant High School in New York. Right: Mabel Ping-Hua Lee led a march up Fifth Avenue in support of women’s suffrage. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY BETTMANN ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES; LIBRARY OF CONGRESS) This article appeared in print on page BR10.

**Load-Date:** August 27, 2023

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[***The Democrats Are Their Own Worst Enemies; Pamela Paul***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69J1-RHB1-DXY4-X1K3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 2, 2023 Thursday 23:31 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 998 words

**Byline:** Pamela Paul

**Highlight:** John B. Judis and Ruy Teixeira say the Democratic Party is failing in matters of culture and in matters of class.

**Body**

This should be the Democratic Party’s moment. Donald Trump’s stranglehold has lurched the G.O.P. toward the fringe. Republican congressional behavior echoes that of an intemperate toddler and the party’s intellectual and ideological foundations have become completely unmoored.

But far from dominant, the Democratic Party seems disconnected from the priorities, needs and values of many Americans.

Current polls show a 2024 rematch between Trump and Joe Biden [*too close*](https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/president/us/general_election_trump_vs_biden-6247.html#polls) for [*true comfort*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/polls/president-general/2024/); the same is true should [*Nikki*](https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2024/president/us/general_election_haley_vs_biden-8127.html) Haley or [*Ron DeSantis*](https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2024/president/us/general_election_desantis_vs_biden-7967.html) be the Republican nominee. Many constituents who were once the Democratic Party’s reliable base — the ***working class***, middle-class families, even Black and Latino Americans and other ethnic minorities — have veered toward the G.O.P. In a development that has baffled Democrats, a greater share of those groups voted for Republican candidates in recent elections.

Something worrisome has happened to the party of the people.

This worry isn’t entirely new. In 2004, Thomas Frank’s book asked, “What’s the Matter With Kansas?” Why, Frank wondered, did working- and middle-class Americans vote Republican when Democratic policies were more attuned to their needs?

The question to ask now is: Why isn’t the Democratic Party serving their needs either?

John B. Judis and Ruy Teixeira, authors of 2002’s hugely influential “[*The Emerging Democratic Majority*](https://www.nytimes.com/2002/11/24/books/wait-till-next-year.html),” might seem like the last people to have an answer, given [*that book’s*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/25/us/politics/ruy-teixeira-democrats.html) [*failed prophecy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/24/upshot/democratic-majority-book.html) that America would be majority Democratic by 2010 given shifts in the electorate and the population.

But in “[*Where Have All the Democrats Gone?*](https://us.macmillan.com/books/9781250877499/wherehaveallthedemocratsgone#:~:text=In%20Where%20Have%20All%20the,and%20partnership%20of%20the%20working)” they give a pretty persuasive explanation — one that should be read as a warning.

If the answer to Frank’s question was that cultural issues can trump issues of class in ways that favor Republicans, Judis’s and Teixeira’s answer looks doubly troubling to Democrats: Not only is the Democratic Party increasingly failing in matters of culture (despite its strength on abortion rights), it’s also seen as failing in matters of class. In a country that has become more overtly populist in its values and needs, Democrats are the ones who look like the party of out-of-touch elitists.

“We’ve had this peculiar situation where the reigning power in the Democratic Party has been between progressive social organizations and the neoliberal business elite,” Judis told me when I spoke to him last week. The majority of Americans are feeling left behind.

This bodes ill for Democrats. As he and Teixeira write in the book, “The Democratic Party has had its greatest success when it sought to represent the common man and woman against the rich and powerful, the people against the elite and the plebeians against the patricians.”

When it comes to economics, the authors say, Democrats have too often pursued the interests of their own elites and donors. Since the 1990s, the party has pursued policies that worsen the economic plight of Americans who are not well off. President Bill Clinton, for example, supported NAFTA and China’s entry into the World Trade Organization, which undermined American manufacturing; the administration also endorsed the Banking Act of 1999, which accelerated the financialization of the American economy. While Barack Obama conveyed a populist message on the campaign trail, as president, they say, he became captive to neoliberal Washington.

Much of the Democratic Party’s agenda has been set by what Judis and Teixeira call the “shadow party,” a mix of donors from Wall Street, Hollywood and Silicon Valley, wealthy foundations, activist groups, the media, lobbyists and scholars.

Democratic leaders seem too willing to settle for a kind of cheap progressivism — a carbon-neutral, virtue-signaling, box-checking update on what was once called limousine liberalism. But the Democratic Party cannot win and America cannot flourish if it doesn’t prioritize the economic well-being of the American majority over the financial interests and cultural fixations of an elite minority.

Biden has curtailed some of its shadow party’s economic agenda — but less so its cultural and social policies. There, Judis and Teixeira argue, the party seems bent on imposing a narrow progressive stance on issues like race, “sexual creationism” (commonly known as [*gender ideology*](https://unherd.com/2022/12/why-i-stopped-being-a-good-girl-2/)), immigration and climate, at the expense of more broadly shared beliefs within the electorate.

The moral values may differ at each extreme of the two parties, but their efforts to moralize can sound an awful lot alike to many Americans. Even though Democrats themselves are adopting “a pretty aggressive way to change the culture,” Teixeira told me, the Democratic Party acts as if anyone who reacts against the assumptions of its progressive wing is completely off base.

“There’s a certain amount of chutzpah among Democrats to assume that it’s only the other side pursuing a culture war,” he said.

For too long, the Democratic Party depended on shifting demographics to shore up its side. Then it relied on the horror show of the G.O.P. to scare people onto its side. Both have been an effective and damaging distraction. As Judis and Teixeira put it, Democrats “need to look in the mirror and examine the extent to which their own failures contributed to the rise of the most toxic tendencies on the political right.”

We can no longer afford to avoid the hard truths. If the Democratic Party doesn’t focus on what it can deliver to more Americans, it won’t have to wonder anymore where all the Democrats went.

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PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY SAM WHITNEY/THE NEW YORK TIMES; JOHN MCKEEN AND PHANASITTI/GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page A21.

**Load-Date:** November 2, 2023

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[***Fighting Inequity With Joyful Noise***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BP1-WMC1-JBG3-603Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 31, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section RE; Column 0; Real Estate Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 2444 words

**Byline:** By Debra Kamin

**Body**

During the Harlem Renaissance, Black people were underpaid for their work and exploited for their rent. To make ends meet, some hosted rent parties, celebrations with an undercurrent of desperation.

Minnie Pindar was at home in Harlem on a Saturday in 1929, and she had a party to throw.

She and her sister, Lucibelle Pindar, had passed out invitations, printed on cheap, white card stock, promising a good time in their ground floor apartment at 149 West 117th Street. ''Refreshments Just It'' and ''Music Won't Quit,'' the invitation read. Their invitation, one of dozens of similar party invitations tucked into the Langston Hughes papers at Yale's Beinecke Library, hints at the rich but difficult lives of Black people living in New York at the dawn of the Harlem Renaissance.

On that Saturday, Nov. 2, the Pindar sisters likely readied their home to welcome guests. Maybe they moved the furniture to make room for dancing. Maybe Ms. Pindar wore her best dress. There would likely be revelry and laughter that night, but throwing the party was a necessity. Every guest was expected to give them a quarter. The rent was due.

Minnie Pindar was 23, had two young sons and worked as a housekeeper, a job that made about $50 a month in 1929, the start of the Great Depression. Lucibelle, who went by Lucille, was 19. The rent for the apartment that the four of them shared with their mother, 45-year-old Sylvia Walker, and two of Sylvia's other grandchildren, was $55 a month.

It was the steep price to pay for the promise of Harlem, a siren for Black Southerners who were rewriting the story of their lives in the midst of the Great Migration. Escaping the terror of lynchings, Black migrants were flowing from south to north in a movement of millions. By 1920, 75,000 Black people had made Harlem their permanent stop, shaping it into the largest Black community in the country, a place for Black public life in America to be resurrected on their own terms. Its streets crackled with the energy of renewal, and in its cafes and clubs, an electric revival of Black literature, scholarship, poetry, music and politics was playing out in real time and kept reverberating well into the 1930s.

Inside Harlem's packed tenements, however, the picture was more grim. Black people in 1920s Harlem were underpaid for their work and exploited for their rent, often charged 30 percent more per room than white ***working-class*** New Yorkers.

I don't know how many rent parties Minnie threw. I do know that her younger son, Cleveland Gilmore, never liked to talk about his childhood and the poverty he lived with as a boy. I know this because nearly 100 years after she and her sister passed out invitations and opened their home, I called her grandson, Amir Gilmore, and asked him about his family's past.

I had come prepared with questions. But what I actually gave Amir was answers.

Mr. Gilmore, 33, never knew his grandmother's name. Today he is an assistant professor and associate dean at Washington State University. He has spent his academic career focused on dissecting the meaning of Black joy and perseverance, always digging, he said, toward some unknown corner of Black history. Turns out it was his own.

Ms. Pindar could probably never have dreamed of such a future for her grandchild. The present was enough to navigate.

In 1929, a quart of milk cost 16 cents; a dozen eggs, 47 cents.

That Saturday, the mercury kept climbing, all the way to an unseasonable high of 72 degrees. Thousands of New Yorkers sought respite at Coney Island where some in bathing suits ventured into the water.

But for Ms. Pindar, that day was all about the rent.

Rent parties were playing out behind thousands of other closed doors in run-down Harlem buildings. Tenants would use the proceeds to pay their landlord on the first of the month, and then hopefully make it another 30 days before scrimping again.

The Red Box

Because of Langston Hughes, there's an extensive record of Harlem's rent parties.

Hughes saved dozens of invitations, squirreling them away in a red box that once housed his checkbooks. He held on to them even as he traveled as a newspaper correspondent in the Soviet Union, Haiti and Japan, and a series of rented American rowhouses until he finally settled into his own permanent home in Harlem, on East 127th Street, in 1947.

He would later donate them as part of a much larger collection of his papers housed at Yale's Beinecke Library, where they have a permanent home in the James Weldon Johnson Memorial Collection of African American Arts and Letters. He had worked as a personal assistant to Carter G. Woodson, known as the father of Black History Month.

''He was doing this for posterity, to let people know that these things were happening,'' said Melissa Barton, a curator of the Yale Collection of American Literature.

Hughes moved to New York in the early 1920s as a student at Columbia University, feeling more at home in the community of Harlem than at the Ivy League school.

Harlem was the ideal muse. In his autobiography, ''The Big Sea,'' he describes how as the Harlem Renaissance gained steam, ''white people began to come to Harlem in droves,'' prompting Black dancers, musicians and singers to shift their acts to please their visiting audiences. It was a phenomenon of economy that obscured the historical record. ''The gay and sparkling life of the so-called Negro Renaissance of the '20s was not so gay and sparkling beneath the surface as it looked,'' he wrote. ''Nontheatrical, nonintellectual Harlem was an unwilling victim of its own vogue. It didn't like to be stared at by white folks.''

Rent parties like Ms. Pindar's were bawdy, booze-soaked and offered an escape from the white gaze. Outside, there was prohibition and gawkers from Lower Manhattan. Inside, there was beer and bathtub gin. There was live music, including appearances by Duke Ellington and Fats Waller.

At rent parties, Hughes wrote, he met truckers, seamstresses and shoeshine boys.

Rug-Cutters

At rent parties, Harlemites experimented with new dances. None were as much of a phenomenon as the Lindy Hop, which emerged in dance halls like the Savoy Ballroom and married moves from other dances including the Charleston, the Texas Tommy and the Breakaway with individual styling and flips, all set to the soaring tempos of swing jazz.

Nearly all of the invitations followed the same format: a clever rhyming couplet at the top offered a snippet of homespun poetry, followed by a euphemism advertising the main event. Most hosts, including Minnie and Lucille, announced their gatherings as a ''Social Whist Party,'' but some opted for ''A midsummer frolic,'' ''A beer brawl'' or even a ''Chitterling Strut.'' Hosts promised drinks, food and tunes, then listed the date and time as well as the apartment.

The sisters promised a room full of lively Black people, announcing ''lots of Browns with plenty of pep'' would be on hand at the Saturday night affair.

Hughes wasn't the only great Black writer chronicling the moment in Harlem.

Black literature and music found its voice in those moments. The pulse of rent parties appears as percussion beneath much of the art of the time. Duke Ellington and his Jungle Band released the swinging, sizzling ''Rent Party Blues'' in 1929. Countee Cullen penned ''Heritage,'' a meditation on the ancestors, in 1925. Billie Holiday made her debut on a Harlem nightclub stage in 1931, while Duke Ellington, Fats Waller and Louis Armstrong were blending ragtime and blues into the fever dream through which jazz music emerged. And on any given night, Harlem residents were as likely to hear a live rendition of ''Ain't Misbehavin''' and ''Perdido'' in a living room at a rent party as they were at the Alhambra or the Apollo.

Zora Neale Hurston, who moved to Harlem in the 1920s and sometimes sat in the bedroom of her small apartment at 108 West 131st Street while parties raged in her living room, compiled a dictionary of ''Harlem Slanguage'' that includes the term ''rug-cutter'' -- a dancer at a Harlem rent party whose moves are so sharp that their feet could cut the host's rug.

But while much of the historic canon about rent parties focuses on their raucous joy, it was a stalking inequity that prompted them.

''When you think about real estate in the context of rent parties, rent parties were held by people who were in very precarious circumstances,'' Ms. Barton said. ''They were acts of desperation.''

For many Black Americans migrating from the South to northern cities, like New York, Chicago and Detroit, rent parties were the ultimate act of desperation.

It is unclear when Minnie, Lucille and their mother, Sylvia Walker, moved to the West 117th Street tenement. A 1930 census record shows Minnie Pindar was born ''about 1907,'' was Negro, single, and had not attended school but was able to read and write. The census also lists her occupation as a servant for a private family and details her mother's birthplace as Georgia; her father's was Florida. In that same census, Sylvia Walker, Minnie's mother, is listed as the head of household for their rented apartment; the value is listed as $55 per month.

Rent parties reached their peak during the years of the Great Depression, but some were still being thrown after World War II. Billie Holiday continued to perform ''Strange Fruit,'' a meditation on lynchings. For hundreds of thousands of Black people, rent parties were much more than an exuberant pastime well into the 1950s. They were a gasp of freedom in a country that doubled as a chokehold.

The neighborhood evolved. An elevated train that ran along Second Avenue, likely a train Ms. Pindar took, and the tenement that she tried to hold onto in 1929, are long gone.

'Passive Observers'

By 2000, Minnie's tenement had been replaced by an empty lot. Nachum Turetzky, a philosophy professor who is originally from Israel, bought it. He was a graduate student at CUNY at the time with a wife and 3-year-old son. He watched the new townhouse go up, and today lives alone on the top floor and rents out the unit below for $4,300.

''Harlem has been my home for the last 25 years,'' he said.

As is the story across New York City, crime peaked in Harlem in the late 1980s and 1990s, and gentrification continues to rewrite the neighborhood's story, block by block. Mr. Turetzky said he felt like he was playing a part in the neighborhood's revival. ''Harlem was devastated but it was also beautiful. We had the sense that something was happening here, and we wanted to buy a place and not pay somebody else's mortgage,'' he said. ''This block was a shining star in the darkness.''

James and Natalie Fine, who moved into one of the rental units in September 2022, admit they're outsiders but say they've received a warm welcome.

''When we first moved here, you could just see this was a community. People have been here for generations,'' said Mr. Fine, 34. They chose their unit, a two-bedroom with a basement, for a common reason -- it was affordable.

He is a lawyer and Ms. Fine, also 34, is a nurse who works in medical device sales. The couple, who married last May, are expecting their first child and don't plan to stay long -- they're looking to move to Washington, D.C., closer to Mr. Fine's family, this summer after their baby is born.

''We're sort of passive observers in this place of living history,'' Mr. Fine said.

But some 95 years later, a landlord-tenant relationship remains fraught: The Fines are currently in a dispute over maintenance issues with Mr. Turetzky, and have withheld their rent for the last five months.

The Housekeeper's Grandson

Minnie Pindar's name reappears in a 1952 marriage license to Scotty Eckford, a union organizer of Black hotel employees in New York City. Mr. Eckford was also the uncle of Elizabeth Eckford, the American civil rights activist who made history in 1957 when she enrolled in the all-white Little Rock Central High School and attended class.

Ms. Pindar died in the Bronx in 1997. Her younger son, Cleveland Gilmore, was 2 on that unseasonably warm November night in 1929. As an adult, he never talked about rent parties, or life in Harlem at all.

When I contacted him about his family's history, he said he was stunned to learn that his grandmother was at the epicenter of the Jazz Age and the Harlem Renaissance.

''My dad was all about bits and pieces,'' said Mr. Gilmore. ''He grew up poor. He didn't like to talk about his life. He would tell us little things, like how he would buy watermelon for a nickel, but I never knew about his family.''

The elder Mr. Gilmore died of a brain aneurysm in 2004, when Amir was 14. Despite the silence between them, Cleveland and Amir did have one language to communicate: jazz.

In 1929, maybe Cleveland and his mother watched excitedly as the Alhambra Ballroom opened its doors on 126th Street, with an upstairs stage that would be graced by Billie Holiday and Bessie Smith. Maybe they walked past the Cotton Club on 142nd Street and scorned its ban on Black patrons, even while it welcomed Black performers like Ethel Waters and Cab Calloway to its stage. Or maybe, on early morning walks with his mother near 134th street, the elder Mr. Gilmore heard strains from Fats Waller, Harry Dial and Herman Autrey at Smalls Paradise, where 6 a.m. breakfast dances were led by a full jazz band.

''I started my Ph.D. because of my dad, and because we had such a tough relationship,'' he said. ''He found his joy in jazz. And so that's what we did. He would put on music, and the walls would come down. He would open up and it was like talking to a different man. He would be vulnerable. And then the music would end and the walls would come back up.''

In his dissertation for his doctorate, Mr. Gilmore set out to answer the questions his father left open, dissecting the roots of Black joy and pulling the thread on what Black aesthetics mean without the presence of a white patron. Without realizing it, he was circling close to that Harlem ground-floor apartment and to all the reasons his grandmother gave a party, with jazz and dancing filling the air and with Langston Hughes quietly taking note of the date and time.

''I was always so curious about my origins and who I am. I've always thought there has to be more. I talk about history, Black life and the things Black people had to do to make it,'' he said. ''So to learn my grandmother was doing those things, living through these times in abject poverty and finding not just a way to survive but also to have fun and find joy, that's so badass.''

Susan C. Beachy contributed research.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/28/realestate/rent-party-harlem-renaissance.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/28/realestate/rent-party-harlem-renaissance.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: For years, the poet Langston Hughes collected rent-party invitations from Harlem residents, storing them in a red box, above. During the Harlem Renaissance, live music and dancing, in the styles of the time, left, were common at such events. But the parties were acts of desperation. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY TONY CENICOLA/THE NEW YORK TIMES

CHOMBURG CENTER FOR RESEARCH IN BLACK CULTURE, PHOTOGRAPHS AND PRINTS DIVISION, THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY) (RE1)

Top row and below, invitations to Harlem rent parties found among the collected papers of the writer Langston Hughes at Yale University. Clockwise from top left: migrants from Florida, heading north in 1940

a newspaper clipping from 1929 about what has long been a contentious issue

dancers in Harlem in a photograph from 1929

and a New York City gathering in 1944 included the actor Canada Lee, center in white shirt, and Hughes, right. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JACK DELANO/FARM SECURITY ADMINISTRATION, OFFICE OF WAR INFORMATION PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

GEORGE KARGER/THE CHRONICLE COLLECTION, VIA GETTY IMAGES

DAILY NEWS ARCHIVE

BILLY ROSE THEATER DIVISION, THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY) (RE4)

Clockwise from left: Amir Gilmore, the grandson of Minnie Pindar, who is known to have hosted a rent party in Harlem in 1929

a new building now sits at the site of that party, an apartment at 149 West 117th Street

Nachum Turetzky, a philosophy professor, owns the new building, lives on the top floor and rents out the unit below

and James and Natalie Fine are Mr. Turetzky's tenants. ''We're sort of passive observers in this place of living history,'' Mr. Fine said. Below left, inset, Harlem has long inspired and supported musical talents in the jazz tradition, including Miles Davis, John Coltrane and Nina Simone. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES ESTRIN/THE NEW YORK TIMES

TONY CENICOLA/THE NEW YORK TIMES

RAJAH BOSE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

JAMES ESTRIN/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (RE5) This article appeared in print on page RE1, RE4, RE5.

**Load-Date:** March 31, 2024

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[***Unlikely Co-Conspirators in the Fight Against Free Trade***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B4F-8SC1-JBG3-6148-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 18, 2024 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2024 The New York Times Company

**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 18; FARAH STOCKMAN

**Length:** 1510 words

**Byline:** By Farah Stockman

**Body**

They met in the 1990s, at an event about the North American Free Trade Agreement, where they were the only people arguing against it. He was a conservative trade lawyer who filed anti-dumping cases on behalf of American steel companies and predicted that the treaty would hurt American jobs. (It did.) She was a liberal activist with a consumer advocacy organization who planned protests featuring giant puppets. Her worry was that NAFTA's rules would hurt working people and override U.S. legal standards on food safety and the environment. (They did.)

These two had something else in common: Both had grown up in Midwestern towns that suffered when manufacturing moved overseas. She hailed from Wausau, Wis., where her family had run a scrapyard. He grew up in Ashtabula, Ohio, and his father put himself through college by working in a steel mill. After that first meeting, they kept in touch, swapping notes on how to throw sand in the gears of a free trade machine that seemed unstoppable.

Thirty years later, this unlikely friendship -- between Bob Lighthizer, Donald Trump's U.S. trade representative, and Lori Wallach, the director of the ReThink Trade program at the American Economic Liberties Project, a nonprofit research and advocacy group -- continues. And it played a role in bringing about one of the biggest shifts in U.S. trade policy in decades: the astonishing reversal of U.S. support for the international trading system that American officials had long championed.

Mr. Lighthizer is best known as the implementer of Mr. Trump's agenda of economic populism. He renegotiated NAFTA, slapped tariffs on China and put the World Trade Organization's appeals court on ice by refusing to nominate new judges. What is less well known is that he did all that with the help of Ms. Wallach and other progressive Democrats, who proved to be some of his most reliable allies -- over the howling objections of corporate-oriented Republicans. In the acknowledgments of his book ''No Trade Is Free,'' Mr. Lighthizer singled out Ms. Wallach as ''a longtime friend and co-conspirator.''

His policies were hated by Wall Street, but they are popular with many ordinary Americans, which is one reason that the Biden administration has not rolled them back and in some cases has even expanded them. Like Mr. Lighthizer, Mr. Biden's U.S. trade representative, Katherine Tai, speaks of trade policies that should be centered on the needs of American workers, not multinational corporations.

Neither progressives nor Republicans are eager to talk about the success of this alliance. It's awkward in an election year, especially for those, including Ms. Wallach, who are understandably more focused on Mr. Trump's pledge to be a dictator on Day 1 than his attitude toward commerce. But it also illuminates something the Trump administration got right and why this part of its agenda has endured, despite the chaos and polarizing behavior of Mr. Trump.

Mr. Lighthizer and Ms. Wallach were free-trade skeptics before it was cool. In the early 1990s, they lobbied against the creation of the World Trade Organization and against China's admission to it. In 1997, Mr. Lighthizer warned that ''if China is allowed to join the W.T.O. on the lenient terms that it has long been demanding, virtually no manufacturing job in this country will be safe.''

They came to their skepticism because of a deep concern that, left unchecked, free trade would sacrifice the economic well-being of ***working-class*** Americans at the altar of corporate profits. Trade deals were hammered out by people who cared about gaining geopolitical clout, not what was happening in Wausau or Ashtabula.

''It was 'Sell out the working people -- they are not important,''' Mr. Lighthizer told me, describing what he believed to be the mentality of some trade negotiators. ''What's important is 'The French like us.'''

Yet every U.S. president since Bill Clinton pushed it forward, regardless of party, until 2016, when both Mr. Trump and Bernie Sanders spoke out against free trade agreements. Mr. Lighthizer knew that Mr. Trump felt passionately about the subject -- thanks to an ad Mr. Trump took out in 1987 -- but the two had never met. Shortly after Mr. Trump won the election, Mr. Lighthizer got a call and soon had his dream job: U.S. trade representative.

In 2017, as the Trump White House filled with sycophants and Wall Street guys, Mr. Lighthizer stood out. He had years of experience on Capitol Hill, having worked for Bob Dole, a powerful Kansas senator, and served as a trade negotiator under Ronald Reagan. Also, Mr. Lighthizer had built warm relationships with union leaders and Democrats. Ms. Wallach was thrilled, and she supported his nomination.

''It wasn't a question of 'Hey, Bob, are you going to do the right thing?''' she told me. ''It was that Bob's in there and he's going to do the right thing, but will he be able to, given that Donald Trump is a walking, talking multinational corporation and all around him are a bunch of class-A corporate hacks?''

So they joined forces again. Mr. Lighthizer got to work on renegotiating NAFTA, which involved haggling with Canada, Mexico and Capitol Hill. He was already working with a group of free-trade-skeptical Republicans. Ms. Wallach urged him to reach out to Representative Rosa DeLauro of Connecticut, a liberal who led the charge against the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a free-trade agreement that the Obama administration had negotiated. After NAFTA went into effect, Ms. DeLauro's district lost a factory that had employed thousands of people. Mr. Lighthizer won her support after countless hours of meetings.

''I found him to be a straight shooter,'' Ms. DeLauro told me. ''Bill Clinton called us thugs when we opposed NAFTA. Barack Obama said we didn't know what we were talking about when we opposed the Trans-Pacific Partnership. Bob Lighthizer listened to us and knew that there was room for change.''

The result was a trade deal that strengthened Mexican workers' right to unionize and added trade incentives for auto companies to locate production in plants that paid their workers at least $16 an hour.

Their finest hour was when they managed to kill a sacred cow of international trade: a provision in NAFTA that gave three international judges the power to resolve disputes between investors and countries, sidestepping domestic laws and courts. Ms. Wallach helped Mr. Lighthizer frame the argument against it in conservative terms.

''I talked to her all the time,'' Mr. Lighthizer told me of Ms. Wallach. ''Never once did she not give me the best advice that she could. Never did she betray confidence. I didn't keep any secret from her.''

When the new NAFTA passed overwhelmingly in Congress, the business world stood aghast as one of their most cherished models for neoliberal economics was dismantled. After decades of fighting a losing battle, the underdogs had finally won. Ms. Wallach sent Mr. Lighthizer homemade jam from Wisconsin. Mr. Lighthizer sent Ms. Wallach a bottle of champagne.

Miraculously, Mr. Lighthizer managed to make it to the end of the Trump administration on good terms with both Mr. Trump and Ms. Wallach -- no small feat. Then came Jan. 6, 2021, the day Mr. Trump whipped up a mob of his supporters and pointed them at the Capitol. Mr. Lighthizer condemned the actions of the mob, but he never broke with Mr. Trump. Today he's working on trade policy with the America First Policy Institute, a pro-Trump think tank that several other former Trump officials have joined.

Mr. Lighthizer said that being successful in Washington requires staying in your lane and picking your battles. His lane is trade, and on this issue, he and Mr. Trump are in total agreement. A slew of Republicans urged Mr. Trump to overrule Mr. Lighthizer's populist moves. Mr. Trump never did.

''President Trump's instincts on this are exactly the same as mine,'' Mr. Lighthizer told me. ''He used to tell me, 'Hang in there.'''

It has been hard for Ms. Wallach to accept her friend's enduring loyalty to a man she views as instigating an ''all but unprecedented threat to U.S. democracy.'' Jan. 6 rocked her to the core. She avoided discussing it with Mr. Lighthizer for years. It had taken a wrecking ball like Mr. Trump to upend decades of conventional wisdom about free trade, but the country doesn't need a wrecking ball like that anymore.

Yet this friendship persists. Maybe it's because, after all these years, they genuinely like and respect each other. Or maybe it's because they understand how fragile victories in Washington can be. Armies of lobbyists are out there, trying to undo what they have done. The ability to keep working together, she said, ''is worth fighting to preserve.''

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**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Lori Wallach, above, and Bob Lighthizer, right, have worked together for years to disrupt the free trade machine. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JASON ANDREW FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

GESI SCHILLING FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A18.

**Load-Date:** January 18, 2024

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[***Black Pastors Pressing Biden On Cease-Fire***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B6T-01D1-DXY4-X196-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 29, 2024 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1680 words

**Byline:** By Maya King

**Body**

As the Israel-Hamas war enters its fourth month, a coalition of Black faith leaders is pressuring the Biden administration to push for a cease-fire -- a campaign spurred in part by their parishioners, who are increasingly distressed by the suffering of Palestinians and critical of the president's response to it.

More than 1,000 Black pastors representing hundreds of thousands of congregants nationwide have issued the demand. In sit-down meetings with White House officials, and through open letters and advertisements, ministers have made a moral case for President Biden and his administration to press Israel to stop its offensive operations in Gaza, which have killed thousands of civilians. They are also calling for the release of hostages held by Hamas and an end to Israel's occupation of the West Bank.

The effort at persuasion also carries a political warning, detailed in interviews with a dozen Black faith leaders and their allies. Many of their parishioners, these pastors said, are so dismayed by the president's posture toward the war that their support for his re-election bid could be imperiled.

''Black faith leaders are extremely disappointed in the Biden administration on this issue,'' said the Rev. Timothy McDonald, the senior pastor of First Iconium Baptist Church in Atlanta, which boasts more than 1,500 members. He was one of the first pastors of more than 200 Black clergy members in Georgia, a key swing state, to sign an open letter calling for a cease-fire. ''We are afraid,'' Mr. McDonald said. ''And we've talked about it -- it's going to be very hard to persuade our people to go back to the polls and vote for Biden.''

Any cracks in the ordinarily rock-solid foundation of Black support for Mr. Biden, and for Democrats nationally, could be of enormous significance in November.

The intense feeling on the war in Gaza is among myriad unexpected ways that the war has scrambled U.S. politics. And it comes as Mr. Biden is already facing signs of waning enthusiasm among Black voters, who have for generations been the Democrats' most loyal voting base.

The coalition of Black clergy pushing Mr. Biden for a cease-fire is diverse, from conservative-leaning Southern Baptists to more progressive nondenominational congregations in the Midwest and Northeast.

''This is not a fringe issue,'' said the Rev. Michael McBride, a founder of Black Church PAC and the lead pastor of the Way church in Berkeley, Calif. ''There are many of us who feel that this administration has lost its way on this.''

Seeing images of destruction in Gaza, many Black voters whose churches have become involved in the cease-fire movement have voiced increasing disenchantment with Democrats, who they feel have done little to stop the war.

Their pastors said their congregants' strong reactions to the war were striking.

''Black clergy have seen war, militarism, poverty and racism all connected,'' said Barbara Williams-Skinner, co-convener of the National African American Clergy Network, whose members lead roughly 15 million Black churchgoers. She helped coordinate recent meetings between the White House and faith leaders. ''But the Israel-Gaza war, unlike Iran and Afghanistan, has evoked the kind of deep-seated angst among Black people that I have not seen since the civil rights movement.''

When Hamas invaded Israel on Oct. 7, killing some 1,200 Israelis and taking about 240 people hostage, leagues of Black pastors joined their counterparts in interfaith prayer for Israel, whose land they revere as holy.

But since then, the pastors' Palestinian allies in the United States, Gaza and the West Bank have sought their assistance on behalf of civilians suffering under Israel's counteroffensive. And the pastors have gotten an earful from their own congregants, especially younger churchgoers, about the conflict and Mr. Biden's full-throated support for Israel.

That sentiment more broadly reflects a strong sense of solidarity between Black Americans and Palestinians that has shaped opinion since the war began.

''We see them as a part of us,'' said the Rev. Cynthia Hale, the founder and senior pastor of Ray of Hope Christian Church in Decatur, Ga. ''They are oppressed people. We are oppressed people.''

The Black pastors' effort has forced the Biden administration to pay attention, as the president readies for what is expected to be an extremely close election against former President Donald J. Trump.

It began in late October, when a delegation of Black faith leaders from across the country descended on Washington, where they called for an end to the fighting in meetings with the White House and members of the Congressional Black Caucus. Hundreds of pastors signed open letters to Democratic leaders and paid for full-page advertisements in national newspapers, including The New York Times, to push for a cease-fire on humanitarian grounds and call for the release of all hostages being held in Gaza.

Since its founding, the Black church has been considered a power center of Black political organizing. In addition to providing spiritual guidance and challenging political leaders on moral grounds, Black religious leaders have galvanized their members to exercise their hard-won voting rights, often with great success.

Mr. Biden, especially, has recognized the importance of the Black church. One of his first campaign events of 2024 took place at Mother Emanuel A.M.E. in Charleston, S.C., on Jan. 8, making him the first sitting president to speak from the church's storied pulpit. When protesters interrupted his speech with calls for a cease-fire, their cries were drowned out by shouts of ''Four more years!''

Mr. Biden's campaign did not comment on the record for this article.

Some leaders say Mr. Biden still has time to change the trajectory of the conflict abroad and, in turn, recover any love lost between his administration and Black voters.

''As long as Blacks feel that the president is being genuine, I think he will continue to have our support,'' said Bishop Reginald T. Jackson, who presides over more than 500 African Methodist Episcopal churches in Georgia. He, too, signed the letter calling for a cease-fire and the return of hostages. ''I think he's demonstrating his authenticity by the friction that you can tell is between him and Netanyahu as relates to what's going on in the Middle East,'' he said, referring to Israel's prime minister.

Still, six Black faith leaders who spoke with The New York Times said they or their colleagues had considered rescinding invitations to Democratic politicians hoping to speak during their Sunday services, or withholding public support for Mr. Biden's re-election until his administration committed to a cease-fire.

''What they are witnessing from the administration in Gaza is a glaring contradiction to what we thought the president and the administration was about,'' said the Rev. Frederick D. Haynes, the senior pastor of Friendship-West Baptist Church in Dallas and the president and chief executive of the Rainbow PUSH Coalition, the civil rights organization founded by the Rev. Jesse L. Jackson. His church has more than 12,000 members. ''So when you hear a president say the term, 'redeem the soul of America,' well, this is a stain, a scar on the soul of America. There's something about this that becomes hypocritical.''

Black faith leaders are nonetheless conscious of the risks in pushing Mr. Biden on a cease-fire with Mr. Trump looming as the likely Republican presidential nominee. Even pastors most critical of Mr. Biden on the war in Gaza agreed that a Trump re-election would be a worst-case scenario for their largely Black and ***working-class*** congregations.

They also suggested that Mr. Trump, who has said he would bar refugees from Gaza from entering the United States, would most likely have less sympathy than Mr. Biden for the plight of Gaza's civilians.

But the difference between grudging and enthusiastic support could be significant. Asked whether the war in the Middle East could threaten Mr. Biden's chances in November, the Rev. Jamal Bryant, the senior pastor of New Birth Missionary Baptist Church in Stonecrest, Ga., said, ''I think Biden threatens his own success.''

Democrats, Mr. Bryant observed, have seemed to be ''almost on cruise control and feel like: Oh, the Black people will come around. They'll be forgiving, and they'll go along with us.'' But, he added, as the war drags on, ''I really think that the ante is going to really elevate itself.''

The cease-fire calls have strained some relationships between Black pastors and Jewish leaders.

Rabbi Peter S. Berg, the senior rabbi of the Temple in Atlanta, described in an email his ''extraordinary relationship'' with Black pastors and recalled a service at the nearby Ebenezer Baptist Church over the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday weekend in which Christians and Jews prayed together for peace and the safe return of the hostages.

He added, though, that he felt the demand for a cease-fire, from some pastors whom he has long considered friends, did not fully consider the feelings of Jews with ties to Israel.

''While we all want peace and for this war to end, I was disappointed to see that some faith leaders call for a cease-fire without focusing on bringing the hostages home and holding Hamas accountable for the atrocities they have committed,'' Rabbi Berg said, adding, ''This is the time to double down on our strong relationships and to be open and honest with each other.''

Black pastors said they had sought to reassure Jewish leaders who took issue with their cease-fire push, underlining that their demand was not rooted in antisemitism and that they were also calling for the release of Israeli hostages and for Israel to be safe from attack.

''Our call for a cease-fire ought not be read as a call for the killing or terror of Jewish individuals and families,'' said Mr. McBride, who took part in the meetings in Washington. ''We're against all of these wicked expressions of dehumanization and terror, wherever they show up.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/28/us/politics/black-pastors-biden-gaza-israel.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/28/us/politics/black-pastors-biden-gaza-israel.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALYSSA POINTER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A14) This article appeared in print on page A1, A14.

**Load-Date:** January 29, 2024

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[***A Writer, Especially Attuned, Considers a Perplexing Age***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69HK-DRN1-DXY4-X02B-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 31, 2023 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. 7; FICTION

**Length:** 938 words

**Byline:** By Dwight Garner

**Body**

Set during the pandemic, Sigrid Nunez's new novel, ''The Vulnerables,'' is a story of unlikely companionship and personal reflection.

THE VULNERABLES, by Sigrid Nunez

Animals and uncomfortable topics: Count on these in a Sigrid Nunez novel. Her slim, discursive, minor yet charming new one, ''The Vulnerables,'' is no exception.

The animal is a parrot, a sociable macaw named Eureka. The narrator, an unnamed writer, moves into a friend's apartment in Manhattan to care for Eureka when his owner gets stuck on the West Coast. It's the spring of 2020 and America is in Covid lockdown. The bird needs company. Macaws have egos. They can go mad, like the rest of us, if neglected for too long.

The apartment, a condo near Madison Square Park, is luxury squared. It is described as ''the collision of great imagination, great taste and a whole lot of money.'' The owners also have a place upstate, and a third in (obviously) Marfa, Texas. If there is one thing Covid taught us, Nunez writes, it's that more people than we thought have places upstate.

''The Vulnerables'' is Nunez's ninth novel. Her best-known remains ''The Friend,'' which won a National Book Award in 2018. This one comes across as a Covid diary, with a light scaffolding of incident to hold its meditations up.

The narrator's interactions with the parrot are funny and moving. Not having more pets is among her central regrets. Playing with Eureka makes her melancholy, because ''animals having fun can be a poignant spectacle -- I suppose partly because it narrows the gap between us and them.''

I can do without animals, most of the time, in novels. But Nunez is a closer observer than most, and she is wittier. She reports on a cockatoo that has been taught to say Bette Davis's famous line, parodied by Elizabeth Taylor in ''Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?'': ''What a dump!''

The uncomfortable topics are mostly the narrator's instinctive pushback against what Robert Hughes called the culture of complaint. ''When men appear in fiction now,'' she writes, ''it's usually to be criticized or denounced for something. The one thing you're never prepared to hear is that the men will do the right thing.'' It isn't just women showing men in a relentlessly bad light, each one a ''bungler or loser or some kind of creep,'' Nunez goes on. Anyone who reads novels on a regular basis will recognize the veracity of her follow-up:

And now male writers bend over backward to emphasize the superiority of their female characters. I meet the same paragon in book after book: high I.Q., great personality, firm moral purpose, dazzling wit. And the trick is to get across that she's also very attractive without ever appearing to be somehow disrespecting her. It would be funny if it weren't so boring.

Seven times out of 10, she fails to mention, the young woman will have green eyes.

This book's title refers to the fact that, because she is on the far side of 65, the narrator is ''a vulnerable'' in the face of Covid. Every novel is about aging, in a way, but Nunez is especially attuned to old age's tender humiliations. When a handsome young man arrives to share the apartment with her, she is unhappy. She had expected to be alone.

He makes her feel her age. Is sex over for her? A friend says that life can be a minefield in middle age, because ''you're not quite ready to give up, but your sexual radar can get a bit skewed, and you have to worry more and more about making a spectacle of yourself.''

Nunez can be relied upon to carry her thoughts one beat further than most writers. Thus her narrator recalls the horror of being a very young person forced to confront, on a class trip on Valentine's Day to a nursing home, the very old:

We did not want to go to that place. Those people -- holy moly, what had happened to them? What calamity had bleached and bent and shriveled them? ... The warbly voices, the shakes, the drool, the munching mouths.

Like certain storms, this novel churns intensely in one place. There is a bit more plot. The narrator joins old friends at a funeral. They stay up late, talking and passing a joint. The narrator has insomnia; her writing is going poorly; she can't concentrate. She wanders happily in an emptied-out Manhattan. She embodies John Ashbery's comment, in his poem ''The Bungalows,'' that ''sometimes standing still is also life.''

She lives near the Union Square Greenmarket, so she doesn't need to have food delivered. But she quotes a viral tweet that described lockdown as ''the middle class hiding while ***working-class*** people bring them things.''

I am committed, until one of us dies, to Nunez's novels. I find them ideal. They are short, wise, provocative, funny -- good and strong company. Her narrator marshals a defense of the short, semifictional novel. ''The traditional novel has lost its place as the major genre of our time,'' she writes. ''It may not be dead yet, but it will not long abide. No matter how well done, it seems to lack urgency. No matter how imaginative, it seems to lack originality.''

She concludes: ''Perhaps what is wanted in our own dark anti-truth times, with all our blatant hypocrisy and the growing use of story as a means to distort and obscure reality, is a literature of personal history and reflection: direct, authentic, scrupulous about fact.''

You don't have to follow her all the way, and start digging the novel's grave, to sense that she is onto something. It has always been true: Being told about life, by a perceptive writer, can be as good as, if not better than, being told a story.

THE VULNERABLES | By Sigrid Nunez | Riverhead | 242 pp. | $28

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/30/books/review/sigrid-nunez-the-vulnerables.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/30/books/review/sigrid-nunez-the-vulnerables.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY CLEMENT PASCAL FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page C7.

**Load-Date:** October 31, 2023

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[***Black Pastors Pressure Biden to Call for a Cease-Fire in Gaza***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B6K-D631-DXY4-X00W-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 28, 2024 Sunday 16:45 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1692 words

**Highlight:** Black congregants’ dismay at President Biden’s posture on the war could imperil his re-election bid.

**Body**

As the Israel-Hamas war enters its fourth month, a coalition of Black faith leaders is pressuring the Biden administration to push for a cease-fire — a campaign spurred in part by their parishioners, who are increasingly distressed by the suffering of Palestinians and critical of the president’s response to it.

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The effort at persuasion also carries a political warning, detailed in interviews with a dozen Black faith leaders and their allies. Many of their parishioners, these pastors said, are so dismayed by the president’s posture toward the war that their support for his re-election bid could be imperiled.

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The intense feeling on the war in Gaza is among myriad unexpected ways that the war has scrambled U.S. politics. And it comes as Mr. Biden is already [*facing signs*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/29/us/politics/black-voters-biden-2024.html) of [*waning enthusiasm*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/12/us/politics/biden-black-democrats.html) among [*Black voters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/29/us/politics/biden-black-voters.html), who have for generations been the Democrats’ most loyal voting base.

The coalition of Black clergy pushing Mr. Biden for a cease-fire is diverse, from conservative-leaning Southern Baptists to more progressive nondenominational congregations in the Midwest and Northeast.

“This is not a fringe issue,” said the Rev. Michael McBride, a founder of Black Church PAC and the lead pastor of the Way church in Berkeley, Calif. “There are many of us who feel that this administration has lost its way on this.”

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Still, six Black faith leaders who spoke with The New York Times said they or their colleagues had considered rescinding invitations to Democratic politicians hoping to speak during their Sunday services, or withholding public support for Mr. Biden’s re-election until his administration committed to a cease-fire.

“What they are witnessing from the administration in Gaza is a glaring contradiction to what we thought the president and the administration was about,” said the Rev. Frederick D. Haynes, the senior pastor of Friendship-West Baptist Church in Dallas and the president and chief executive of the Rainbow PUSH Coalition, the civil rights organization founded by the Rev. Jesse L. Jackson. His church has more than 12,000 members. “So when you hear a president say the term, ‘redeem the soul of America,’ well, this is a stain, a scar on the soul of America. There’s something about this that becomes hypocritical.”

Black faith leaders are nonetheless conscious of the risks in pushing Mr. Biden on a cease-fire with Mr. Trump looming as the likely Republican presidential nominee. Even pastors most critical of Mr. Biden on the war in Gaza agreed that a Trump re-election would be a worst-case scenario for their largely Black and ***working-class*** congregations.

They also suggested that Mr. Trump, who has [*said he would bar refugees from Gaza*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/16/us/politics/trump-gaza-refugees-travel-ban.html) from entering the United States, would most likely have less sympathy than Mr. Biden for the plight of Gaza’s civilians.

But the difference between grudging and enthusiastic support could be significant. Asked whether the war in the Middle East could threaten Mr. Biden’s chances in November, the Rev. Jamal Bryant, the senior pastor of New Birth Missionary Baptist Church in Stonecrest, Ga., said, “I think Biden threatens his own success.”

Democrats, Mr. Bryant observed, have seemed to be “almost on cruise control and feel like: Oh, the Black people will come around. They’ll be forgiving, and they’ll go along with us.” But, he added, as the war drags on, “I really think that the ante is going to really elevate itself.”

The cease-fire calls have strained some relationships between Black pastors and Jewish leaders.

Rabbi Peter S. Berg, the senior rabbi of the Temple in Atlanta, described in an email his “extraordinary relationship” with Black pastors and recalled a service at the nearby Ebenezer Baptist Church over the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday weekend in which Christians and Jews prayed together for peace and the safe return of the hostages.

He added, though, that he felt the demand for a cease-fire, from some pastors whom he has long considered friends, did not fully consider the feelings of Jews with ties to Israel.

“While we all want peace and for this war to end, I was disappointed to see that some faith leaders call for a cease-fire without focusing on bringing the hostages home and holding Hamas accountable for the atrocities they have committed,” Rabbi Berg said, adding, “This is the time to double down on our strong relationships and to be open and honest with each other.”

Black pastors said they had sought to reassure Jewish leaders who took issue with their cease-fire push, underlining that their demand was not rooted in antisemitism and that they were also calling for the release of Israeli hostages and for Israel to be safe from attack.

“Our call for a cease-fire ought not be read as a call for the killing or terror of Jewish individuals and families,” said Mr. McBride, who took part in the meetings in Washington. “We’re against all of these wicked expressions of dehumanization and terror, wherever they show up.”

Audio produced by Adrienne Hurst.

Audio produced by Adrienne Hurst.

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALYSSA POINTER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A14) This article appeared in print on page A1, A14.

**Load-Date:** February 1, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Five Horror Movies to Stream Now***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69KY-89N1-DXY4-X4CH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 11, 2023 Saturday

The New York Times on the Web

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**Section:** Section ; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk

**Length:** 1009 words

**Byline:** By Erik Piepenburg

**Body**

This month's picks include an evil void, an unshakable sniper and a delightfully demonic cable box.

'Lockdown Tower'

Stream it on Shudder.

Oh man, how to describe Guillaume Nicloux's profoundly despairing film. ''The Mist'' meets ''Yellowjackets''? Close, but not sinister enough. I'll just say this: The movie crushed me.

The premise is sinister and simple: One night, the mostly ***working-class*** and immigrant residents of a Paris high-rise discover that it's not just dark outside. There is no longer an outside outside. And the void they see from their windows is lethal: When two men fall into it, what's left is only part of a leg cut clean at the shin. Nicloux uses the threat of this horrifying abyss in what gets my vote for the most barbaric scene of the year.

As time passes -- the film monstrously skips through years, not days -- residents divide themselves on floors by race. (''The whites banded together long ago,'' one character says.) Food, sex, an apartment: Almost everything is negotiated for survival. You don't need me to tell you that once tribalism takes over, the downward spiral quickens. There are allegories here, to Covid and to economic inequality. There's also a bedtime story that offers, just maybe, a crumb of hope.

'Night of the Hunted'

Stream it on Shudder.

[Video: Watch on YouTube.]

Franck Khalfoun's single location survival thriller, based on David R. Losada's Spanish-language ''Night of the Rat,'' is a throat-grabbing and gruesome exploration of toxic masculinity and American violence.

Alice (Camille Rowe) has an early morning flight to meet her husband. The couple's friend John (Jeremy Scippio), with whom she's having an affair, stops at a gas station on the way to take her to the airport. Inside the store, Alice notices there's no cashier but blood is splattered on the wall. As she rushes for the door, an unseen gunman shoots her in the arm, disabling her and trapping her there. That's just the first 15 minutes.

As the gunman kills unsuspecting customers who show up at the gas station, Alice learns her assailant is a veteran aggrieved over ''fake news and forced mandates.'' A church billboard across from the gas station that says simply GODISNOWHERE -- a message of hope or hopelessness, depending on how you parse it. An indictment as much as it is a sniper drama, the film feels ripped from America's ugliest headlines.

'Mercy Road'

Rent or buy it on major platforms.

[Video: Watch on YouTube.]

''The following is taken from only the first 30 minutes of 'Mercy Road.'''

That's the tease in the trailer for John Curran's thriller, as if the 1950s schlock-horror impresario William Castle were in charge of its marketing campaign. But Curran's propulsive film -- set one night almost entirely inside a vehicle -- is no joke. It's a rush that never lets up.

The action kicks off as Tom (a commanding Luke Bracey) jumps into his truck and calls his 12-year-old daughter, Ruby. ''Please, don't go home,'' he pleads in a voice message. As he speeds down a darkened road somewhere in Australia, he gets calls from a mysterious stranger who says he has kidnapped Ruby from the man whose blood is splattered across Tom's work shirt. Curran puts cameras on the driver's seat, floor and windshield, providing a 360-degree view of Tom's race to save both Ruby and his sanity, a quest that culminates in an emotional (and paranormal) finish.

Curran sustains a high-energy momentum -- think ''Speed'' + ''Phone Booth'' + ''Locke'' -- with incredible precision, like a world-class conductor cruising through a tricky symphony. Curran's score of tinkling piano (did I hear the 1010 WINS news cue?) and rat-a-tat percussion make the film as thrilling to listen to as it is to watch.

'Cobweb'

Stream it on Hulu.

[Video: Watch on YouTube.]

If there's one movie that has divided horror fans this year, it's Samuel Bodin's haunted house fairy tale. It's about a bullied young boy (Woody Norman) who strikes up a friendship with a creepy voice from behind his bedroom walls who tells him that his parents (Lizzy Caplan and Antony Starr) are evil secret-keepers up to no good.

I almost gave up on it. The acting felt mannered, and the unreliable ghost narrator stuff was conveyed with a hammer. ''All those scary things, they're just in your head,'' mom says to Peter before banishing him to the basement.

But about halfway through, the film takes an uncomfortably dark yet surprisingly moving turn in which the sinister goings-on are revealed to be less about a spirit driving the living nuts and more about how blood ties can bind and strangle. Bodin builds suspense with restraint; his still, cinematic tableaus disorient and please the eye in equal measure. I want Debra Wilson, who's exceptional as the voice of the stuff-of-nightmares monster, to read me everything.

'HeBGB TV'

Stream it on Screambox.

[Video: Watch on YouTube.]

I don't think I've had more fun this year than with this low-budget horror-comedy oddity from the writer-directors Adam Lenhart, Eric Griffin, and Jake McClellan.

It's about HeBGB TV, a cable box that looks like an exposed brain. It mysteriously shows up at your door, and when you plug it into your television, the Purple Guy, who looks like the spawn of Randy Rainbow and Nosferatu, guides you through weird videos with ketchup-puking monsters, singing candy corn and boob jokes.

Told in a ''Pee-wee's Playhouse'' meets ''Videodrome''-like newsmagazine style, the film incorporates puppetry, animation, live action and musical numbers that are delightfully juvenile and subversively queer. There are even commercials; I would totally eat Fang's Breakfast Bites, a cereal with chopped-up thumbs as prizes.

My favorite section was the call-in sex hotline show hosted by the foxy Monster Girl, played by the radiantly glam-freak performer Knucklehead, who also plays the Purple Guy. When the ''bonely'' borscht belt skeleton-comedian Rib Tickla (Michael Garland) calls in to impress her with a joke using the word coccyx. I thought: Now that's humerus.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/10/movies/horror-movies-streaming.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/10/movies/horror-movies-streaming.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: AngeÌ€le Mac in ''Lockdown Tower.'' (PHOTOGRAPH BY Shudder FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** November 11, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Tenement Museum to Feature a Black Family’s Apartment for the First Time***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69X3-1G71-JBG3-64V9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 19, 2023 Tuesday 12:25 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1205 words

**Highlight:** The museum has shared the stories of immigrants and migrants who lived in New York City in the 19th and 20th centuries for nearly four decades. For the first time, a Black family’s apartment will be included.

**Body**

The museum has shared the stories of immigrants and migrants who lived in New York City in the 19th and 20th centuries for nearly four decades. For the first time, a Black family’s apartment will be included.

For the past 35 years, the Tenement Museum has told the stories of immigrants and migrants who lived in New York City in the 19th and 20th centuries to help visitors better understand the city through the lives of its ***working class***.

For the first time in its history, the museum will soon feature the apartment of a Black family as [*a permanent exhibit*](https://www.tenement.org/new-exhibit-coming-soon/).

“[*A Union of Hope*](https://www.tenement.org/tour/a-union-of-hope-1869/?tour_date=2023-12-11),” the new exhibit in the Lower East Side museum, will include the recreated apartment of Joseph Moore, a coachman, and Rachel Moore, a housekeeper. The exhibit was supposed to [*open in 2022, but was delayed*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/09/arts/design/tenement-museum-black-history.html) because of renovations to modernize the building. Limited tours begin on Dec. 26, and it will open completely in February.

The Tenement Museum has centered Black history in the past, including during walking tours and public talks, said Kat Lloyd, the museum’s vice president of programs and interpretation. But the families featured since the museum’s opening in 1988 have largely been immigrants and refugees from Europe. This is, in part, because the museum has focused on people who lived in the two buildings where the museum is located, Ms. Lloyd said.

But that’s changing.

“The most sort of glaring gap for us was the story of Black New Yorkers who lived in tenements,” Ms. Lloyd said. The new exhibit will help the organization achieve “this goal of restoring history and telling a fuller wider story.”

The shift caused some controversy. In 2021, a former educator at the museum, Peter Van Buren, wrote in [*The Spectator World*](https://thespectator.com/topic/wokeness-claims-museum/) that the museum was constructing a “big fat lie” by including the Moore family, noting that they had never lived on the Lower East Side. Mr. Van Buren claimed the museum had been letting politics influence its decisions after the 2016 election of President Trump.

“This wokeness, which drove me to quit, is now headed for a new low,” Mr. Van Buren wrote, describing the planned Moore exhibit as a “desperate move to shoehorn” a Black family into the mix. His column circulated widely in conservative media after nationwide protests against the police after the [*murder of George Floyd*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/31/us/george-floyd-investigation.html) in 2020. He declined to comment further on Tuesday.

At the time, Annie Polland, the Tenement Museum president, dismissed the criticism, [*telling The Daily Beast in 2021*](https://www.thedailybeast.com/wokeness-battle-engulfs-tenement-museum-in-new-york-city-after-ex-employees-rant), “It has always been part of our mission to tell complicated stories, and it’s always been part of our mission to expand the stories that we told while keeping the stories we already have.”

The Moore exhibit had been in the works since at least 2019. The museum said it had learned of the family in 2008. One of its exhibits featured an Irishman also named Joseph Moore who had lived in one of the museum’s buildings at 97 Orchard Street. Over the years, visitors were curious about another Joseph Moore listed in a city directory that was part of the exhibit.

That Joseph Moore had “col’d” next to his name, an abbreviation for “colored,” signifying he was Black.

In 2019, the museum decided to create an exhibit about that Joseph Moore. He was born in Belvidere, N.J., and moved to New York City in 1857, where slavery had already been outlawed for [*30 years*](https://history.nycourts.gov/when-did-slavery-end-in-new-york/#:~:text=It%20was%20not%20until%20March,total%20abolition%20of%20legal%20slavery.). He married Ms. Moore in 1864, and they lived in a two-room apartment at 17 Laurens Street, in what is now SoHo, for at least six years.

In addition to the Moores, three other people lived in the apartment: Jane Kennedy, a dressmaker and Ms. Moore’s sister-in-law from her first marriage; Rose Brown, an Irish immigrant who worked as a washerwoman; and Louis Munday, Ms. Brown’s son who was Irish and Black.

Curators of the exhibit drew from a number of resources, including published essays and newspaper clippings, to recreate the two-room apartment.

In one room, two beds are against the walls, one of which the Moores would have shared and the other for Ms. Kennedy, Ms. Lloyd said. A sewing station for Ms. Kennedy sits near a window. Museum curators also included a framed photo of Abraham Lincoln on the fireplace mantle after finding that a newspaper article about another of Mr. Moore’s apartments in 1889 had noted such a portrait.

“It’s very, very rare for us to have a description of an actual apartment where one of our subjects lives,” Ms. Lloyd said, adding that the portrait encourages visitors to dwell on “what kind of symbolism Lincoln might hold for Joseph, for others within his community.”

The apartment’s only other room includes a turkey carcass stored in a larder, or cupboard. The carcass was inspired by an essay in “Heads of Colored People” by Dr. James McCune Smith, the first African American to receive a medical degree. The essay describes a woman who receives a turkey carcass as payment from her employer.

“The washerwoman essay is really like the closest we have to a source that is describing a Black tenement home in this period,” Ms. Lloyd said.

The second room also features a stove with enough space to fit a large pot of water for laundry. Oysters, which were sort of the “pizza slice of the 1860s,” Ms. Lloyd said, rest in a pan on the stove.

To give visitors an idea of what the conversations among Black Americans in the 1860s might have sounded like, the Tenement Museum partnered with the [*Black Gotham Experience*](https://blackgotham.com/#1), an organization offering walking tours across the city.

In one such conversation, two school-age children discuss “Uncle Tom’s Cabin,” which was published in 1852. Another features adults crowded around a newspaper, discussing the ratification of the 15th Amendment in 1870, paving the way for Black men to vote.

Marquis Taylor, the lead researcher for the exhibit, said photos, speeches and newspapers, including the six or so Black newspapers in New York in the 1850s and 1860s, were essential to constructing the conversations.

The newspapers captured a “diversity of opinions,” he noted, covering events at Black churches, efforts by Black New Yorkers to repeal the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 and efforts by Black women to repeal property requirements to vote.

Recently, Ms. Lloyd wondered aloud what a Black woman named Gina Manuel would think about the exhibit. In 1989, Ms. Manuel wrote to Ruth J. Abram, one of the museum’s founders, after listening to her on WNYC AM Radio, Ms. Lloyd said.

In the letter, Ms. Manuel told Ms. Abram about her ancestors who lived in tenement buildings on the Lower East Side before being “pushed out” to Hell’s Kitchen. She begged Ms. Abram to not forget them in the museum.

“Their spirits walk those halls, and their bones lay in the earth there, and we remember them,” Ms. Manuel wrote.

“Most of society seems to write us off when they look at the history of New York City, and America, but my people were part of New York City,” she said. They “deserve to be remembered.”

PHOTOS: The Tenement Museum, left, features “A Union of Hope,” a permanent exhibition about a Black family who lived in New York City in the 1860s. Curators designed the exhibition (above and below) based on resources such as essays and newspaper clippings. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROSHNI KHATRI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page C2.

**Load-Date:** December 26, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Why This Unlikely Washington Friendship Endures; Farah Stockman***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B41-PWS1-JBG3-6006-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 16, 2024 Tuesday 23:18 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1538 words

**Highlight:** The surprising friendship that has made Donald Trump’s trade policies so durable.

**Body**

They met in the 1990s, at an event about the North American Free Trade Agreement, where they were the only people arguing against it. He was a conservative trade lawyer who filed anti-dumping cases on behalf of American steel companies and predicted that the treaty would hurt American jobs. ([*It did*](https://www.epi.org/publication/briefingpapers_bp147/).) She was a liberal activist with a consumer advocacy organization who planned protests featuring giant puppets. Her worry was that NAFTA’s rules would hurt working people and override U.S. legal standards on food safety and the environment. ([*They did*](https://www.sierraclub.org/sites/default/files/uploads-wysiwig/NAFTA%20Enviro%20Redlines%20FINAL.pdf).)

These two had something else in common: Both had grown up in Midwestern towns that suffered when manufacturing moved overseas. She hailed from Wausau, Wis., where her family had run a scrapyard. He grew up in Ashtabula, Ohio, and his father put himself through college by working in a steel mill. After that first meeting, they kept in touch, swapping notes on how to throw sand in the gears of a free trade machine that seemed unstoppable.

Thirty years later, this unlikely friendship — between Bob Lighthizer, Donald Trump’s U.S. trade representative, and Lori Wallach, the director of the ReThink Trade program at the American Economic Liberties Project, a nonprofit research and advocacy group — continues. And it played a role in bringing about one of the biggest shifts in U.S. trade policy in decades: the astonishing reversal of U.S. support for the international trading system that American officials had long championed.

Mr. Lighthizer is best known as the implementer of Mr. Trump’s agenda of economic populism. He renegotiated NAFTA, slapped tariffs on China and put the World Trade Organization’s appeals court on ice by refusing to nominate new judges. What is less well known is that he did all that with the help of Ms. Wallach and other progressive Democrats, who proved to be some of his most reliable allies — over the howling objections of corporate-oriented Republicans. In the acknowledgments of his book “No Trade Is Free,” Mr. Lighthizer singled out Ms. Wallach as “a longtime friend and co-conspirator.”

His policies were hated by Wall Street, but they [*are popular with many ordinary Americans*](https://news.gallup.com/opinion/gallup/267770/americans-views-trade-trump-era.aspx), which is one reason that the Biden administration has not rolled them back and in some cases has [*even expanded them*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/06/03/us/biden-news-today). Like Mr. Lighthizer, Mr. Biden’s U.S. trade representative, Katherine Tai, speaks of trade policies that should be [*centered on the needs of American workers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/06/opinion/biden-jobs-trade.html), not multinational corporations.

Neither progressives nor Republicans are eager to talk about the success of this alliance. It’s awkward in an election year, especially for those, including Ms. Wallach, who are understandably more focused on Mr. Trump’s pledge to be [*a dictator on Day 1*](https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2023/12/trump-says-hell-be-a-dictator-on-day-one/676247/) than his attitude toward commerce. But it also illuminates something the Trump administration got right and why this part of its agenda has endured, despite the chaos and polarizing behavior of Mr. Trump.

Mr. Lighthizer and Ms. Wallach were free-trade skeptics before it was cool. In the early 1990s, they lobbied against the creation of the World Trade Organization and against China’s admission to it. In 1997, Mr. Lighthizer [*warned*](https://www.nytimes.com/1997/02/25/opinion/what-did-asian-donors-want.html) that “if China is allowed to join the W.T.O. on the lenient terms that it has long been demanding, virtually no manufacturing job in this country will be safe.”

They came to their skepticism because of a deep concern that, left unchecked, free trade would sacrifice the economic well-being of ***working-class*** Americans at the altar of corporate profits. Trade deals were hammered out by people who cared about gaining geopolitical clout, not what was happening in Wausau or Ashtabula.

“It was ‘Sell out the working people — they are not important,’” Mr. Lighthizer told me, describing what he believed to be the mentality of some trade negotiators. “What’s important is ‘The French like us.’”

Yet every U.S. president since Bill Clinton pushed it forward, regardless of party, until 2016, when both [*Mr. Trump*](https://time.com/4386335/donald-trump-trade-speech-transcript/) and [*Bernie Sanders*](https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2016-election/bernie-sanders-defeated-trade-democratic-platform-fight-n606481) spoke out against free trade agreements. Mr. Lighthizer knew that Mr. Trump felt passionately about the subject — thanks to an ad Mr. Trump took out [*in 1987*](https://www.wsj.com/articles/trump-forged-his-ideas-on-trade-in-the-1980sand-never-deviated-1542304508) — but the two had never met. Shortly after Mr. Trump won the election, Mr. Lighthizer got a call and soon had his dream job: U.S. trade representative.

In 2017, as the Trump White House filled with sycophants and Wall Street guys, Mr. Lighthizer stood out. He had years of experience on Capitol Hill, [*having worked for Bob Dole*](https://www.nytimes.com/1984/09/30/business/the-steel-trade-negotiations-the-experts-who-will-forge-the-new-quotas.html), a powerful Kansas senator, and served as a trade negotiator under Ronald Reagan. Also, Mr. Lighthizer had built warm relationships with union leaders and Democrats. Ms. Wallach was thrilled, and she supported his nomination.

“It wasn’t a question of ‘Hey, Bob, are you going to do the right thing?’” she told me. “It was that Bob’s in there and he’s going to do the right thing, but will he be able to, given that Donald Trump is a walking, talking multinational corporation and all around him are a bunch of class-A corporate hacks?”

So they joined forces again. Mr. Lighthizer got to work on renegotiating NAFTA, which involved haggling with Canada, Mexico and Capitol Hill. He was already working with a group of [*free-trade-skeptical Republicans*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/07/briefing/desantis-republican-economics.html). Ms. Wallach urged him to reach out to Representative Rosa DeLauro of Connecticut, a liberal who led the charge against the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a free-trade agreement that the Obama administration had negotiated. After NAFTA went into effect, Ms. DeLauro’s district lost a factory that had employed thousands of people. Mr. Lighthizer won her support after countless hours of meetings.

“I found him to be a straight shooter,” Ms. DeLauro told me. “Bill Clinton called us thugs when we opposed NAFTA. Barack Obama said we didn’t know what we were talking about when we opposed the Trans-Pacific Partnership. Bob Lighthizer listened to us and knew that there was room for change.”

The result was a trade deal that strengthened Mexican workers’ right to unionize and added trade incentives for auto companies to locate production in plants that paid their workers at least $16 an hour.

Their finest hour was when they managed to kill a sacred cow of international trade: a provision in NAFTA that gave three international judges the power to resolve disputes between investors and countries, sidestepping domestic laws and courts. Ms. Wallach helped Mr. Lighthizer frame the argument against it in conservative terms.

“I talked to her all the time,” Mr. Lighthizer told me of Ms. Wallach. “Never once did she not give me the best advice that she could. Never did she betray confidence. I didn’t keep any secret from her.”

When the [*new NAFTA*](https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/three-years-us-mexico-canada-agreement-has-proven-its-worth) passed overwhelmingly in Congress, the business world stood aghast as one of their most cherished models for neoliberal economics was dismantled. After decades of fighting a losing battle, the underdogs had finally won. Ms. Wallach sent Mr. Lighthizer homemade jam from Wisconsin. Mr. Lighthizer sent Ms. Wallach a bottle of champagne.

Miraculously, Mr. Lighthizer managed to make it to the end of the Trump administration on good terms with both Mr. Trump and Ms. Wallach — no small feat. Then came Jan. 6, 2021, the day Mr. Trump whipped up a mob of his supporters and pointed them at the Capitol. Mr. Lighthizer condemned the actions of the mob, but he never broke with Mr. Trump. Today he’s working on trade policy with the America First Policy Institute, a pro-Trump think tank that several other former Trump officials have joined.

Mr. Lighthizer said that being successful in Washington requires staying in your lane and picking your battles. His lane is trade, and on this issue, he and Mr. Trump are in total agreement. A slew of Republicans urged Mr. Trump to overrule Mr. Lighthizer’s populist moves. Mr. Trump never did.

“President Trump’s instincts on this are exactly the same as mine,” Mr. Lighthizer told me. “He used to tell me, ‘Hang in there.’”

It has been hard for Ms. Wallach to accept her friend’s enduring loyalty to a man she views as instigating an “all but unprecedented threat to U.S. democracy.” Jan. 6 rocked her to the core. She avoided discussing it with Mr. Lighthizer for years. It had taken a wrecking ball like Mr. Trump to upend decades of conventional wisdom about free trade, but the country doesn’t need a wrecking ball like that anymore.

Yet this friendship persists. Maybe it’s because, after all these years, they genuinely like and respect each other. Or maybe it’s because they understand how fragile victories in Washington can be. Armies of lobbyists are out there, trying to undo what they have done. The ability to keep working together, she said, “is worth fighting to preserve.”

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/31/opinion/letters/letters-to-editor-new-york-times-women.html) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://help.nytimes.com/hc/en-us/articles/115014925288-How-to-submit-a-letter-to-the-editor). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](mailto:letters@nytimes.com).

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PHOTOS: Lori Wallach, above, and Bob Lighthizer, right, have worked together for years to disrupt the free trade machine. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JASON ANDREW FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; GESI SCHILLING FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A18.

**Load-Date:** January 17, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Jane Austen's English Countryside Is Not Mine***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68TT-1MS1-DXY4-X14M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 30, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section SR; Column 0; Sunday Review Desk; Pg. 8; GUEST ESSAY

**Length:** 1328 words

**Byline:** By Rebecca Smith

**Body**

Often people assume I am someone I am not. My childhood was spent making dens in the hidden corners of the landscaped gardens of a grand country estate in the Lake District. I wandered woods full of baby pheasants being fattened up for the shoot. I roamed the hills listening to my Walkman like a modern Brontë sister. I had lakes to paddle in and a dinghy that we bumped down the ­path to a private beach.

But they weren't my gardens. It wasn't my beach.

Until the age of 18, I lived on three private country estates in England. First in Yorkshire, then in Bedford, then on Graythwaite Estate, in Cumbria in the Lake District. In each of these my dad had the job of forester, working his way up until he was head forester, overseeing 500 hectares of woodland at Graythwaite, where the job came with a three-bedroom lodge on the estate.

The house was old and four miles from any kind of shop. But to me, it was idyllic. It had an open coal fire, a huge walk-in pantry and bay windows. A story -- probably apocryphal -- had it that there had been an upstairs but the landowner didn't like the way it ruined his view, so he just sliced it off, like a layer of Victoria sponge cake.

Our house was a tied cottage. For centuries, it was not uncommon for the offer of a job in the English countryside to include accommodation. The rent would be minimal or nothing -- a fact reflected in the wages. And when the job ended, so, often, did your right to housing.

There was tied housing for the servants of the families and houses on grand country estates -- for the gardener, gamekeeper, plumber, forester and tenant farmers.

For workers, it was a precarious, contingent way of life. Both the quality of the accommodation and your rights to it were entirely dependent on the benevolence of the landowner. But none of that lay heavily on me as a child. In the summer, I would climb out of my bedroom window when I should have been asleep and ride my bike up and down the estate road. My brother and I made rhododendron perfume to sell to visitors and dangled from an old tire swing. We didn't realize yet that the ground was shifting beneath our feet.

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Hawkshead, about five miles from Graythwaite, is one of the prettiest villages in the Lake District. It used to have two banks, a police station, four pubs, cafes and businesses. When I was a teenager, I worked in the King's Arms, one of the pubs. There was a chalkboard on which someone had written, ''I wandered lonely as a cloud, then thought: Sod it, I'll have a pint instead.'' Wordsworth, whose cottage is a popular stop a few miles north, would not have approved.

These days, there are still lots of cafes, but now the police station is apartments, one bank is a gallery, and the other one is a ticket office for a Beatrix Potter attraction. Many of the village homes are vacation rentals or second homes, empty for most of the year, pushing the prices higher for the few homes that do go up for sale. There were always bus trippers, but the streams of tourists at this time of year, its busiest, make it feel a bit like a rural Disneyland.

In the early 2000s, when a lot of the big landowners were starting to realize how profitable renting property to these visitors could be, Graythwaite Estate decided not to employ a forester anymore. Dad became self-employed, and we started paying market rent. The farm and other houses on the estate started to become vacation cottages; some became beautiful wedding venues. Eventually, Mum and Dad moved to a terraced house in a nearby town. It had a yard, not a garden, but it was theirs.

This story is repeated in many of the prettiest places in Britain. In some of the villages around where I grew up, as many as 80 percent of the houses are second homes, according to housing advocates.

Over and over again, people who grew up or made a life there have been forced to make way for others. (In Dinorwig, a former slate-mining town in Wales that is popular with visitors, a schoolteacher told The Guardian that her family was evicted by a landlady who admitted that she could make four times as much by renting their home to tourists.) These visitors spend money in the local shops, but they don't put children in the school. They don't become part of the church congregation. A way of life slowly suffocates.

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As an adult, I was invited on a pheasant shoot in Scotland by an old boss. I went, admittedly thrilled to be on the other side of the party. I sat high up on the heated seats of a Range Rover and watched the beaters and their dogs go ahead and scare the pheasants into the sky. I ate one of the fanciest sausage rolls I've ever tasted. I felt as though I had put on the wrong shoes.

I think that growing up the way I did has given me a kind of class ambiguity. As if having access to all this land, the outside world and all that's in it, made us rich. As a teenager, if I answered the phone and it was one of the landowners, I learned to change my accent -- I could and can still do a pretty good imitation. But class is one thing; land is another. If you don't own land, you're forever at the mercy of the people who do.

Tied housing still exists, albeit in a much-reduced form -- and mostly for people who work in agriculture or hospitality. These days, I live in a new house in the suburbs near Falkirk, in Scotland. The central heating is cozy and reliable. I don't need to chop logs or get coal delivered. When I move the pictures on the wall, I don't see the true color of the wallpaper, untouched by soot. It doesn't take hours to get to my kids' school or the hospital.

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I have been back to Graythwaite a few times, but it always felt like trespassing. In my dreams, though, I am often in the garden of the old house, in the shade of the big trees. Comfy as a dandelion in the dirt.

Rebecca Smith is the author of ''Rural: The Lives of the ***Working Class*** Countryside,'' from which this essay is adapted.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/29/opinion/british-countryside-****working-class****.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/29/opinion/british-countryside-working-class.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page SR8.

**Load-Date:** July 30, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Five Horror Movies to Stream Now***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69KS-KWV1-DXY4-X3DD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 10, 2023 Friday 02:08 EST

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**Section:** MOVIES

**Length:** 1007 words

**Byline:** Erik Piepenburg

**Highlight:** This month’s picks include an evil void, an unshakable sniper and a delightfully demonic cable box.

**Body**

This month’s picks include an evil void, an unshakable sniper and a delightfully demonic cable box.

‘Lockdown Tower’

[*Stream it on Shudder*](https://www.shudder.com/movies/watch/lockdown-tower/599121123ef045a7).

Oh man, how to describe Guillaume Nicloux’s [*profoundly despairing film*](https://youtu.be/g5817c5YqAQ?si=mCVWSoYBCPgmys8q). “The Mist” meets “Yellowjackets”? Close, but not sinister enough. I’ll just say this: The movie crushed me.

The premise is sinister and simple: One night, the mostly ***working-class*** and immigrant residents of a Paris high-rise discover that it’s not just dark outside. There is no longer an outside outside. And the void they see from their windows is lethal: When two men fall into it, what’s left is only part of a leg cut clean at the shin. Nicloux uses the threat of this horrifying abyss in what gets my vote for the most barbaric scene of the year.

As time passes — the film monstrously skips through years, not days — residents divide themselves on floors by race. (“The whites banded together long ago,” one character says.) Food, sex, an apartment: Almost everything is negotiated for survival. You don’t need me to tell you that once tribalism takes over, the downward spiral quickens. There are allegories here, to Covid and to economic inequality. There’s also a bedtime story that offers, just maybe, a crumb of hope.

‘Night of the Hunted’

[*Stream it on Shudder*](https://www.shudder.com/movies/watch/night-of-the-hunted/52d4603925acf8fb).

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](http://youtube.com/embed/12SUjGsAEHs)]

Franck Khalfoun’s single location survival thriller, based on David R. Losada’s Spanish-language [*“Night of the Rat,”*](https://tubitv.com/movies/489688/noche-del-raton?start=true&amp;tracking=google-feed&amp;utm_source=google-feed) is a throat-grabbing and gruesome exploration of toxic masculinity and American violence.

Alice (Camille Rowe) has an early morning flight to meet her husband. The couple’s friend John (Jeremy Scippio), with whom she’s having an affair, stops at a gas station on the way to take her to the airport. Inside the store, Alice notices there’s no cashier but blood is splattered on the wall. As she rushes for the door, an unseen gunman shoots her in the arm, disabling her and trapping her there. That’s just the first 15 minutes.

As the gunman kills unsuspecting customers who show up at the gas station, Alice learns her assailant is a veteran aggrieved over “fake news and forced mandates.” A church billboard across from the gas station that says simply GODISNOWHERE — a message of hope or hopelessness, depending on how you parse it. An indictment as much as it is a sniper drama, the film feels ripped from America’s ugliest headlines.

‘Mercy Road’

[*Rent or buy it on major platforms*](https://www.justwatch.com/us/movie/mercy-road).

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](http://youtube.com/embed/4_2ZD2Juu5E)]

“The following is taken from only the first 30 minutes of ‘Mercy Road.’”

That’s the tease in the trailer for John Curran’s thriller, as if the 1950s schlock-horror impresario [*William Castle*](https://www.nytimes.com/1977/06/02/archives/long-island-opinion-william-castle-63-movie-producer-career-modeled.html) were in charge of its marketing campaign. But Curran’s propulsive film — set one night almost entirely inside a vehicle — is no joke. It’s a rush that never lets up.

The action kicks off as Tom (a commanding Luke Bracey) jumps into his truck and calls his 12-year-old daughter, Ruby. “Please, don’t go home,” he pleads in a voice message. As he speeds down a darkened road somewhere in Australia, he gets calls from a mysterious stranger who says he has kidnapped Ruby from the man whose blood is splattered across Tom’s work shirt. Curran puts cameras on the driver’s seat, floor and windshield, providing a 360-degree view of Tom’s race to save both Ruby and his sanity, a quest that culminates in an emotional (and paranormal) finish.

Curran sustains a high-energy momentum — think “Speed” + “Phone Booth” + “Locke” — with incredible precision, like a world-class conductor cruising through a tricky symphony. Curran’s score of tinkling piano (did I hear the [*1010 WINS news cue*](https://youtu.be/CJnLKlgQS6A?si=cNx12vj0unk_bt8h)?) and rat-a-tat percussion make the film as thrilling to listen to as it is to watch.

‘Cobweb’

[*Stream it on Hulu*](https://www.hulu.com/movie/cobweb-9833cdfb-077e-4753-964a-df792b7c3737?dl=false).

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](http://youtube.com/embed/hGY0icwlDGY)]

If there’s one movie that has [*divided*](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/cobweb_2023) horror fans this year, it’s Samuel Bodin’s haunted house fairy tale. It’s about a bullied young boy (Woody Norman) who strikes up a friendship with a creepy voice from behind his bedroom walls who tells him that his parents (Lizzy Caplan and Antony Starr) are evil secret-keepers up to no good.

I almost gave up on it. The acting felt mannered, and the unreliable ghost narrator stuff was conveyed with a hammer. “All those scary things, they’re just in your head,” mom says to Peter before [*banishing him to the basement*](https://youtu.be/hIIj6RC2-uk?si=ntWbo1jg3W27XiAV).

But about halfway through, the film takes an uncomfortably dark yet surprisingly moving turn in which the sinister goings-on are revealed to be less about a spirit driving the living nuts and more about how blood ties can bind and strangle. Bodin builds suspense with restraint; his still, cinematic tableaus disorient and please the eye in equal measure. I want Debra Wilson, who’s exceptional as the voice of the stuff-of-nightmares monster, to read me everything.

‘HeBGB TV’

[*Stream it on Screambox*](https://www.screambox.com/watch/1000000023395/HeBGB-TV).

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](http://youtube.com/embed/xcYsf_g8ju8)]

I don’t think I’ve had more fun this year than with this low-budget horror-comedy oddity from the writer-directors Adam Lenhart, Eric Griffin, and Jake McClellan.

It’s about HeBGB TV, a cable box that looks like an exposed brain. It mysteriously shows up at your door, and when you plug it into your television, the Purple Guy, who looks like the spawn of Randy Rainbow and Nosferatu, guides you through weird videos with ketchup-puking monsters, singing candy corn and boob jokes.

Told in a “Pee-wee’s Playhouse” meets “Videodrome”-like newsmagazine style, the film incorporates puppetry, animation, live action and musical numbers that are delightfully juvenile and subversively queer. There are even commercials; I would totally eat Fang’s Breakfast Bites, a cereal with chopped-up thumbs as prizes.

My favorite section was the call-in sex hotline show hosted by the foxy Monster Girl, played by the radiantly glam-freak performer [*Knucklehead*](https://www.tiktok.com/@birthdayjake), who also plays the Purple Guy. When the “bonely” borscht belt skeleton-comedian Rib Tickla (Michael Garland) calls in to impress her with a joke using the word coccyx. I thought: Now that’s humerus.

PHOTO: Angèle Mac in “Lockdown Tower.” (PHOTOGRAPH BY Shudder FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** November 11, 2023

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[***U.A.W. Says It Aims to Organize Nonunion Auto Plants***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69HB-G0C1-JBG3-6511-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 29, 2023 Sunday 11:18 EST

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**Section:** BUSINESS

**Length:** 893 words

**Byline:** Neal E. Boudette

**Highlight:** After outlining gains for Ford workers in a live-streamed speech, Shawn Fain, the union president, said he was setting his sights on other automakers.

**Body**

After outlining gains for Ford workers in a live-streamed speech, Shawn Fain, the union president, said he was setting his sights on other automakers.

After winning major gains in wages and benefits from two of the three Detroit automakers, the United Automobile Workers union is looking beyond the Motor City to car companies operating nonunion factories across the South.

In a speech to union members live-streamed on Facebook Sunday night, the U.A.W. president, Shawn Fain, said the union planned a push to organize plants at some of the nonunion automakers, such as Toyota, Honda and Tesla.

“One of our biggest goals coming out of this historic contract victory is to organize like we’ve never organized before,” Mr. Fain said. “When we return to the bargaining table in 2028, it won’t just be with the Big Three. It will be the Big Five or Big Six.”

The statement was one of Mr. Fain’s clearest to date that the U.A.W. intended to renew efforts to unionize the plants of foreign-owned automakers and Tesla, which operates nonunion vehicle plants in California and Texas.

The U.A.W. has previously tried to unionize Southern auto plants — where workers typically make significantly less than the top U.A.W. wage — with little success. While it has unionized some small component plants in the South, and represents workers employed by heavy truck manufacturers like Mack and Freightliner, it has not been able to organize plants owned by any major automaker there.

Volkswagen workers in Chattanooga, Tenn., voted against U.A.W. representation in 2014. Workers at a Nissan plant in Canton, Miss., did the same in 2017. U.A.W. organizers have also tried to win support at a Mercedes-Benz plant in Alabama.

Mr. Fain said the increased wages and benefits in a tentative contract agreement with Ford Motor would help the U.A.W. and other unions win gains for ***working-class*** people.

Harley Shaiken, a professor emeritus at the [*University of California, Berkeley*](https://geography.berkeley.edu/professor-emeritus-harley-shaiken), who has followed the U.A.W. for more than three decades, said the tentative agreements with Ford and Stellantis should improve the U.A.W.’s image and lift its prospects in the South.

“The union is not back to where it was 30 years ago in terms of influence, but this is a step to restoring power to the U.A.W. and to unions in general,” he said.

On Sunday, a U.A.W. council that oversees negotiations with Ford approved the tentative agreement hammered out with Ford on Wednesday. In a statement, Ford said it would give an assessment of how the contract affects its business after ratification.

On Saturday, the union announced it had a tentative contract agreement with Stellantis, the maker of Chrysler, Jeep and Ram vehicles.

The agreement closely follows the terms reached with Ford, a method known as pattern bargaining. Stellantis also agreed to reopen a plant in Belvidere, Ill., that had been idled this year, and to keep an engine plant in Michigan and a machining factory in Ohio that the company had considered closing.

Union workers have begun returning to work at the three Ford plants that were affected by the union’s growing wave of strikes. Stellantis workers are expected to begin returning to work in the next day or so.

The U.A.W. began its strikes on Sept. 15 and eventually expanded it to include about 18,000 workers at three Ford vehicle plants and more than 14,000 workers at two Stellantis plants that make pickup trucks and Jeeps along with 20 Stellantis parts distribution warehouses.

The union is continuing to negotiate with General Motors, and on Saturday expanded its strike against the automaker, telling workers to walk out at a factory in Spring Hill, Tenn. All told, about 14,000 U.A.W. workers are on strike at G.M. The other affected locations include plants in Missouri, Michigan and Texas and 18 parts warehouses.

In a statement, G.M. said it was “disappointed” by the expansion of the strike, adding, “We have continued to bargain in good faith with the U.A.W., and our goal remains to reach an agreement as quickly as possible.”

Mr. Fain used most of his address to outline the details of the union’s tentative agreement [*with Ford*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/25/business/economy/uaw-ford-contract-agreement-strike.html). It calls for significant wage increases for many of the company’s 57,000 U.A.W. workers. By the end of the agreement’s four-and-a-half-year term, most workers will earn $40.82 an hour.

That gives workers now earning the top wage of $32 an hour increases of 25 percent; for some workers lower on the wage scale, wages will more than double. At the new top wage, employees working 40 hours a week will earn about $84,000 a year. Profit-sharing bonuses and overtime work will enable many U.A.W. members to make more than $100,000 a year.

The tentative deal also gives workers additional paid time off, including two weeks of paid family leave and paid leave for jury duty. It also allows temporary employees, who currently earn $16.67 an hour, to gain permanent status after 90 days, and to rise to the top wage in three years.

If the agreement is ratified by a majority of Ford’s U.A.W. work force, most workers will get an immediate 11 percent wage increase and will be given bonuses of $5,000 each.

PHOTO: “One of our biggest goals coming out of this historic contract victory is to organize like we’ve never organized before,” said Shawn Fain, the United Automobile Workers president. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Scott Olson/Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** October 30, 2023

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[***The English Countryside Is a Place of Profound Inequality; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68TJ-VYJ1-DXY4-X0SM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 29, 2023 Saturday 16:37 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1323 words

**Byline:** Rebecca Smith

**Highlight:** My childhood was spent in the corners of landscaped gardens at a grand country estate. But they weren’t my gardens.

**Body**

Often people assume I am someone I am not. My childhood was spent making dens in the hidden corners of the landscaped gardens of a grand country estate in the Lake District. I wandered woods full of baby pheasants being fattened up for the shoot. I roamed the hills listening to my Walkman like a modern Brontë sister. I had lakes to paddle in and a dinghy that we bumped down the ­path to a private beach.

But they weren’t my gardens. It wasn’t my beach.

Until the age of 18, I lived on three private country estates in England. First in Yorkshire, then in Bedford, then on Graythwaite Estate, in Cumbria in the Lake District. In each of these my dad had the job of forester, working his way up until he was head forester, overseeing 500 hectares of woodland at Graythwaite, where the job came with a three-bedroom lodge on the estate.

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For workers, it was a precarious, contingent way of life. Both the quality of the accommodation and your rights to it were entirely dependent on the benevolence of the landowner. But none of that lay heavily on me as a child. In the summer, I would climb out of my bedroom window when I should have been asleep and ride my bike up and down the estate road. My brother and I made rhododendron perfume to sell to visitors and dangled from an old tire swing. We didn’t realize yet that the ground was shifting beneath our feet.

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Rebecca Smith is the author of “[*Rural: The Lives of the* ***Working Class*** *Countryside*](https://harpercollins.co.uk/products/rural-the-lives-of-the-working-class-countryside-rebecca-smith?variant=40150668968014),” from which this essay is adapted.

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This article appeared in print on page SR8.

**Load-Date:** July 30, 2023

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[***First Comes Love of Reading, Then Love***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69KH-B1H1-JBG3-60XB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 9, 2023 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section D; Column 0; Style Desk; Pg. 3; THIRD WHEEL

**Length:** 997 words

**Byline:** By Gina Cherelus

**Body**

Pop culture has conditioned us to believe that a meet-cute that doesn't happen in a bookstore is hardly worth having. But is being an avid reader truly essential to romance?

One of the first questions men ask Angela Liu on dating apps is ''What are you reading?'' The question is a softball for Ms. Liu, a self-proclaimed lover of literature. ''I really care about the human condition and emotions and stuff,'' she said.

What she has noticed, however, is that many men aren't into those kinds of books, and a question that may have been intended to screen her often ends up backfiring.

''I can't stand dudes who just read self-help books or things specifically related to the job that they're doing and that's all they read,'' Ms. Liu, 27, said on Friday at a book club for singles in Manhattan.

There's something flirty and magnetic about a physical book that tablets and smartphones can't really capture -- the idea of meeting someone in a library, in the aisle of a bookstore or while reading on the subway, for instance, remains stubbornly high on the list of many people's romantic fantasies. Although there might be more romantic activities a single person could do on a Friday night in New York City, very few beat potentially stumbling into your next bibliophile boo while surrounded by shelf after shelf of sweet prose.

''I love when people have bookshelves, because I just go there immediately and stare at what they have,'' Ms. Liu said.

At a meeting of McNally Jackson's new After Hours Book Club (tag line: ''Read, flirt, sip''), single attendees including Ms. Liu gathered at the bookseller's location in South Street Seaport, a former maritime hub turned shopping district in Lower Manhattan, for an evening of wine, beer and discussion about ''Dogs of Summer,'' a novel by Andrea Abreu.

More than 20 people, a majority of them women, chatted in small groups about the book, a coming-of-age story of two girls in a ***working-class*** neighborhood of the Canary Islands during the summer of 2005. They were encouraged by the event's host, Mikaela Dery, to switch tables every 20 minutes or so to meet and interact with others. They also shared their thoughts on the connection between reading and romance.

Michael Hoang, 28, said he was motivated to attend the After Hours discussion partly because of the book selection and partly because of the event's name. He hasn't put much effort into dating, Mr. Hoang said, but the few people he has gone out with have not shared his interest and taste in books. As someone who reads mostly for beauty and occasionally for escapism, he considers himself biased toward fiction readers in terms of compatibility.

''Reading is a pretty decent self-selection in terms of mutual interest,'' he said. ''So interactions with folks that I enjoy, romantic interest or otherwise, have usually been pretty good if there's a reading factor.''

A fondness for books is a trait that many seek in a prospective romantic partner, almost to the point of cliché. It's the glue that connects the rival bookstore owners turned lovers in the romantic comedy ''You've Got Mail''; it's present in the tiny bookshop where a bumbling Londoner charms a movie star in ''Notting Hill''; it's part of what draws a love-struck stalker to imprint on his first victim in the Netflix thriller ''You.'' Considering how pop culture has been spoon-feeding us this fantasy for decades, it's little wonder there's an appetite for it in real life.

Megan Mueller, a 24-year-old graduate student in architecture at Cornell University, said she usually she spent her Friday evenings hanging out with classmates. But they had the day off from school, so she took the opportunity to do something she ordinarily wouldn't after hearing about the After Hours Book Club on Instagram.

She said that a love of reading was preferable but not quite nonnegotiable when dating.

''I think I would have more to talk about and I would get along with them a little bit better,'' she said, ''but it's not a deal breaker.''

Ms. Mueller recalled a man she dated more than three years ago while she was an undergrad. After going to his apartment (it was ''like a frat house,'' she said), she discovered he had no books. It didn't completely faze her, but it was something she noted.

''Everyone has different interests,'' she said over a glass of red wine and cocktail napkins printed with conversation starters. ''I have friends that don't like to read or they'd rather listen to audiobooks or podcasts and stuff.''

Still, the connection between reading and sex is well established. A popular tote bag from the Strand, a New York bookstore, advises, ''If You Go Home With Somebody & They Don't Have Books,'' don't throw them a bone (though, as the line is attributed to John Waters, the full quotation uses spicier language). And we can't forget Instagram pages like @HotDudesReading, which once captivated the internet and was later turned into a book.

''There's a lot of cruising in bookstores,'' said Tom Rothacker, a college theater professor. ''The Strand, the Drama Book Shop -- and it's predominantly women and gay men.''

Kendall Erickson, an attendee of the After Hours Book Club who is an art director and has already logged about 50 books on her Goodreads account this year, said that, ''just for fun,'' she maintained a list of books that she spotted people reading on the subway. This summer, she was riding the B62 bus from Whole Foods back to her home in the Greenpoint section of Brooklyn when she noticed a man staring at her reading ''Penance'' by Eliza Clark and appeared to be into her, but neither of them made a move, so it was a missed connection.

''It was like, OK, we're still on the bus together for like 10 stops,'' she said. ''And then finally he got off the bus. He was very cute.'' (In case he's reading this article, she added that he was wearing a beanie and was ''kind of blond.'')

Send your thoughts, stories and tips to [*thirdwheel@nytimes.com*](mailto:thirdwheel@nytimes.com)

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/09/style/dating-reading-books-single.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/09/style/dating-reading-books-single.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: At a meeting of McNally Jackson's After Hours Book Club in its South Street Seaport outpost, singles discussed ''Dogs of Summer,'' a novel by Andrea Abreu. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MONIQUE JAQUES FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page D3.

**Load-Date:** November 9, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Is Reading the Hottest Thing You Can Do as a Single Person?; Third Wheel***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69KH-P981-DXY4-X29N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 9, 2023 Thursday 18:09 EST

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**Section:** STYLE

**Length:** 1026 words

**Byline:** Gina Cherelus

**Highlight:** Pop culture has conditioned us to believe that a meet-cute that doesn’t happen in a bookstore is hardly worth having. But is being an avid reader truly essential to romance?

**Body**

Pop culture has conditioned us to believe that a meet-cute that doesn’t happen in a bookstore is hardly worth having. But is being an avid reader truly essential to romance?

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**Load-Date:** November 11, 2023

**End of Document**



[***The G.O.P. Goes Full-On Extremist***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69GR-J9D1-JBG3-6305-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 27, 2023 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 25; PAUL KRUGMAN

**Length:** 936 words

**Byline:** By Paul Krugman

**Body**

There are no moderate Republicans in the House of Representatives.

Oh, no doubt some members are privately appalled by the views of Mike Johnson, the new speaker. But what they think in the privacy of their own minds isn't important. What matters is what they do -- and every single one of them went along with the selection of a radical extremist.

In fact, Johnson is more extreme than most people, I think even political reporters, fully realize.

Much of the reporting on Johnson has, understandably, focused on his role in the efforts to overturn the 2020 election. Let me say, by the way, that the widely used term ''election denial'' is a euphemism that softens and blurs what we're really talking about. Trying to keep your party in power after it lost a free and fair election, without a shred of evidence of significant fraud, isn't just denial; it's a betrayal of democracy.

There has also been considerable coverage of Johnson's right-wing social views, but I'm not sure how many people grasp the depth of his intolerance. Johnson isn't just someone who wants to legalize discrimination against L.G.B.T.Q. Americans and ban gay marriage; he's on record as defending the criminalization of gay sex.

But Johnson's extremism, and that of the party that chose him, goes beyond rejecting democracy and trying to turn back the clock on decades of social progress. He has also espoused a startlingly reactionary economic agenda.

Until his sudden elevation to speaker, Johnson was a relatively little-known figure. But he did serve for a time as chairman of the Republican Study Committee, a group that devises policy proposals. And now that Johnson has become the face of his party, people really should look at the budget proposal the committee released for 2020 under his chairmanship.

For if you read that proposal carefully, getting past the often mealy-mouthed language, you realize that it calls for the evisceration of the U.S. social safety net -- not just programs for the poor, but also policies that form the bedrock of financial stability for the American middle class.

Start with Social Security, where the budget calls for raising the retirement age -- already set to rise to 67 -- to 69 or 70, with possible further increases as life expectancy rises.

On the surface, this might sound plausible. Until Covid produced a huge drop, average U.S. life expectancy at age 65 was steadily rising over time. But there is a huge and growing gap between the number of years affluent Americans can expect to live and life expectancy for lower-income groups, including not just the poor but also much of the ***working class***. So raising the retirement age would fall hard on less fortunate Americans -- precisely the people who depend most on Social Security.

Then there's Medicare, for which the budget proposes increasing the eligibility age ''so it is aligned with the normal retirement age for Social Security and then indexing this age to life expectancy.'' Translation: Raise the Medicare age from 65 to 70, then keep raising it.

Wait, there's more. Most nonelderly Americans receive health insurance through their employers. But this system depends greatly on policies that the study committee proposed eliminating. You see, benefits don't count as taxable income -- but in order to maintain this tax advantage, companies (roughly speaking) must cover all their employees, as opposed to offering benefits only to highly compensated individuals.

The committee budget would eliminate this incentive for broad coverage by limiting the tax deduction for employer benefits and offering the same deduction for insurance purchased by individuals. As a result, some employers would probably just give their top earners cash, which they could use to buy expensive individual plans, while dropping coverage for the rest of their workers.

Oh, and it goes almost without saying that the budget would impose savage cuts -- $3 trillion over a decade -- on Medicaid, children's health coverage and subsidies that help lower-income Americans afford insurance under the Affordable Care Act.

How many Americans would lose health insurance under these proposals? Back in 2017 the Congressional Budget Office estimated that Donald Trump's attempt to repeal Obamacare would cause 23 million Americans to lose coverage. The Republican Study Committee's proposals are far more draconian and far-reaching, so the losses would presumably be much bigger.

So Mike Johnson is on record advocating policies on retirement, health care and other areas I don't have space to get into, like food stamps, that would basically end American society as we know it. We would become a vastly crueler and less secure nation, with far more sheer misery.

I think it's safe to say that these proposals would be hugely unpopular -- if voters knew about them. But will they?

Actually, I'd like to see some focus groups asking what Americans think of Johnson's policy positions. Here's my guess, based on previous experience: Many voters will simply refuse to believe that prominent Republicans, let alone the speaker of the House, are really advocating such terrible things.

But they are and he is. The G.O.P. has gone full-on extremist, on economic as well as social issues. The question now is whether the American public will notice.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/26/opinion/mike-johnson-republican-party.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/26/opinion/mike-johnson-republican-party.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAMON WINTER/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A25.

**Load-Date:** October 27, 2023

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[***Best Sellers: Combined Print & E-Book Nonfiction: Sunday, June 18th 2023***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68H1-B271-DXY4-X03V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 18, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk

**Length:** 530 words

**Body**

About the Best Sellers:

These lists are an expanded version of those appearing in the June 18, 2023 print edition of the Book Review, reflecting sales for the week ending June 3, 2023. An asterisk (\*) indicates that a book's sales are barely distinguishable from those of the book above it. A dagger (?) indicates that some retailers report receiving bulk orders. For an explanation of our methodology, visit [*http://www.nytimes.com/best-sellers*](http://www.nytimes.com/best-sellers).

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|  |  | Weeks | Best Sellers: Combined Print & E-Book Nonfiction |
| This | Last | On |  |
| Week | Week | List |  |
| 1 | 2 | 7 | THE WAGER, by David Grann. (Doubleday) The survivors of a shipwrecked British vessel on a secret mission during an imperial war with Spain have different accounts of events. |
| 2 | 1 | 79 | KILLERS OF THE FLOWER MOON, by David Grann. (Doubleday) The story of a murder spree in 1920s Oklahoma that targeted Osage Indians, whose lands contained oil. |
| 3 | 3 | 10 | OUTLIVE, by Peter Attia with Bill Gifford. (Harmony) A look at recent scientific research on aging and longevity. |
| 4 | 4 | 145 | THE BODY KEEPS THE SCORE, by Bessel van der Kolk. (Penguin) How trauma affects the body and mind, and innovative treatments for recovery. |
| 5 | 6 | 43 | I'M GLAD MY MOM DIED, by Jennette McCurdy. (Simon & Schuster) The actress and filmmaker describes her eating disorders and difficult relationship with her mother. |
| 6 | 8 | 63 | CRYING IN H MART, by Michelle Zauner. (Vintage) The daughter of a Korean mother and Jewish American father, and leader of the indie rock project Japanese Breakfast, describes creating her own identity after losing her mother to cancer. |
| 7 | 7 | 21 | SPARE, by Prince Harry. (Random House) The Duke of Sussex details his struggles with the royal family, loss of his mother, service in the British Army and marriage to Meghan Markle. |
| 8 | 5 | 2 | THE BOOK OF CHARLIE, by David Von Drehle. (Simon & Schuster) The Washington Post columnist shares stories and wisdom he learned from a neighbor who was more than a century old. |
| 9 | 14 | 80 | BRAIDING SWEETGRASS, by Robin Wall Kimmerer. (Milkweed Editions) A botanist and member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation espouses having an understanding and appreciation of plants and animals. |
| 10 |  | 2 | QUIETLY HOSTILE, by Samantha Irby. (Vintage) A new collection of essays detailing personal and professional experiences by the author of ?Wow, No Thank You." |
| 11 | 9 | 4 | THE DADDY DIARIES, by Andy Cohen. (Holt) The host and executive producer of ?Watch What Happens Live? juggles fatherhood and his career. |
| 12 |  | 2 | KING: A LIFE, by Jonathan Eig. (Farrar, Straus & Giroux) A biography of the civil rights icon Martin Luther King Jr., which includes new archival material and reflections from some who worked, lived and fought with him. |
| 13 | 12 | 28 | THE LIGHT WE CARRY, by Michelle Obama. (Crown) The former first lady shares personal stories and the tools she uses to deal with difficult situations. |
| 14 |  | 1 | THE FORGOTTEN GIRLS, by Monica Potts. (Random House) The choices that sent two women who grew up as part of the ***working-class*** poor in the foothills of the Ozarks in different directions. |
| 15 |  | 10 | HAPPY-GO-LUCKY, by David Sedaris. (Back Bay) The humorist portrays personal and public upheavals of his life in its seventh decade and the world in the time of a pandemic. |

**Load-Date:** June 19, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Best Sellers: Hardcover Nonfiction: Sunday, June 18th 2023***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68H1-B271-DXY4-X03S-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 18, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk

**Length:** 507 words

**Body**

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|  |  | Weeks | Best Sellers: Hardcover Nonfiction |
| This | Last | On |  |
| Week | Week | List |  |
| 1 | 1 | 7 | THE WAGER, by David Grann. (Doubleday) The survivors of a shipwrecked British vessel on a secret mission during an imperial war with Spain have different accounts of events. |
| 2 | 2 | 10 | OUTLIVE, by Peter Attia with Bill Gifford. (Harmony) A look at recent scientific research on aging and longevity. |
| 3 | 4 | 43 | I'M GLAD MY MOM DIED, by Jennette McCurdy. (Simon & Schuster) The actress and filmmaker describes her eating disorders and difficult relationship with her mother. |
| 4 | 5 | 21 | SPARE, by Prince Harry. (Random House) The Duke of Sussex details his struggles with the royal family, loss of his mother, service in the British Army and marriage to Meghan Markle. |
| 5 | 3 | 2 | THE BOOK OF CHARLIE, by David Von Drehle. (Simon & Schuster) The Washington Post columnist shares stories and wisdom he learned from a neighbor who was more than a century old. |
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| 8 | 8 | 4 | THE DADDY DIARIES, by Andy Cohen. (Holt) The host and executive producer of ?Watch What Happens Live? juggles fatherhood and his career. |
| 9 | 11 | 10 | POVERTY, BY AMERICA, by Matthew Desmond. (Crown) The Pulitzer Prize-winning author of ?Evicted? examines the ways in which affluent Americans keep poor people poor. |
| 10 | 15 | 96 | GREENLIGHTS, by Matthew McConaughey. (Crown) The Academy Award-winning actor shares snippets from the diaries he kept over 35 years. |
| 11 | 10 | 5 | LOOK FOR ME THERE, by Luke Russert. (Harper Horizon) The Emmy Award?winning journalist details how he grieved for his late father and sought to make his own way. |
| 12 |  | 1 | EVERYTHING ALL AT ONCE, by Steph Catudal. (HarperOne) As she tends to her husband during his battle with cancer, Catudal examines events during and after her father?s death. |
| 13 |  | 1 | THE FORGOTTEN GIRLS, by Monica Potts. (Random House) The choices that sent two women who grew up as part of the ***working-class*** poor in the foothills of the Ozarks in different directions. |
| 14 |  | 2 | THE STORY OF ART WITHOUT MEN, by Katy Hessel. (Norton) An overview of more than 300 works of art from the Renaissance to the present day by women artists. |
| 15 | 6 | 2 | ON OUR BEST BEHAVIOR, by Elise Loehnen. (Dial) An examination of the seven deadly sins and their influence over the lives of women today. |

**Load-Date:** June 19, 2023

**End of Document**



[***The G.O.P. Goes Full-On Extremist; Paul Krugman***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69GM-7DV1-JBG3-625P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 26, 2023 Thursday 15:08 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 943 words

**Byline:** Paul Krugman

**Highlight:** When intolerance meets reactionary economics.

**Body**

There are no moderate Republicans in the House of Representatives.

Oh, no doubt some members are privately appalled by the views of Mike Johnson, the new speaker. But what they think in the privacy of their own minds isn’t important. What matters is what they do — and [*every single one*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/25/us/politics/house-republicans-speaker-vote-johnson.html) of them went along with the selection of a radical extremist.

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For if you read that proposal carefully, getting past the often mealy-mouthed language, you realize that it calls for the evisceration of the U.S. social safety net — not just programs for the poor, but also policies that form the bedrock of financial stability for the American middle class.

Start with Social Security, where the budget calls for raising the retirement age — already set to [*rise to 67*](https://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10035.pdf#page=7) — to [*69 or 70*](https://mikejohnson.house.gov/sites/mikejohnson.house.gov/files/final%20rsc%20fy%202020%20for%20print.pdf#page=102), with possible further increases as life expectancy rises.

On the surface, this might sound plausible. Until Covid produced a huge drop, average U.S. life expectancy at age 65 was steadily rising over time. But there is a [*huge and growing gap*](https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/ssb/v81n3/v81n3p19.html) between the number of years affluent Americans can expect to live and life expectancy for lower-income groups, including not just the poor but also much of the ***working class***. So raising the retirement age would fall hard on less fortunate Americans — precisely the people who depend most on Social Security.

Then there’s Medicare, for which the budget proposes [*increasing the eligibility age*](https://mikejohnson.house.gov/sites/mikejohnson.house.gov/files/final%20rsc%20fy%202020%20for%20print.pdf#page=94) “so it is aligned with the normal retirement age for Social Security and then indexing this age to life expectancy.” Translation: Raise the Medicare age from 65 to 70, then keep raising it.

Wait, there’s more. Most nonelderly Americans receive health insurance [*through their employers*](https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/nonelderly-0-64/?currentTimeframe=0&amp;sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D). But this system depends greatly on policies that the study committee proposed eliminating. You see, benefits don’t count as taxable income — but in order to maintain this tax advantage, companies (roughly speaking) must cover all their employees, as opposed to offering benefits only to [*highly compensated individuals*](https://complianceadministrators.com/section-105h-nondiscrimination/).

The committee budget would eliminate this incentive for broad coverage by [*limiting the tax deduction for employer benefits*](https://mikejohnson.house.gov/sites/mikejohnson.house.gov/files/final%20rsc%20fy%202020%20for%20print.pdf#page=84) and offering the same deduction for insurance purchased by individuals. As a result, some employers would probably just give their top earners cash, which they could use to buy expensive individual plans, while dropping coverage for the rest of their workers.

Oh, and it goes almost without saying that the budget would impose savage cuts — [*$3 trillion over a decade*](https://mikejohnson.house.gov/sites/mikejohnson.house.gov/files/final%20rsc%20fy%202020%20for%20print.pdf#page=193) — on Medicaid, children’s health coverage and subsidies that help lower-income Americans afford insurance under the Affordable Care Act.

How many Americans would lose health insurance under these proposals? Back in 2017 the Congressional Budget Office [*estimated*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/24/us/politics/cbo-congressional-budget-office-health-care.html) that Donald Trump’s attempt to repeal Obamacare would cause 23 million Americans to lose coverage. The Republican Study Committee’s proposals are far more draconian and far-reaching, so the losses would presumably be much bigger.

So Mike Johnson is on record advocating policies on retirement, health care and other areas I don’t have space to get into, like food stamps, that would basically end American society as we know it. We would become a vastly crueler and less secure nation, with far more sheer misery.

I think it’s safe to say that these proposals would be hugely unpopular — if voters knew about them. But will they?

Actually, I’d like to see some focus groups asking what Americans think of Johnson’s policy positions. Here’s my guess, based on [*previous experience*](https://www.msnbc.com/rachel-maddow-show/maddowblog/focus-groups-show-voters-often-question-facts-gop-plans-rcna99228): Many voters will simply refuse to believe that prominent Republicans, let alone the speaker of the House, are really advocating such terrible things.

But they are and he is. The G.O.P. has gone full-on extremist, on economic as well as social issues. The question now is whether the American public will notice.

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PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAMON WINTER/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A25.

**Load-Date:** October 27, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Map Illustrating 42 Years of Marijuana Arrests Shapes Way Forward***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69RB-T7Y1-DXY4-X0M6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 27, 2023 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1212 words

**Byline:** By Ashley Southall

**Body**

A new map illustrating 42 years of marijuana arrests documents the way that New York disproportionately targeted ***working-class***, Black and Hispanic people for decades.

For young Black men like Justin Sullivan, growing up in Harlem in the 2000s came with regular harassment from the police, making it risky to use marijuana. But when he started making white friends who also smoked weed, he learned that they were not under the same scrutiny.

''That's when I started seeing how I was vilified for cannabis,'' Mr. Sullivan, now 34, said in an interview.

Included with New York's legalization of weed in 2021 was a central promise to give back to communities that were most harmed by the war on drugs. Now, state cannabis regulators have created an interactive map from 1.2 million marijuana arrests conducted across the state over the last four decades as a guide to which neighborhoods qualify.

Mr. Sullivan's distressing experience could give him an advantage as he seeks one of at least 1,000 licenses that cannabis regulators in New York State plan to hand out early next year in a broad expansion of the legal market. Harlem, once a hotbed of drug arrests, is pinpointed in the mapping tool as a leading candidate for redress.

New York set a goal for half of all licenses to be awarded to applicants from the hardest-hit neighborhoods, along with women, racial and ethnic minority applicants, distressed farmers and service-disabled veterans. Regulators will use the map to help determine if applicants qualify as belonging to a disproportionately affected community. And it serves as a clear reminder of how drug enforcement arrests in New York have been concentrated in low-income, Black and Latino communities.

''This wasn't darts on a wall,'' said Tabatha Robinson, the director of economic development, policy and research of the Office of Cannabis Management, the state agency that released the mapping tool last month and regulates the recreational weed market.

Across the country, from California to Massachusetts, similar efforts to make the industry more inclusive have struggled. It has been no different in New York, where an interim dispensary licensing program has been halted since August by a lawsuit from veterans who say they were illegally excluded.

Researchers who put together the mapping tool analyzed the home addresses of all people arrested in New York State from 1980 through 2021. Enforcement in some neighborhoods was as much as 10 times higher than it would have been if arrests had been evenly distributed across the state, according to Damian Fagon, the state's chief equity officer for cannabis.

New York City accounted for most of the arrests -- about 1 million. The places with the most disproportionate arrest rates were all in the city: a jagged stretch of Brownsville, a boxy tract anchored by a major public hospital in East Flatbush and a triangular expanse of East Harlem surrounding the Robert F. Wagner Houses.

Arrests in the city were highest in the 2000s and early 2010s, during the peak era of stop and frisk, a period when police conducted millions of mostly unlawful stops targeting Black and Latino men.

Researchers have found stark racial disparities in arrests that could not be fully explained by the police's persistent claims that they were driven by emergency calls and community complaints and not racial bias.

While the sum of marijuana arrests contributing to the map is staggering, it may be missing millions more encounters. The data set does not include stops where officers issued criminal summonses or wrote tickets for small infractions, where they took no action at all or where they used marijuana as a pretext but the stop did not result in a charge.

Mr. Fagon acknowledged the map's limitations, but he said he believed it still captured the areas most harmed by marijuana arrests and provided people who have lived in those places with a pathway into the legal industry.

The state designated 40 percent of cannabis sales tax revenues to fund reinvestment grants in the places where arrests were high. People who have lived for certain periods in those areas can get priority consideration for business licenses, discounts halving application and licensing fees and financial assistance, training and help with operations.

Besides serving as a guide, the map will also serve to track whether the state is keeping its commitments. Henry Louis Taylor, an urban studies professor at the University at Buffalo, said the map will help determine whether business and job opportunities in the cannabis industry are flowing to where they're needed the most. It will also be useful for assessing whether future reinvestment initiatives, like job training and health care programs, make a meaningful difference, he said.

''We're going to be able to see whether or not, and to what extent, these communities are going to benefit from the legalization of marijuana,'' he said. ''So I think this is hugely important and significant.''

But the cannabis sales those initiatives depend on have lagged amid New York's slow and chaotic rollout. Just 27 adult-use dispensaries have opened across the state since last December, though sales reached $83 million in the first nine months with the help of new farmers' markets.

The new round of licensing is separate from the earlier, interim program that awarded 463 dispensary licenses to certain nonprofits and to people with prior marijuana convictions or their close relatives, which is now on hold. Regulators also plan to issue licenses for cultivators, processors, distributors and craft businesses that typically have five employees or fewer and can grow, process and sell their own products.

Mr. Sullivan, who plans to vie for one of the 1,000 new licenses, said his family wants to open a dispensary in a barbershop they have owned in Harlem for nearly 60 years. It would be on Frederick Douglass Boulevard in a stretch of Harlem where cannabis arrests rates have been four to six times higher than the state average.

Mr. Sullivan has never been arrested. But as a Harlem resident for many years he is eligible for extra consideration by cannabis regulators. He is also what the state calls a ''legacy'' dealer, someone who was part of the marijuana industry before legalization -- a group that officials are keen on drawing into the legal market.

Mr. Sullivan's maternal grandfather opened the barbershop in 1964 after migrating from Georgia. He became a successful businessman, obtaining several rental properties and opening the shop before he was sent to prison for six years in the late 1970s on charges that included marijuana distribution, his family said.

Harlem has changed since then, with famous landmarks like the Renaissance Ballroom and Lenox Lounge now home to retail chains, banks, and luxury homes that are out of reach for many longtime residents. Mr. Sullivan's family has held on to the barbershop building, and they've turned a former speakeasy in the back room into a space for cannabis workshops.

''Our neighborhood's disappearing,'' said Phillip Ellison, 37, Mr. Sullivan's step-cousin and business partner, and a lecturer in entrepreneurship at Tufts University. ''So we're lucky to have the privilege of having space.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/24/nyregion/marijuana-legal-arrests-ny-race.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/24/nyregion/marijuana-legal-arrests-ny-race.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Justin Sullivan grew up in an epicenter of drug arrests. Now the experience could help propel him into the legal cannabis market. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREA MOHIN/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A17.

**Load-Date:** November 27, 2023

**End of Document**



[***People Are Fleeing to Red States. Are They Better?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:680Y-86C1-DXY4-X30J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 14, 2023 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 23; DAVID BROOKS

**Length:** 923 words

**Byline:** By David Brooks

**Body**

There are a lot of us in the Northeastern media who properly spend a lot of time slamming the Republican Party for what a mess it's become. I have only one question: If we're right, why are so many people leaving blue states so they can live in red ones?

Between 2010 and 2020, the fastest-growing states were mostly red -- places like Texas, Georgia, Florida, Tennessee and South Carolina. During the pandemic that trend accelerated, and once again, most of the big population-gaining states are governed by Republicans.

If you go back further, you see decade after decade of migration toward the more conservative South. The Brookings Institution demographer William Frey has noted that in 1920, the Northeast and the Midwest accounted for 60 percent of America's population. A century later, the Sunbelt accounts for 62 percent of the nation's population. These days we are mostly a Sunbelt nation.

Why are these red states growing so rapidly? The short answer is that they are more pro-business. In a study for the American Enterprise Institute, Mark J. Perry compared the top 10 states people were flocking to in 2021 with the top 10 states people were flocking from.

The places they are flocking to have lower taxes. The 10 states that saw the biggest population gains have an average maximum income tax of 3.8 percent. The 10 states with the biggest population loss have an 8 percent average rate.

The growing states also have fewer restrictions on home construction. That contributes to lower housing prices. The median home price in those 10 population-gaining states is an average of 23 percent less than that of the 10 biggest population-losing states.

Perry goes down a range of other factors and concludes that Americans are moving away from blue states with high energy costs, byzantine regulatory regimes and unfriendly business climates. They are moving to economically vibrant red states with lower costs, more conservative fiscal policies and more job opportunities.

Fifty years ago, few would have predicted that the American South would emerge as an economic dynamo -- and that people would be flocking to places like South Carolina and Tennessee, but it's happening.

So can we tell a simple story here: Republican policies work, Democratic policies don't?

Well, not quite. When you look inside the red states at where the growth is occurring, you notice immediately that the dynamism is not mostly in the red parts of the red states. The growth is in the metro areas -- which are often blue cities in red states. A study from the L.B.J. Urban Lab, for example, found that Austin, Houston and Dallas-Fort Worth accounted for 71 percent of the jobs created in Texas in 2019.

Edward Glaeser, a Harvard economist who studies cities, provided me with data that showed which cities enjoyed rapid employment growth between 2019 and 2021. They tended to be from warmer parts of the country, an all-star team of Sunbelt blue cities: Austin, Raleigh Durham, Miami, Nashville, Tampa and Phoenix. Republicans may be proud that many of their states are growing, but Austin is not CPAC's utopia.

If you look at these success stories you see they are actually the product of a red-blue mash-up. Republicans at the state level provide the general business climate, but Democrats at the local level influence the schools, provide many social services and create a civic atmosphere that welcomes diversity and attracts highly educated workers.

Very often the conservative state authorities are at war with the more liberal city authorities over things like minimum wage laws and L.G.B.T.Q. rights. But, at least for right now, the red-blue mash-up seems to work.

So if this is the formula that produces a dynamic and cosmopolitan society, where is the political party that is conservative-leaning on business matters and more liberal-leaning on things like education, immigration and work force development?

Where is the party that stands for the policy blend that manifestly works?

Once upon a time you could squint and imagine the George W. Bush/Mitt Romney Republican Party morphing in that direction. No longer. The G.O.P. is a ***working-class*** populist party that has no interest in nurturing highly educated bobo boom towns. The G.O.P. does everything it can to repel those people -- and the Tesla they drove in on.

If you look at Democrats on the coasts you don't see much movement in that direction, either. But Democrats have been growing stronger in exactly these growing Southwestern states. Joe Biden became the first Democrat to win Maricopa County (Phoenix) since 1948. Democrats now hold all six of the Senate seats from Nevada, New Mexico and Colorado. They held both seats in Arizona until Kyrsten Sinema went independent.

As the Democratic Party becomes more and more the party of the college-educated voters and as the Republicans become more the party of white ***working-class*** voters, Democratic prospects in the upper Midwest get worse. But Democratic prospects in the Southwestern growth areas get better. It would not surprise me if a different kind of Democrat emerged from these areas.

We know the policy mix that creates a dynamic society. We just don't yet have a party that wants to promote it.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/13/opinion/sun-belt-migration.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/13/opinion/sun-belt-migration.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A23.

**Load-Date:** April 14, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Why People Are Fleeing Blue Cities for Red States; David Brooks***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:680T-YD51-DXY4-X278-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 13, 2023 Thursday 14:53 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 935 words

**Byline:** David Brooks

**Highlight:** Pro-business policies are behind boom towns.

**Body**

There are a lot of us in the Northeastern media who properly spend a lot of time slamming the Republican Party for what a mess it’s become. I have only one question: If we’re right, why are so many people leaving blue states so they can live in red ones?

Between 2010 and 2020, the fastest-growing states [*were mostly red*](https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2021/08/more-than-half-of-united-states-counties-were-smaller-in-2020-than-in-2010.html#:~:text=These%20five%20states%20accounted%20for,grew%20by%2015.0%25%20or%20more.) — places like Texas, Georgia, Florida, Tennessee and South Carolina. During the pandemic, that trend accelerated, and once again, most of the big population-gaining states are governed by Republicans.

If you go back farther, you see decade after decade of migration toward the more conservative South. The Brookings Institution demographer William Frey [*has noted that*](https://www.cnn.com/2021/05/11/politics/battleground-states-sunbelt-midwest/index.html) in 1920, the Northeast and the Midwest accounted for 60 percent of America’s population. More than a century later, the 18 states that are generally considered to be in the Sun Belt account for about 52 percent of the nation’s population. These days we are mostly a Sun Belt nation.

Why are these red states growing so rapidly? The short answer is that they are more pro-business. In [*a study for the American Enterprise Institute*](https://www.aei.org/carpe-diem/top-10-inbound-vs-top-10-outbound-us-states-in-2021-how-do-they-compare-on-a-variety-of-economic-tax-business-climate-and-political-measures/), Mark J. Perry compared the top 10 states people were flocking to in 2021 with the top 10 states people were flocking from.

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This article appeared in print on page A23.

**Load-Date:** April 25, 2023

**End of Document**



[***From France, Poetic and Feverish Realism***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68VT-YBS1-DXY4-X20D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 4, 2023 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; Movies, Performing Arts/Weekend Desk; Pg. 4; CRITIC'S PICKS

**Length:** 676 words

**Byline:** By Beatrice Loayza

**Body**

Two newly restored films by the director Jean Grémillon, whom cinephiles discuss like a special secret, get a second life in theaters.

Compared to other heavy hitters from the golden age of French cinema -- think Jean Renoir (''The Rules of the Game'') or Marcel Carné (''Children of Paradise'') -- history hasn't been kind to Jean Grémillon. This is especially the case in the United States, where the director's work continues to be discussed among cinephiles like a special secret. It's a shame. His films are among the most innovative and expressive from a period stretching roughly from the early 1930s through the '50s -- and in many ways they look ahead to the rule breaking of the French New Wave.

Newly restored in 4K, ''Lady Killer'' and ''The Strange Mister Victor'' are essentially Grémillon's breakthrough films, the midpoints between his early documentaries and experimental dramas and his greatest hits (''Stormy Waters,'' ''Lumière d'été''), which he made during the German occupation of France.

''Lady Killer'' stars the leonine Jean Gabin as Lucien, a womanizing legionnaire. Suave and sexy in his uniform, Lucien attracts the female gaze like moths to the flame. Enter the femme fatale Madeleine (Mireille Balin), a beautiful socialite bound to a wealthy benefactor. Lucien falls hard for Madeleine and takes up a job at a print shop in Paris so that they can be together. Then comes betrayal and murder, though Grémillon supplements the bleak fatalism and noirish intrigue with bursts of quivering melodrama that enrich and expand the story beyond its ostensible fatal-attraction framework.

In his early days, Grémillon was a violinist who played with an orchestra that provided accompaniment for silent films. He applies this musical sensibility to his construction of drama. His films move between small, seemingly uneventful moments and ones that hit like a reverberating gong. What starts out as a placid relationship between Lucien and his meek doctor friend, René (Réne Lefèvre), moves on to new, devastating terrain. Their bond is capped by a startlingly intimate scene of male camaraderie that plays like a fever dream.

Working in the tradition of poetic realism, Grémillon intermingled documentarylike visions of ***working-class*** milieus with stylized interludes of psychological tension. ''The Strange Mister Victor'' begins like a panoramic drama about the socially diverse inhabitants of Toulon, in the south of France, and eventually reveals an ethical crisis about the entanglement of two men. Victor Agardanne (Raimu) is an upstanding businessman with wife and child, though he secretly consorts with a band of crooks. When he kills one of them for threatening to blackmail him, he uses a tool that belongs to his cobbler, Bastien (Pierre Blanchar), as the murder weapon, which leads to that man's arrest. When Bastien escapes imprisonment, the guilty Victor goes out of his way to harbor the unsuspecting fugitive.

There's perhaps more to chew on in ''Mister Victor,'' bolstered by an expert performance from Raimu that straddles genuine moral anxiety and self-interested desperation. Yet one particular scene from ''Lady Killer'' continues to live in my head rent-free.

Midway through the film, a mirror captures Lucien as he spots Madeleine from a distance and then steps back into the shadows when she meets his gaze. The plots of Grémillon's films are meaty and sociologically probing, but what sets him apart from the directors of his time -- the majority of them narrative-focused artists who came from a theater background -- are moments like these: brief, wordless, but throbbing with desire and despair.

Lady KillerNot rated. In French, with subtitles. Running time: 1 hour 34 minutes. In theaters.

The Strange Mister VictorNot rated. In French, with subtitles. Running time: 1 hour 43 minutes. In theaters. Lady KillerNot rated. In French, with subtitles. Running time: 1 hour 34 minutes. In theaters.The Strange Mister VictorNot rated. In French, with subtitles. Running time: 1 hour 43 minutes. In theaters.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/03/movies/lady-killer-the-strange-mister-victor-review.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/03/movies/lady-killer-the-strange-mister-victor-review.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Jean Gabin, left, as a legionnaire and Mireille Balin as a socialite in Jean Grémillon's 1937 film ''Lady Killer.'' (PHOTOGRAPH BY GRASSHOPPER FILM) This article appeared in print on page C4.

**Load-Date:** August 4, 2023

**End of Document**



[***How Biden Thinks***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67KN-M5N1-JBG3-648K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 20, 2023 Monday 06:52 EST

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1841 words

**Byline:** David Leonhardt

**Highlight:** On Presidents’ Day, we go inside the West Wing to explain a crucial way that Biden is different from many Democrats.

**Body**

On Presidents’ Day, we go inside the West Wing to explain a crucial way that Biden is different from many Democrats.

I want to use today’s newsletter — on Presidents’ Day — to explain how President Biden thinks about the country and what distinguishes him from many other leading Democrats. To do so, I spent time at the White House last week talking with senior officials and emerged with a clearer sense of why Biden and his inner circle believe that he should run for re-election.

You may not agree with them. He is already 80 years old. But even if you think his age should be disqualifying for 2024, Biden’s analysis of American politics is worth considering. He believes that he understands public opinion in ways that many of his fellow Democrats do not, and there is reason to think he is correct.

Let’s start in the same place that Biden often does when talking about this subject: with the campaign that launched his career.

‘Limousine liberals’

Biden was first elected to the Senate in a very bad year for the Democratic presidential nominee. It was 1972, and that nominee was George McGovern. Richard Nixon, the incumbent, portrayed McGovern as an effete liberal who was focused on the three A’s — amnesty (for draft dodgers), abortion and acid. Despite McGovern’s own humble background and World War II heroism, he played into the caricature, allowing Hollywood stars and college activists to become symbols of his campaign.

Biden, a 29-year-old long-shot Senate candidate in Delaware, [*took a different approach*](https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2019/06/joe-biden-1972-race-senate.html). On economic issues, he ran as a populist. He complained about “millionaires who don’t pay any taxes at all” and “billion-dollar corporations who want a ride on the public’s back.”

On other issues, Biden signaled that he was more moderate. He called for an end to the Vietnam War while also opposing amnesty for draft dodgers. He said the police should focus less on marijuana busts while also opposing legalization. He distanced himself from McGovern’s student volunteers. “I’m not as liberal as most people think,” Biden told a Delaware newspaper.

On Election Day, McGovern lost every state except Massachusetts and received less than 40 percent of the vote in Delaware. Biden won [*a shocking upset*](https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1972/11/12/91354030.html?pageNumber=273) that launched his long Senate career.

Today, when Biden reminisces about the McGovern campaign, he uses the phrase “limousine liberals,” [*which was coined in 1969*](https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1969/08/18/78391983.html?pageNumber=23). “They forgot about the neighborhood I grew up in,” he has said. The key lesson was that the rest of America looked more like Biden’s old neighborhood in Scranton, Pa., than like Hollywood or the Ivy League.

Biden has never forgotten that. Every president since Nixon had hung a portrait of George Washington [*above the fireplace in the Oval Office*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/05/05/arts/design/oval-office-art.html), but not Biden. That spot has instead gone to Franklin D. Roosevelt. When Biden looks up from his desk, he sees the portrait. He tells people that F.D.R. is the president who never forgot about the ***working class***.

“We didn’t pay nearly as much attention to ***working-class*** folks as we used to,” Biden said recently, talking about 1972. “And the same thing is happening today.”

‘Sick and tired’

Regular readers of The Morning may recognize this theme. The Democratic Party, especially its left flank, [*has gone upscale*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/07/briefing/democratic-party-covid-georgia.html) in the 21st century, increasingly reflecting [*the social liberalism of well-off professionals*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/04/briefing/democrats-election-working-class-voters.html). Most Americans without a four-year college degree now vote Republican, even though they lean left on economic issues.

When explaining the shift, liberals sometimes argue that it stems from ***working-class*** bigotry. And racism certainly influences American politics. But the shift is not simply about race (nor is it smart politics to describe millions of voters as bigots).

After all, the Democratic Party’s upscale liberalism has alienated voters of color, too. Latinos have become more Republican in the past few years; one recent analysis of the Latino vote found that liberals’ stridency on Covid precautions and their lack of concern about border security [*have harmed Democrats*](https://equisresearch.medium.com/post-mortem-part-two-the-american-dream-voter-66dd6f673d1e). Many Black voters, for their part, hold more moderate views on crime, immigration and gender issues than liberal professionals do.

Biden’s own rise to presidency highlighted this dynamic. He ran as Joe from Scranton — and Black voters in South Carolina rescued his campaign. Affluent moderates often preferred Michael Bloomberg or Pete Buttigieg, while affluent progressives liked Elizabeth Warren.

As president, Biden has stuck to this approach. He is more socially liberal than he was in 1972 but downplays the issues on which many swing voters are moderate. In his State of the Union address, he didn’t say much about abortion, a recognition that [*the country is more conflicted*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/19/briefing/abortion-debate-public-opinion.html) about the issue than liberals often imagine. On immigration, he has taken steps to reduce the surge of undocumented migrants ([*albeit slowly*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/07/us/politics/mayorkas-republicans-border.html), as Republicans note). On Covid, he infuriated some on the left by saying what seems obvious to many Americans: The virus is still a threat, but the pandemic is over.

On economic issues, by contrast, Biden is the most progressive president in decades. “Damn it,” he has said, “I’m sick and tired of ordinary people being fleeced.”

He talks proudly about [*his crackdown on corporate concentration*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/24/business/biden-antitrust-amazon-google.html). He says that the pharmaceutical industry has “ripped off” the country, and he has capped some drug costs. He says that the solution to Social Security financing involves raising taxes on the rich. He waves away neoliberal criticism of his “Buy America” trade policies. He has enacted a huge infrastructure program and plans to travel the country this year telling voters about the bridges, roads and factories that are part of it.

The Democrats’ dilemma

Biden, to be clear, has not solved the Democratic Party’s ***working-class*** problem. He too lost voters without a bachelor’s degree in 2020, although he won a few more percentage points of their vote than Hillary Clinton had in 2016. He has also not solved the country’s inequality problem. It’s too soon to know if his policies will make a meaningful difference.

But Biden has demonstrated something important. He occupies the true middle ground in American politics, well to the left of most elected Republicans on economics and somewhat to the right of most elected Democrats on social issues. Polls on specific issues point to the same conclusion. That’s the biggest reason that he is the person who currently gets to decide how to decorate the Oval Office.

All of which underscores a dilemma facing the Democratic Party. In 2024, it either must nominate a man who would be 86 when his second term ended or choose among a group of prominent alternatives who tend to bear some political resemblance to George McGovern.

For more: Three words sum up Biden’s 2024 message — [*competent beats crazy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/19/us/politics/biden-2024-campaign.html).

Go back in time: “[*Delaware Elects Youngest U.S. Senator*](https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1972/11/09/79478058.html?pageNumber=21),” The Times reported in 1972.

THE LATEST NEWS

War in Ukraine

* Biden made a [*secret trip to Kyiv*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/20/us/politics/biden-ukraine-visit.html) and met with Volodymyr Zelensky, Ukraine’s leader, ahead of the anniversary of Russia’s invasion.

1. The trip came during a diplomatic visit to Poland to affirm U.S. support for Ukraine. Here’s [*the latest*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/02/20/world/russia-ukraine-war) from the meetings.
2. Secretary of State Antony Blinken says China is [*considering giving Russia weapons*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/19/world/europe/us-china-weapons-russia-ukraine.html), a move that would transform the war into a struggle involving three superpowers.
3. Vladimir Putin has [*reshaped Russia in his image*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/19/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-putin.html) during a year of war.
4. A Ukrainian husband and wife shared a trench on the front line. They [*died in it together*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/20/world/asia/ukraine-russia-war-death.html).

International

* Turkey’s post-earthquake reconstruction is compounding the [*country’s economic problems*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/19/business/turkey-earthquake-economy-erdogan.html).

1. The influencer Andrew Tate’s misogynistic views are popular with some British students. [*Educators are trying to fight back*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/19/world/europe/andrew-tate-uk-teachers.html).
2. The Duomo in Milan has needed [*constant care for 637 years*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/19/world/europe/milan-italy-duomo-cathedral.html).

Other Big Stories

* Minus 30 and limited daylight: The U.S. military gave up a hunt for downed flying objects at the end of the world. [*See images from the search*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/20/us/politics/ufos-alaska-deadhorse.html).

1. One person was killed and 10 others wounded in [*shootings in Memphis*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/19/us/memphis-mass-shooting-whitehaven.html).
2. Residents of East Palestine, Ohio, are [*paying for their own toxic-chemical tests*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/19/us/politics/east-palestine-toxic-chemicals-epa.html) because they don’t trust the government’s handling of a recent train derailment.
3. Telemedicine is making [*Ketamine more accessible*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/20/us/ketamine-telemedicine.html). Some people are using the drug to treat depression, but others are abusing it.
4. The founder of the world’s biggest hedge fund will be [*paid billions to retire*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/20/business/bridgewater-ray-dalio-retire.html).

Opinions

Gail Collins and Bret Stephens discuss the [*Republican presidential candidates*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/20/opinion/trump-carlson-biden-2020-2024.html).

Patti Davis, Ronald Reagan’s daughter, hopes [*Bruce Willis will feel a little less lonely*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/18/opinion/bruce-willis-my-father-and-the-decision-of-a-lifetime.html) because of his announcement of his dementia diagnosis.

Big tech companies [*should be liable for the illegal conduct*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/20/opinion/facebook-section-230-supreme-court.html) that their platforms enable, says Julia Angwin.

MORNING READS

Big-wave photography: She [*swims in icy water with sharks*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/17/sports/big-wave-surfing-sachi-cunningham.html) to get the shot.

Avoiding toxins: Use this guide to [*pick safer beauty products*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/15/well/live/personal-care-products-chemicals.html).

Going gray: A news anchor’s hair color [*made her the focus of the story*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/16/world/canada/lisa-laflamme-ctv-anchor.html).

Metropolitan Diary: A [*pigeon in a picnic basket*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/19/nyregion/metropolitan-diary.html) in the park.

Game time: Take [*our latest news quiz*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/02/17/briefing/news-quiz-ohio-nikki-haley-ufo-michigan-state.html). (The average was 8.9.)

Lives Lived: Richard Belzer played Detective John Munch on “Law &amp; Order: Special Victims Unit.” He [*died at 78*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/19/arts/television/richard-belzer-dead.html).

SPORTS NEWS FROM THE ATHLETIC

M.L.B. turmoil: The league created an “[*economic reform committee*](https://theathletic.com/4226341/2023/02/19/mlb-economic-reform-committee-mets-bally/)” as it looks to address huge spending disparities and the future of local broadcasts.

LeBron James: The basketball star will try to play in all of the Lakers’ remaining games to help his team [*make the playoffs*](https://theathletic.com/4229044/2023/02/19/lebron-lakers-final-games-importance/).

Women’s soccer: The U.S. team [*beat Japan*](https://theathletic.com/4228999/2023/02/19/uswnt-japan-shebelieves-cup-mallory-swanson/) in the SheBelieves Cup. Mallory Swanson scored the game-winning goal.

ARTS AND IDEAS

New York noir

Freedoms betrayed, classes divided, races at war — these heady themes lace Walter Mosley’s 46th novel, “Every Man a King.” The title is a reference to the motto of Huey Long, the populist Louisiana demagogue from the 1930s. Mosley’s book is a hard-boiled tale set in New York, and our reviewer calls it [*“a sterling example” of the genre.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/17/books/review/walter-mosley-every-man-a-king.html)

PLAY, WATCH, EAT

What to Cook

Make gumbo or a [*caramelized apple king cake*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/mardi-gras-recipes.html) to celebrate Mardi Gras.

What to Watch

“All Quiet on the Western Front,” a German-language movie, [*was named best film*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/19/movies/baftas-winners-2023.html) at the BAFTAs.

On Comedy

Try [*these sets*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/17/arts/comedy-specials-marc-maron-roseanne-barr.html) from a maturing Marc Maron and a pandering Roseanne Barr.

Now Time to Play

The pangram from yesterday’s Spelling Bee was opulent. Here is [*today’s puzzle*](https://www.nytimes.com/puzzles/spelling-bee).

Here’s [*today’s Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/crosswords/game/mini), and a clue: Meadow songbird (four letters).

And here’s [*today’s Wordle*](https://www.nytimes.com/games/wordle/index.html).

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

P.S. Labor issues, senatorial speeches and “a snub to King George”: [*How Presidents’ Day came to be*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/presidents-day-lincoln-washington.html).

Here’s [*today’s front page*](https://static01.nyt.com/images/2023/02/20/nytfrontpage/scan.pdf).

“[*The Daily*](https://www.nytimes.com/thedaily)” is off today for the holiday.

Kitty, Bennett, Matthew Cullen, Lauren Hard, Lauren Jackson, Claire Moses, Ian Prasad Philbrick, Tom Wright-Piersanti and Ashley Wu contributed to The Morning. You can reach the team at [*themorning@nytimes.com*](mailto:themorning@nytimes.com).

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

PHOTO: President Joe Biden and the Franklin D. Roosevelt portrait over the fireplace. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Sarahbeth Maney/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** February 20, 2023

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[***It's Not an Excuse to Say the Trumps Did Worse***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:696M-NDB1-DXY4-X01F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 19, 2023 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 26; THE CONVERSATION

**Length:** 1650 words

**Byline:** By Gail Collins and Bret Stephens

**Body**

Gail Collins: Bret, September is one of my favorite months, and I've always kinda wished Congress would stay out on vacation longer. They tend to be a leaky cloud on the horizon.

Let's start with -- oh God, the impeachment inquiry. You're in charge of the Republicans, no matter how you feel about Donald Trump. Give me your take.

Bret Stephens: Gail, if this impeachment inquiry were any more premature, it would be a teenage boy.

Gail: I'm stealing that line.

Bret: I say that as someone who thinks that Hunter Biden's business dealings -- with his family's alleged shell companies and his shady foreign partners and curiously high-priced artwork -- stink to heaven. I also think we in the press need to dig deeper and harder into what his father knew about what his son was up to, whether Joe knowingly lent his name to the enterprise, and who, if anyone, in the wider Biden family benefited from Hunter's activities. And it's no excuse to say the Trumps did worse. Innocence isn't established by arguing that the other guy is a bigger crook.

But, as our colleague David French astutely pointed out last week, ''Where is the blue dress?'' Every modern impeachment inquiry, from Richard Nixon and the missing 18½ minutes of tape to Bill Clinton and his, er, DNA sample, to Trump's phone call to Volodymyr Zelensky and then the Jan. 6 riot, started from smoking-gun evidence of wrongdoing. What we have here, at most, is secondhand smoke.

Gail: Thirdhand, maybe. Hunter Biden broke the law when he filled out a false gun-purchase form, denying he had a drug use problem. That's bad. He should be punished, but it certainly doesn't have to be by doing time in the slammer.

Bret: Agree. It would probably be enough to sentence Hunter to watch 100 hours of Josh Hawley questioning Senate witnesses. But that might vanquish his hard-earned sobriety.

Gail: When you try to connect Hunter's stupid misdeeds to his father, to argue it's a reason to throw the duly elected president of the United States out of office -- it's like me demanding new antismoking laws in Manhattan because a guy in Canton, Ohio, is puffing on a cigar downtown.

But we're pretty much in concert on this, I think. Next what-about-the-Republicans inquiry: the budget. Is Kevin McCarthy leading -- or not-leading -- us into a government shutdown?

Bret: I love the way McCarthy keeps getting kicked around by the ultra-MAGAites: It's the most poetic bit of justice since Mr. Bumble, the sadist, married Mrs. Corney, the bigger sadist, in ''Oliver Twist.''

Gail: Yippee! A Dickens reference to Kevin McCarthy. Not as if we had great expectations for his speakership.

Bret: Touché. My guess is that we'll avoid a shutdown with a continuing resolution that funds the government past the end of the month. And I'm sure we'll find a way to fund the Defense Department, too. The longer-term question is how McCarthy can manage a Republican circus in which Donald Trump is the ringmaster, Matt Gaetz cracks the whip and Marjorie Taylor Greene is in charge of the clowns.

And speaking of cracking the whip: Your thoughts on the autoworkers' strike?

Gail: You know, I've been out on strike a few times -- mostly it worked out and got everybody to a decent settlement. Although once, long ago, it did cause the publisher of a small paper I was working on to just pull the plug.

Bret: Uh oh.

Gail: I'm generally on the union side in these things. Organized labor has been a key to the growth of a solid middle- and ***working-class*** America. But the U.A.W.'s lack of support for President Biden's effort to move us to electric cars has definitely cooled me.

Bret: Won't surprise you that it's the part of the strike I find most interesting: It shows the growing gap between the Democrats' environmental commitments and the interests of ***working-class*** voters.

Gail: Presuming you're hanging with management?

Bret: Er, yep.

I don't blame workers for wanting hefty raises: Inflation has really eaten away at purchasing power. But the U.A.W. wants to more than double the Big Three's labor costs, to about $150 an hour from around $65 now, which is unsustainable against nonunionized competitors like Toyota, where it's closer to $55. The union also wants to go back to the same kind of defined-benefit pension plan that practically bankrupted the Big Three a generation ago.

I'm wondering about the politics of this, too. The administration is standing with the unions, though I'm not sure a long strike helps them as opposed to, say, Trump.

Gail: I'm sure there's a big gap between the ideal contract goals they espouse in public and their real-life targets. But the bottom line is that when profits are raising management pay spectacularly, workers also deserve an unusually nice, substantial raise.

If there's a long strike, which I doubt there will be, we'll come back to it -- this really is one of our most fundamental differences. But in the meantime: Mitt Romney. He's retiring. What are your thoughts?

Bret: You and I both have guilty consciences for being so hard on the guy back when he was running for president.

Now, I think of him as the last good Republican. He was right about the threat posed by Russia back in 2012, when so many Democrats mocked him for it. He was the only Republican senator who voted to convict Trump in his first impeachment trial and one of only seven Republicans who voted for conviction in the second impeachment.

Gail: Mitt Romney was a good governor in Massachusetts, where he proved a cost-conscious Republican could still build a much-needed state health care program. He's been a fine senator who proved it's possible for a Republican to have backbone in the age of Trump.

Those were the arenas he was meant to star in. Sadly, as a presidential candidate, he was terrible. Suddenly retro: ''I'm not concerned about the very poor.'' And very, very boring. It predates your arrival at The Times, but you may remember that I made a thing out of mentioning, every time I wrote about Romney, that he once drove to Canada with the family dog on the roof of the car.

Bret: May remember, Gail?

Gail: It was just a game I'd worked up to rebel against the deep, deep dullness of his candidacy. Still getting pictures of dogs on car roofs from readers after all these years.

But that shouldn't be his political legacy. Mitt, I apologize.

Bret: Me too, Mitt. And in choosing to retire from politics when he's still fit in order to make way for the next generation, Romney's showing that he's right about life -- in the sense that it's good to bow out with grace.

Gail: Bet I know what's coming next.

Bret: Wish I could say the same thing about Joe Biden. Which reminds me to ask your thoughts about David Ignatius's column in The Washington Post that everyone in the chattering classes is talking about, particularly this line: ''If he and Harris campaign together in 2024, I think Biden risks undoing his greatest achievement -- which was stopping Trump.''

Gail: You and I both bemoaned Biden's decision to run again. We wanted him to announce his planned retirement early so all the other Democratic options -- many attractive possibilities from Congress and state government -- could get out there and introduce themselves to the country.

Didn't happen. And Biden, alas, isn't going to listen to critics unless he suffers some unexpected medical issue.

Bret: That ''unexpected medical issue'' is the palpable sense of feebleness in Biden's public performances. Not a good look for a guy who wants to spend five more years in the world's most important job.

Gail: But I'm not sure Biden's age gives the race to Trump. And as I've pointed out a billion times, Trump will be 78 if he runs against Biden, and in way worse physical shape. Although he has now started to brag about his long-life genes.

Bret: His awful dad lived to 93. I'll assume his mom was a saint, and she died at 88.

Gail: As to Kamala Harris, she's certainly been improving during her vice presidency. I'd be happy to see her run as a candidate for president -- up against a bunch of other smart, super-achieving Democrats.

Bret: I suspect a lot of people would feel a lot better about voting for Biden next year if they had rock-solid confidence in his veep. Like Harris or not, her unfavorable rating among voters is close to 56 percent, which makes her a huge drag on an already vulnerable ticket. I know a lot of Democrats feel Biden needs a minority woman as a running mate, so why not swap her out for someone like Michelle Lujan Grisham, the Hispanic governor of New Mexico, or Mellody Hobson, the superstar businesswoman, or Val Demings, the former congresswoman from Florida? I also think Gina Raimondo, the commerce secretary, would also be a great veep choice, even if she isn't a minority woman, because she's just incredibly talented. Remember that F.D.R. tossed out Henry Wallace for Harry Truman in 1944. That's the historical analogy Biden ought to be thinking of now.

Gail: Does sound very attractive. But Bret, you know that sort of thing isn't done anymore. You don't dump your loyal, hard-working vice president. Who also happens to be of Jamaican and Indian descent. Swapping for another minority woman just seems ... tacky.

If Biden bowed out, it'd be perfectly reasonable for all those other good candidates to jump in. But as things stand they are, sigh, as they are.

Bret: I'll grant you the tacky part. But I can think of something a lot worse: Donald Trump back in the White House. When those are the stakes, being tacky seems a small price to pay for national self-preservation.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/18/opinion/trump-biden-hunter-impeachment.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/18/opinion/trump-biden-hunter-impeachment.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY HAIYUN JIANG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A26.

**Load-Date:** September 19, 2023

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[***William Blake’s Prints Tapped the Power of a Wild Mind; Critic’s Pick***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B02-0GP1-JBG3-60NH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 28, 2023 Thursday 17:45 EST

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**Section:** ARTS; design

**Length:** 1402 words

**Byline:** Walker Mimms

**Highlight:** A crackling collection of experimental prints by William Blake resurrects the English poet-painter in all his radical frenzy, and foretells the limits of political art.

**Body**

A crackling collection of experimental prints by William Blake resurrects the English poet-painter in all his radical frenzy, and foretells the limits of political art.

“A wild pet for the supercultivated,” as T.S. Eliot called him, is only half the story of William Blake (1757-1827), a poet who is more famous for his influence on certain moderns (Allen Ginsberg, Bob Dylan, Patti Smith) than actually read.

Blake combined extremes: rambling incantations about European history alongside short ditties on the soul that any child can enjoy. As he wrote in 1794: “I was angry with my friend; / I told my wrath, my wrath did end …”

He made drawings and paintings, too, and some nice ones appear among the 112 works in “William Blake: Visionary” at the Getty Center in Los Angeles, curated by the museum’s Edina Adam and Julian Brooks in cooperation with the Tate Britain, where the show originated. But the works that steal this concise and compelling retrospective are his prints, which were the primary means of Blake’s living.

In an age of pamphleteering and upward mobility, Blake’s “illuminated books,” as he called them, stuck out like a Gutenberg relic. His best known collection, “Songs of Innocence and Experience” (1789-94), six sheets of which are on view here, occupies a print block not much bigger than a credit card. Lean in close to “The Tyger,” his short hymn on creation from the “Songs.” Each detail bespeaks a child narrator’s awe and the clipped meter of a lullaby: the squiggly tails of his y’s (printed in booby-blue ink), the tendrils of green vines framing his tiny stanzas, the spotting of his folk-drawn beast at the foot of the page.

Born in London to ***working-class*** parents, Blake never saw the Continent, missing the Grand Tour and a classical education. His drawings feel both of their time — with neoclassical musculature and big Roman noses — but also self-found and a little palsied, as seen in the faces of “Laocoön” (1815-27), his engraving of the renowned Hellenistic Greek statue surrounded in graffiti-like inscriptions from Greek and Christian mythology.

Blake sought approval from the Royal Academy, London’s artistic gatekeeper, but never quite got it. (The Getty show was postponed by the pandemic, and as a result some of his more traditional paintings, and other telling works from the Tate debut, missed their loan window.)

He apprenticed instead as an engraver — a title he could never shake — and made his living illustrating the books of others. By age 33, according to his skilled engraving of William Hogarth’s “Beggar’s Opera” (1790), he knew how cross hatching could convey depth and shadow — and showed deference to Hogarth, the society satirist whose work hung in London’s most exclusive clubs.

But Hogarth was 25 years gone. Revolutions were afoot: monarchies toppling in America and France, William Wilberforce’s crusade against the slave trade, deism on the loose. Blake found fellow travelers — the abolitionist bookseller Joseph Johnson, the radical feminist Mary Wollstonecraft, the Swiss gothic painter Henry Fuseli — and cut plates for them all. “Blake is damned good to steal from,” said Fuseli, whose dramatic ink drawings on view feel tame beside Blake’s wildings. “Fancy is the end, and not a means in his designs.”

Back then, text was printed from small pieces of metal type that stamped ink onto the page in positive. Conversely, illustrations such as Blake’s Hogarth were transferred to paper in negative, and had to be printed on separate sheets from text. Ink filled the incisions of an engraver’s plate, the metal face was wiped clean, and then the paper, squeezed deep into those incisions, bonded with the ink. Thanks to conflicting processes, text and images had to alternate pages.

Instead Blake found a new, empowering way for his books. He drew both words and images together directly onto his plates in wax. He then used acid to etch away all the negative space, revealing a unified, positive matrix, like a metal stamp. He inked impressions in different colors, then added pigments and inks to the page with brush.

This new process took time but allowed auteurship. In “America, a Prophecy” (1793), his 17-panel paean to the revolution of 1776, we follow Orc (rebellion and creation, personified) in his struggle against Albion (George III’s England, roughly) and Urizen (Blake’s deity of cold, unfeeling logic). Among squiggling roots, gusts and hellfire, the nude Orc, Blake’s strongest use of the human form, vogues and flops around stanzas, printed in blue, that tell how “British soldiers through the thirteen states sent up a howl / Of anguish, threw their swords and muskets to the earth and ran.” These pages look both scribal and conjured, like Polaroids from the Enlightenment unconscious.

No one else made such things. Not Fuseli or Francisco Goya, painters who confronted but seemed to fear such depths of imagination. While some poets who were Blake’s contemporaries (Keats, Shelley, Byron) also unearthed old verse forms (Blake preferred the long-winded “fourteeners” of George Chapman), only Blake so fully assaulted neoclassical visuals.

His allegories reach the density of J.R.R Tolkien. Occasionally cloying, they ask how much interpretation true political art can invite. But they were also necessary protection. When Thomas Paine supported the French Revolution in 1791, denouncing the conservative warnings of Edmund Burke, infamous trials followed in London. In an altercation with a soldier in 1803, Blake was charged with sedition; he was ultimately acquitted.

Glad those days are over. But recall one of [*the most talked-about acquisitions of 2023*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/31/arts/design/portrait-of-omai-getty-national-portrait-gallery.html): a full-length portrait of the Polynesian prince [*Mai (1776)*](https://www.npg.org.uk/support/the-portrait-of-omai) by Burke’s friend Joshua Reynolds (1723-92), founder of the Royal Academy, which cost $60 million, jointly raised by the Getty and London’s National Portrait Gallery. In 2026, “Mai” will come to the Getty. Reynolds sought a quiet dignity, and found it in his tattooed and turbaned subject. (And a wonderful portrait it is.)

Blake thought Reynolds was “hired by Satan for the depression of art,” and instead went for the jugular — his busy books attack colonial rule, child labor, patriarchy, religious zealotry and sexual repression (he and his wife, who was his colorist and collaborator, read “Paradise Lost” to each other in the nude, à la Adam and Eve), using an esoteric printing method that matched the spur of that moment. (His most abolitionist works, [*traditional engravings*](https://blakearchive.org/copy/bb499.1?descId=bb499.1.comeng.03) for John Stedman’s 1796 book on Suriname, don’t appear here because of the pandemic delay.) As our museums struggle to reflect colonial realities, this 18th-century debate — the hushed humanism or the wild radicalism — lives on.

In a final bid for a painter’s renown, Blake staged a solo show in 1809, which flopped. One painting in tempera and gold on canvas, a scene from Thomas Gray’s ode “The Bard,” appears here, browned by bad varnish, odd and antique. Blake wouldn’t live to see the longed-for reforms of the 1830s: emancipation, voting, representation.

His last great illuminated book, “Jerusalem, the Emanation of the Giant Albion” (1804-20), better reflects the final, frustrated years of this black sheep of Romanticism. The copy here is from Yale University, and its rainbow-colored creatures include the uber-mensch Orc bound like Prometheus, and a giant birdman contemplating the nature of vengeance, a pursuit that Blake, in incandescent orange cursive, calls “the destroyer of Grace &amp; Repentance in the bosom.”

Put more simply, in the rest of that quatrain quoted at the top of this review: “I was angry with my foe; / I told it not, my wrath did grow.”

William Blake: Visionary Through Jan. 14, 2024, at the Getty Center, 1200 Getty Center Drive, Los Angeles; 310-440-7300; getty.edu.

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PHOTOS: Top left and right, pages from “Songs of Innocence and of Experience” (1806); center, “Laocoön” (1815-27). Left, “Laughing Song,” from “Songs of Innocence and of Experience.” Bottom left, “America, a Prophecy” (about 1807). Right, an image from “Jerusalem, the Emanation of the Giant Albion” (about 1821). (PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM; THE HUNTINGTON LIBRARY, ART MUSEUM, AND BOTANICAL GARDENS, SAN MARINO; ALE CENTER FOR BRITISH ART, NEW HAVEN) This article appeared in print on page C11.

**Load-Date:** December 30, 2023

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[***It’s Not an Excuse to Say the Trumps Did Worse; The Conversation***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:696F-26P1-DXY4-X19J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 18, 2023 Monday 14:39 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1648 words

**Byline:** Gail Collins and Bret Stephens

**Highlight:** September is the cruelest month? It is if you’re Joe Biden.

**Body**

Gail Collins: Bret, September is one of my favorite months, and I’ve always kinda wished Congress would stay out on vacation longer. They tend to be a leaky cloud on the horizon.

Let’s start with — oh God, the impeachment inquiry. You’re in charge of the Republicans, no matter how you feel about Donald Trump. Give me your take.

Bret Stephens: Gail, if this impeachment inquiry were any more premature, it would be a teenage boy.

Gail: I’m stealing that line.

Bret: I say that as someone who thinks that Hunter Biden’s business dealings — with his family’s alleged shell companies and his shady foreign partners and curiously high-priced artwork — stink to heaven. I also think we in the press need to dig deeper and harder into what his father knew about what his son was up to, whether Joe knowingly lent his name to the enterprise, and who, if anyone, in the wider Biden family benefited from Hunter’s activities. And it’s no excuse to say the Trumps did worse. Innocence isn’t established by arguing that the other guy is a bigger crook.

But, as our colleague [*David French astutely pointed out*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/12/opinion/biden-impeachment-mccarthy.html) last week, “Where is the blue dress?” Every modern impeachment inquiry, from Richard Nixon and the missing [*18\xC2 minutes of tape*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/volokh-conspiracy/wp/2014/06/16/the-missing-18-12-minutes-presidential-destruction-of-incriminating-evidence/) to Bill Clinton and his, er, DNA sample, to Trump’s phone call to Volodymyr Zelensky and then the Jan. 6 riot, started from smoking-gun evidence of wrongdoing. What we have here, at most, is secondhand smoke.

Gail: Thirdhand, maybe. Hunter Biden broke the law when he filled out a false gun-purchase form, denying he had a drug use problem. That’s bad. He should be punished, but it certainly doesn’t have to be by doing time in the slammer.

Bret: Agree. It would probably be enough to sentence Hunter to watch 100 hours of Josh Hawley questioning Senate witnesses. But that might vanquish his hard-earned sobriety.

Gail: When you try to connect Hunter’s stupid misdeeds to his father, to argue it’s a reason to throw the duly elected president of the United States out of office — it’s like me demanding new antismoking laws in Manhattan because a guy in Canton, Ohio, is puffing on a cigar downtown.

But we’re pretty much in concert on this, I think. Next what-about-the-Republicans inquiry: the budget. Is Kevin McCarthy leading — or not-leading — us into a government shutdown?

Bret: I love the way McCarthy keeps getting kicked around by the ultra-MAGAites: It’s the most poetic bit of justice since Mr. Bumble, the sadist, married Mrs. Corney, the bigger sadist, in “Oliver Twist.”

Gail: Yippee! A Dickens reference to Kevin McCarthy. Not as if we had great expectations for his speakership.

Bret: Touché. My guess is that we’ll avoid a shutdown with a continuing resolution that funds the government past the end of the month. And I’m sure we’ll find a way to fund the Defense Department, too. The longer-term question is how McCarthy can manage a Republican circus in which Donald Trump is the ringmaster, Matt Gaetz cracks the whip and Marjorie Taylor Greene is in charge of the clowns.

And speaking of cracking the whip: Your thoughts on the autoworkers’ strike?

Gail: You know, I’ve been out on strike a few times — mostly it worked out and got everybody to a decent settlement. Although once, long ago, it did cause the publisher of a small paper I was working on to just pull the plug.

Bret: Uh oh.

Gail: I’m generally on the union side in these things. Organized labor has been a key to the growth of a solid middle- and ***working-class*** America. But the U.A.W.’s lack of support for President Biden’s effort to move us to electric cars has definitely cooled me.

Bret: Won’t surprise you that it’s the part of the strike I find most interesting: It shows the growing gap between the Democrats’ environmental commitments and the interests of ***working-class*** voters.

Gail: Presuming you’re hanging with management?

Bret: Er, yep.

I don’t blame workers for wanting hefty raises: Inflation has really eaten away at purchasing power. But the U.A.W. wants to more than double the Big Three’s labor costs, to about $150 an hour from around $65 now, which is unsustainable against nonunionized competitors like Toyota, where it’s closer to $55. The union also wants to go back to the same kind of defined-benefit pension plan that practically bankrupted the Big Three a generation ago.

I’m wondering about the politics of this, too. The administration is standing with the unions, though I’m not sure a long strike helps them as opposed to, say, Trump.

Gail: I’m sure there’s a big gap between the ideal contract goals they espouse in public and their real-life targets. But the bottom line is that when profits are raising management pay spectacularly, workers also deserve an unusually nice, substantial raise.

If there’s a long strike, which I doubt there will be, we’ll come back to it — this really is one of our most fundamental differences. But in the meantime: Mitt Romney. He’s retiring. What are your thoughts?

Bret: You and I both have guilty consciences for being so hard on the guy back when he was running for president.

Now, I think of him as the last good Republican. He was right about the threat posed by Russia back in 2012, when so many Democrats mocked him for it. He was the only Republican senator who voted to convict Trump in his first impeachment trial and one of only seven Republicans who voted for conviction in the second impeachment.

Gail: Mitt Romney was a good governor in Massachusetts, where he proved a cost-conscious Republican could still build a much-needed state health care program. He’s been a fine senator who proved it’s possible for a Republican to have backbone in the age of Trump.

Those were the arenas he was meant to star in. Sadly, as a presidential candidate, he was terrible. Suddenly retro: “I’m not concerned about the very poor.” And very, very boring. It predates your arrival at The Times, but you may remember that I made a thing out of mentioning, every time I wrote about Romney, that he once drove to Canada with the family dog on the roof of the car.

Bret: May remember, Gail?

Gail: It was just a game I’d worked up to rebel against the deep, deep dullness of his candidacy. Still getting pictures of dogs on car roofs from readers after all these years.

But that shouldn’t be his political legacy. Mitt, [*I apologize*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/21/opinion/gail-collins-mitt-romney.html).

Bret: Me too, Mitt. And in choosing to retire from politics when he’s still fit in order to make way for the next generation, Romney’s showing that he’s right about life — in the sense that it’s good to bow out with grace.

Gail: Bet I know what’s coming next.

Bret: Wish I could say the same thing about Joe Biden. Which reminds me to ask your thoughts about [*David Ignatius’s column*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2023/09/12/biden-trump-election-step-aside/) in The Washington Post that everyone in the chattering classes is talking about, particularly this line: “If he and Harris campaign together in 2024, I think Biden risks undoing his greatest achievement — which was stopping Trump.”

Gail: You and I both bemoaned Biden’s decision to run again. We wanted him to announce his planned retirement early so all the other Democratic options — many attractive possibilities from Congress and state government — could get out there and introduce themselves to the country.

Didn’t happen. And Biden, alas, isn’t going to listen to critics unless he suffers some unexpected medical issue.

Bret: That “unexpected medical issue” is the palpable sense of feebleness in Biden’s public performances. Not a good look for a guy who wants to spend five more years in the world’s most important job.

Gail: But I’m not sure Biden’s age gives the race to Trump. And as I’ve pointed out a billion times, Trump will be 78 if he runs against Biden, and in way worse physical shape. Although he has now started to brag about his long-life genes.

Bret: His awful dad lived to 93. I’ll assume his mom was a saint, and she died at 88.

Gail: As to Kamala Harris, she’s certainly been improving during her vice presidency. I’d be happy to see her run as a candidate for president — up against a bunch of other smart, super-achieving Democrats.

Bret: I suspect a lot of people would feel a lot better about voting for Biden next year if they had rock-solid confidence in his veep. Like Harris or not, her unfavorable rating among voters is close to 56 percent, which makes her a huge drag on an already vulnerable ticket. I know a lot of Democrats feel Biden needs a minority woman as a running mate, so why not swap her out for someone like Michelle Lujan Grisham, the Hispanic governor of New Mexico, or Mellody Hobson, the superstar businesswoman, or Val Demings, the former congresswoman from Florida? I also think Gina Raimondo, the commerce secretary, would also be a great veep choice, even if she isn’t a minority woman, because she’s just incredibly talented. Remember that F.D.R. tossed out Henry Wallace for Harry Truman in 1944. That’s the historical analogy Biden ought to be thinking of now.

Gail: Does sound very attractive. But Bret, you know that sort of thing isn’t done anymore. You don’t dump your loyal, hard-working vice president. Who also happens to be of Jamaican and Indian descent. Swapping for another minority woman just seems … tacky.

If Biden bowed out, it’d be perfectly reasonable for all those other good candidates to jump in. But as things stand they are, sigh, as they are.

Bret: I’ll grant you the tacky part. But I can think of something a lot worse: Donald Trump back in the White House. When those are the stakes, being tacky seems a small price to pay for national self-preservation.

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PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY HAIYUN JIANG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A26.

**Load-Date:** September 19, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Poetry Among Miles of Strip Malls***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B54-38N1-JBG3-6058-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 21, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section AR; Column 0; Arts and Leisure Desk; Pg. 16

**Length:** 1622 words

**Byline:** By Siddhartha Mitter

**Body**

Film, music and scent combine in Cauleen Smith's immersive ode to her city. Her touchstone is Wanda Coleman, a great poet of L.A.

A couple of months ago, the artist and filmmaker Cauleen Smith gathered a bare-bones crew for a guerrilla-style shoot -- no permits; the locations half-scouted, half-figured-out on the fly -- around the land that she calls her home and her obsession: Los Angeles.

They were filming the city -- four days and nights in a van, shooting from the ocean to East L.A., from humble Watts blocks to the San Gabriel foothills. But more than this, they were tuning into the city's signals, as you might on an old radio -- with the words of a Los Angeles poet, Wanda Coleman, as their tonal and emotional compass.

They made long tracking shots of the beach or roads lined with fast-food outlets and auto shops. They took slow panoramas from hilltops, and held still for minutes, sometimes hours, on downtown garment-shop blocks or railroad crossings. If people entered the frame they kept filming, letting the city come to them.

This week, Smith premieres the film, ''The Wanda Coleman Songbook,'' at 52 Walker, a gallery in TriBeCa, through March 16. It's a New York debut but a deeply Los Angeles project -- an ode by a resident seeking language to make sense of L.A.'s seductions and precarity, while honoring a creative precursor -- Coleman died in 2013 at age 67 -- in whom she finds insight and strength.

Video -- four channels projected floor-to-ceiling -- is just one part of this multi-sensory experience. In lieu of a soundtrack there's an album of seven specially commissioned songs from musicians like Meshell Ndegeocello and Kelsey Lu -- each one a free interpretation of a Coleman poem. Visitors may lounge on sofas and drop the stylus on the EP, which runs the same length as the video but can be started at any point.

Completing the immersive effect, shadows projected on the rear wall evoke Los Angeles street art and sights -- an Olmec head; a raven on a power line. A bespoke scent -- inspired by the earth and flora of Griffith Park -- wafts through the gallery.

With its layers and synesthetic appeal, the project, which was curated by Ebony L. Haynes, the director of 52 Walker, explores Smith's conflicted love for a city that is hard and getting harder -- notably for the poor and for the city's declining Black community, now 8.2 percent of its population -- yet infused with disconcerting beauty.

''I find L.A. beautiful and horrific, and I love trying to see it that way,'' Smith said. ''You can have such profound rage at the city and then be gobstopped at a giant feral bush of bougainvillea. And there's someone sleeping underneath that bush. It's all of it at once.''

Smith, 56, who grew up in Sacramento, has had an unusual creative journey back to Los Angeles, where she lived in the 1990s. She emerged as a filmmaker with experimental works and a feature, ''Drylongso,'' which earned praise at Sundance in 1999 but failed to secure distribution -- consistent with Hollywood's low interest at that time in Black female directors and topics.

Decamping from the industry, she moved to Texas and then Chicago. There, she reinvented herself as an interdisciplinary artist, expanding into drawings, textile banners, installations, performances and processions -- even wallpaper. After years under the radar in both film and art worlds, she appeared in the 2017 Whitney Biennial, with multiple museum shows since.

Honors too have followed, including the Studio Museum in Harlem's Wein Prize in 2020 and the Heinz Award for the Arts in 2022. And last year the long unfindable ''Drylongso'' came out of obscurity with a restoration, theatrical release and induction in the Criterion Collection.

In both film and other projects, Smith makes a practice of honoring her important influences, folding into her work their words or music, or filming at sites important in their lives. Sun Ra and Alice Coltrane recur frequently in these ways.

Her brilliant 2018 film, ''Sojourner,'' invokes an expanded pantheon, including the assemblage artist Noah Purifoy, the feminist Combahee River Collective, and Rebecca Cox Jackson, who founded a 19th-century Black Shaker community. An ongoing drawing series, meanwhile, depicts covers of Black feminist and other books that have shaped Smith intellectually.

But when she turned to Coleman, who was informally called the ''poet laureate of Los Angeles'' but less-known elsewhere, it was to address, Smith said, a downright existential concern.

Smith had moved back to Los Angeles in 2017 to teach at the California Institute of the Arts. (She now teaches at the University of California, Los Angeles.) On returning, she said, she found her love for the city undimmed, yet the circumstances of ordinary people, especially Black people, increasingly dire.

Reading Coleman -- another Black female artist with love and anger for the city -- helped Smith find her bearings. ''Black people have been displaced and erased from L.A. in a way that continues to shock and infuriate me,'' she added. ''This idea of a Black L.A., which honestly was like the 20th-century fuel of this city, is struggling for life now. I was trying to find something to latch onto to think about this or put language to it. And that was Wanda.''

Coleman was intense, charismatic, an L.A. original. ''A force of nature ... the conscience of the L.A. literary scene,'' the Los Angeles Times critic David Ulin wrote in an appreciation after her death. ''A real in-the-flesh, flesh-eating poet who also happened to be a real black woman,'' said the poet Terrance Hayes, introducing a volume of her selected works in 2019.

Raised in Watts, she dropped out of college for 1960s militant politics, but soon made writing her radical practice -- sustained (barely) by various service, clerical and ''pink-collar'' jobs. She briefly edited Players, a soft-core magazine for Black men, in the early 1970s. She later won an Emmy as a writer for the soap ''Days of Our Lives.''

Her poetry, published since the late 1970s by Black Sparrow Press, was raw, often rude, sexually explicit, bitingly funny, full of cleareyed fury at the systems and biases she faced as a ***working-class*** Black woman -- and acerbically insightful on intimacy across class and race. It was also virtuosic, playing with forms from sonnets to the blues and a plethora of literary references. She read it like jazz.

In the 1990s, Smith was vaguely aware of Coleman. ''I had read a poem or two,'' she said. Now, diving into the complete oeuvre, she was struck by how its perspective brought back her own precarious early days in the city, carless and riding the bus -- and by the fierce dignity the author claimed for herself and the people she depicted.

Coleman wrote ''without self-pity, but with total clarity,'' Smith said. When she writes about violence and abuse, ''what you are experiencing is the processing of this terror and violence and a desire to survive it -- a belief that your life has value and you're going to make your way.''

Before long, Smith said, she was thinking of Coleman as she moved through the city, attentive to those on its margins. ''When you're sitting in your car in L.A., Wanda is the best guide,'' she said. But once her project hatched, it was not with a film in mind.

Instead, she wanted to make a record album: To share poems with musicians she admired, ''to know if they connect with Wanda, how they connect, what it sounds like.'' Shot after the music was recorded, the video ''is a wrapper or blanket that's trying to envelop you while you listen to what these artists do with Wanda's work.''

The seven tracks were made separately, with different artists, yet the result -- somewhere in the realm of jazz and avant-garde soul -- is lyrical and cohesive. The roster is impressive: Alice Smith; Jamila Woods and Standing on the Corner; moor mother and Aquiles Navarro; Jeff Parker and Ruby Parker; Shala Miller; Ndegeocello and Lu.

Woods, who is based in Chicago, said she felt resonance between Gwendolyn Brooks's street-level feel for that city and Coleman's Los Angeles. She picked the poem ''Wanda in Worryland'' for its ''gritty vulnerability,'' she said -- ''the intrusive thoughts and external pressures and assumptions that haunt your interior space.''

Alice Smith found Coleman ''very intense -- I had to really figure it out,'' she said by phone. Her lush, echoing track builds off a few lines of ''In That Other Fantasy Where We Live Together.'' She found herself wishing tenderness on Coleman, who she felt ''could use a little bit of somebody to handle her with some kind of care.''

By the time of the shoot, Cauleen Smith said, Coleman's work felt like a trusted guide in looking closely at her city.

It pulled her toward long slow takes, allowing life to happen: ''Can we just stare at this strip mall for 10 minutes? Can we just watch people go in and out of the liquor store?'' And when things got uncomfortable -- how long is it appropriate or productive to show a person disoriented at a bus stop, or laboriously pushing a cart across the street? -- thinking about Coleman helped her sense where to draw the line.

Coursing through Coleman's work, Smith said, is deep love for the total Los Angeles with all its contradictions. ''She drank up this whole city,'' Smith said. ''She understood it so well.''

Now Smith, too, has found that the more she loves on Los Angeles, the more it loves her back -- like the strangers she encountered while shooting, who were kind and funny. ''It's really disarming,'' she said. ''The distance between the political rhetoric of the city, which is cruel, and the tenderness and joy of the people is wild.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/19/arts/design/cauleen-smith-artist-los-angeles.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/19/arts/design/cauleen-smith-artist-los-angeles.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Cauleen Smith, above, who created an immersive installation that melds sight, sound and scent to explore Los Angeles, inspired by the poetry of Wanda Coleman. Left, video stills from ''The Wanda Coleman Songbook,'' which runs through March 16 at the 52 Walker gallery in TriBeCa. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY PHYLICIA J.L. MUNN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

CAULEEN SMIT) This article appeared in print on page AR16.

**Load-Date:** January 21, 2024

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[***Americans Are Hungry for Change, So Get Ready for More Turmoil***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65XR-6RT1-DXY4-X4BN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 15, 2022 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 17; DAVID BROOKS

**Length:** 975 words

**Byline:** By David Brooks

**Body**

I'd like you to consider the possibility that the political changes that have rocked this country over the past six years will be nothing compared with the changes that will rock it over the next six. I'd like you to consider the possibility that we're in some sort of prerevolutionary period -- the kind of moment that often gives birth to something shocking and new.

Look at the conditions all around us:

First, Americans are deeply dissatisfied with the way things are going. Only 13 percent of voters say the country is on the right track, according to a New York Times/Siena College poll published this week.

Second, Americans are deeply dissatisfied with the leaders of both parties. Joe Biden has a 33 percent job approval rating among registered voters. About half of Republican voters want to move on from Donald Trump and find a new presidential candidate for 2024.

Third, inflation is soaring. Throughout history, inflationary periods have often been linked to political instability. As the economist Lionel Robbins wrote about Weimar Germany, inflation ''destroyed the wealth of the more solid elements in German society; and it left behind a moral and economic disequilibrium, apt breeding ground for the disasters which have followed.''

Fourth, the generational turnover is coming. The boomer gerontocracy that now dominates power is bound to retire, leaving a vacuum for something new.

Fifth, Americans are detaching from the two political parties. Far more Americans consider themselves independents than consider themselves either Democrats or Republicans, and independents may be growing more distinct. And there's some research that suggests independents are increasingly not just closeted members of the two main parties but also hold different beliefs, which put them between parties. Sixty-two percent of Americans believe a third party is needed.

Sixth, disgust with the current system is high. A majority of American voters believe that our system of government does not work, and 58 percent believe that our democracy needs major reforms or a complete overhaul. Nearly half of young adult voters believe voting does not affect how the government operates.

If these conditions persist, the 2024 presidential primaries could be wild. Sure, conventional candidates like the Republican Ron DeSantis or the Democrat Gavin Newsom may run for the nominations. But if the hunger for change is as strong as it is now, the climate will favor unconventional outsiders, the further outside the better. These sorts of oddball or unexpected candidates could set off a series of swings and disequilibriums that will make the existing party systems unstable.

Furthermore, if ever there was a moment ripe for a Ross Perot-like third candidate in the 2024 general election, this is that moment. There are efforts underway to prepare the way for a third candidate, and in this environment an outsider, with no ties to the status quo, who runs against the establishment and on the idea that we need to fundamentally fix the system -- well, that person could wind up winning the presidency.

These conditions have already shaken up the stereotypes we used to use to think about politics. We used to think of the Democrats as the party of the economically disadvantaged. But college-educated metropolitan voters continue to flock to it and reshape it more and more each year. In the Times/Siena poll of registered voters, white college graduates wanted Democrats to control Congress by 57 to 36 percent. For the first time in the survey's history, Democrats had a larger share of support among white college graduates than among nonwhite voters. These white voters are often motivated by social policy issues like abortion rights and gun regulation.

The Republicans used to be the party of business, but now they are emerging as a multiracial ***working-class*** party. In the Times/Siena poll, Hispanic voters were nearly evenly split about whether they favored Republicans or Democrats in the midterms. That may be overstating how much Hispanics have shifted, but it does seem as if the Republicans are genuinely becoming a ***working-class*** white-brown coalition. These voters care about the economy, the economy and the economy.

In other words, we now have an establishment progressive party and an anti-establishment conservative party. This isn't normal.

If I were a cynical political operative who wanted to construct a presidential candidate perfectly suited for this moment, I'd start by making this candidate culturally conservative. I'd want the candidate to show by dress, speech and style that he or she is not part of the coastal educated establishment. I'd want the candidate to connect with middle- and ***working-class*** voters on values and to be full-throatedly patriotic.

Then I'd make the candidate economically center-left. I'd want to fuse the economic anxieties of the ***working-class*** Republicans with the economic anxieties of the Bernie Sanders young into one big riled populist package. College debt forgiveness. An aggressive home-building project to bring down prices. Whatever it took.

Then I'd have that candidate deliver one nonpartisan message: Everything is broken. Then he or she would offer a slew of institutional reforms to match the comprehensive institutional reforms the Progressive movement offered more than a century ago.

I guess I'm looking for a sort of modern Theodore Roosevelt. But heck, I don't know. What's coming down the pike is probably so unforeseeable that I don't even have categories for it yet.

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**Graphic**

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Peter van Agtmael /Magnum Photos FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[***A 2024 Presidential Candidate Who Meets the Moment; David Brooks***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65XK-X951-DXY4-X45K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 14, 2022 Thursday 15:33 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 982 words

**Byline:** David Brooks

**Highlight:** Think outsider and unconventional.

**Body**

I’d like you to consider the possibility that the political changes that have rocked this country over the past six years will be nothing compared with the changes that will rock it over the next six. I’d like you to consider the possibility that we’re in some sort of prerevolutionary period — the kind of moment that often gives birth to something shocking and new.

Look at the conditions all around us:

First, Americans are deeply dissatisfied with the way things are going. Only [*13 percent*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/07/11/us/primary-elections-midterms) of voters say the country is on the right track, according to a New York Times/Siena College poll published this week.

Second, Americans are deeply dissatisfied with the leaders of both parties. Joe Biden has a 33 percent [*job approval rating*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/07/11/us/primary-elections-midterms#biden-approval-polling-2024) among registered voters. About half of Republican voters want to [*move on*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/12/us/politics/trump-approval-polling-2024.html) from Donald Trump and find a new presidential candidate for 2024.

Third, inflation is soaring. Throughout history, inflationary periods have often been linked to political instability. As the economist Lionel Robbins wrote about Weimar Germany, inflation “destroyed the wealth of the more solid elements in German society; and it left behind a moral and economic disequilibrium, apt breeding ground for the disasters which have followed.”

Fourth, the generational turnover is coming. The boomer gerontocracy that now dominates power is bound to retire, leaving a vacuum for something new.

Fifth, Americans are detaching from the two political parties. Far more Americans [*consider themselves independents*](https://news.gallup.com/poll/15370/party-affiliation.aspx) than consider themselves either Democrats or Republicans, and independents [*may be growing more distinct*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/04/14/unaffiliated-voters-reject-party-polarization/). And there’s some research that [*suggests*](https://www.uakron.edu/bliss/docs/State-of-the-Parties-2021/bitzer-cooper-manzo-roberts-sop21-paper.pdf) independents are increasingly not just closeted members of the two main parties but also hold different beliefs, which put them between parties. Sixty-two percent of Americans [*believe*](https://news.gallup.com/poll/329639/support-third-political-party-high-point.aspx) a third party is needed.

Sixth, disgust with the current system is high. A majority of American voters believe that our system of government [*does not work*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/13/us/politics/government-trust-voting-poll.html), and 58 percent believe that our democracy needs major reforms or a complete overhaul. Nearly half of young adult voters believe voting does not affect how the government operates.

If these conditions persist, the 2024 presidential primaries could be wild. Sure, conventional candidates like the Republican Ron DeSantis or the Democrat Gavin Newsom may run for the nominations. But if the hunger for change is as strong as it is now, the climate will favor unconventional outsiders, the further outside the better. These sorts of oddball or unexpected candidates could set off a series of swings and disequilibriums that will make the existing party systems unstable.

Furthermore, if ever there was a moment ripe for a Ross Perot-like third candidate in the 2024 general election, this is that moment. There are efforts underway to prepare the way for a third candidate, and in this environment an outsider, with no ties to the status quo, who runs against the establishment and on the idea that we need to fundamentally fix the system — well, that person could wind up winning the presidency.

These conditions have already shaken up the stereotypes we used to use to think about politics. We used to think of the Democrats as the party of the economically disadvantaged. But college-educated metropolitan voters continue to flock to it and reshape it more and more each year. In the [*Times/Siena poll*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/13/upshot/poll-2022-midterms-congress.html) of registered voters, white college graduates wanted Democrats to control Congress by 57 to 36 percent. For the first time in the survey’s history, Democrats had a larger share of support among white college graduates than among nonwhite voters. These white voters are often motivated by social policy issues like abortion rights and gun regulation.

The Republicans used to be the party of business, but now they are emerging as a multiracial ***working-class*** party. In the Times/Siena poll, Hispanic voters were nearly evenly split about whether they favored Republicans or Democrats in the midterms. That may be overstating how much Hispanics have shifted, but it does seem as if the Republicans are genuinely becoming a ***working-class*** white-brown coalition. These voters care about the economy, the economy and the economy.

In other words, we now have an establishment progressive party and an anti-establishment conservative party. This isn’t normal.

If I were a cynical political operative who wanted to construct a presidential candidate perfectly suited for this moment, I’d start by making this candidate culturally conservative. I’d want the candidate to show by dress, speech and style that he or she is not part of the coastal educated establishment. I’d want the candidate to connect with middle- and ***working-class*** voters on values and to be full-throatedly patriotic.

Then I’d make the candidate economically center-left. I’d want to fuse the economic anxieties of the ***working-class*** Republicans with the economic anxieties of the Bernie Sanders young into one big riled populist package. College debt forgiveness. An aggressive home-building project to bring down prices. Whatever it took.

Then I’d have that candidate deliver one nonpartisan message: Everything is broken. Then he or she would offer a slew of institutional reforms to match the comprehensive institutional reforms the Progressive movement offered more than a century ago.

I guess I’m looking for a sort of modern Theodore Roosevelt. But heck, I don’t know. What’s coming down the pike is probably so unforeseeable that I don’t even have categories for it yet.

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PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Peter van Agtmael /Magnum Photos FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[***A Small-Town Stabbing Stirs the Far Right in France***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B29-K2K1-DXY4-X01K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 8, 2024 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 4

**Length:** 1528 words

**Byline:** By Catherine Porter

**Body**

The death might have been just a local tragedy. But some of the suspects were from an immigrant community, turning the case into a cause célèbre for the far right.

The traditional village ball 18 minutes outside the city ended in the traditional way: young men fighting outside.

What made it different were the flashing knives.

Three young men were rushed to the hospital early in the morning on Nov. 19. One, the 16-year-old captain of a local rugby team, died en route from a stab wound to his heart.

What might have been considered a local tragedy for the residents of Romans-sur-Isère, a ***working-class*** city 60 miles south of Lyon, quickly became a national story for one reason: race. The victim was a white teenager from the countryside, while many of the suspects were of North African ancestry and from La Monnaie, a rough city neighborhood notorious for drug dealing.

Almost immediately, far-right supporters, politicians and the right-wing media pounced on the case as proof that France's traditional values were under threat from immigrants, and their descendants, who they say have refused to assimilate.

Nourished by this interpretation, 50 to 100 ultraright nationalists later descended on the city to avenge what they characterized as an anti-white murder. Armed with iron bars and baseball bats, they chanted, ''Islam get out of Europe.''

For others, it was the far right's growing strength and audacity that posed the biggest threat to the country and their own safety. Many residents of La Monnaie said they now stayed at home, fearing they would be targeted for wearing hijabs or for their North African roots.

''The far right today wants to push us into a civil war,'' Interior Minister Gérald Darmanin declared on national radio.

The events have left many residents of Romans-sur-Isère, a city that clings to its former glory as France's luxury shoe manufacturing capital, in a state of numb bewilderment.

''The horror of it -- you send your child to a party, and they return dead or murderers,'' said Thomas Huriez, a city councilor.

''We are all restless and hypersensitive,'' he said. ''We are all a bit lost in it, but the majority, we want things to calm down and to know the truth.''

The truth will have to wait until the vast criminal investigation finishes. More than 100 gendarmes are on the case. Two days after the bloody scene, they swept in to arrest nine young men and teenage boys, seven of whom had fled 300 miles west to Toulouse. They face charges of murder and attempted murder in an organized gang. Several other suspects are still at large.

The ball was held in the sleepy nearby village of Crépol, population 530. Weekend balls are a tradition in villages across France, and some 400 people crowded into the stucco community center tucked down a thin road behind the supermarket.

As the party was winding down, a petty insult about a hairstyle triggered a fight that was taken outside. Brawls at the end of village balls are so common, local seniors recount them almost nostalgically -- but this one quickly took violence to a shocking level.

A knife wound to Thomas Perotto, the youngest son of a restaurant owner, proved lethal.

Other details and motives remain murky. At the outset of the investigation, as the prosecutor tried to tame far-right conjecture raging on social media, he offered official reports. But after charges were officially brought, the investigation was handed over to two investigating judges, who have remained silent.

The official story, to date, comes from the first 100 or so witnesses interviewed, who told investigators that members of the small group from La Monnaie -- reinforced by others who arrived in cars -- threw rocks and metal fences and pulled out knives.

Nine of the scores of witnesses said they heard hostile comments toward ''whites'' during the fight.

Since then, investigators have conducted hundreds more interviews, according to the local prefect, Thierry Devimeux.

''We only have one side of the story,'' said Mr. Devimeux, the top state official in the region. ''I'm not sure that there weren't equally ugly words in the other direction.''

In Crépol, however, many are still convinced the city boys came not to dance and talk to girls, but to attack white people.

Weeks after the confrontation, rain-soaked bouquets and burned-out candles decorated the entrances of the hall, which remained a sealed crime scene. One hand-painted sign summoned the local resistance movement to the Nazi occupiers. ''Fight against the thugs,'' it said.

''Two populations live in France, one of which must constantly flee the attacks of the other increasingly violent faction,'' wrote Éric Zemmour, the head of France's extreme-right party Reconquête. He reposted on social media a list of North-African sounding names, purporting them to be the suspects.

A week after the ball, the right-wing mayor of Romans-sur-Isère, Marie-Hélène Thoraval, declared that there were some 50 irredeemable ''savages'' in La Monnaie who, fueled by drugs and radicalization, represented a worrying trend across the country.

''The city of Romans crystallizes the national feeling of being fed up over this criminality,'' said Ms. Thoraval, releasing a list of five local public buildings that had been burned down in recent years, including a community center and nursery.

''I just said and translated what's been the reality,'' she said in an interview. ''And this truth, it hurts.''

She has been placed under police protection after recent death threats.

But her opponents on the City Council accuse her of cutting funding to local programs in La Monnaie since her election in 2014.

The closures include a neighborhood association building that had offered jobs to locals and after-school programs for young children.

In 2016, teachers published ''a cry of alarm'' about the services that had been stripped away.

Like suburbs around the country, La Monnaie's subsidized apartment buildings went up after World War II to house workers for new factories. Over time, the factories shut, unemployment rose, and those who remained were increasingly poor immigrants.

Many buildings were felled and never replaced, leaving forlorn fields. The scars from burned cars dot the streets. Drug deals occur openly at night.

Locals agree there is a clutch of drug dealers and thugs who commit arson in La Monnaie. Mothers at the neighborhood's busy Saturday market recounted worries that their children would get mixed up with them. But they did not consider them personally threatening, nor think of their neighborhood as dangerous. They described it as close-knit place where neighbors send over bowls of dinner.

They showed online photographs of some of the accused at the ball that night dancing. One of them was also stabbed.

''Stop saying these youth went there to attack. That's not the truth. They went to have fun, and it ended in a brawl,'' said Samira, a mother of four who withheld her last name out of fear, as her daughter was threatened after photographs of her with one of the accused circulated online.

Many residents of La Monnaie said they now feared being targeted by far-right supporters, who were only stopped from entering the neighborhood during their march by police officers in riot gear. Families of the accused received death threats online and delivered by mail. One mother gave up the lease of her home and moved away.

More than a dozen of the ultraright protesters were arrested; six were tried immediately and sent to prison for assaulting officers and taking part in a violent group.

''My daughter is so terrified, she didn't send her children to school this week,'' Ajela Idir, 67, a retired shoe factory worker shopping with her sisters, said in December.

Many said they felt stigmatized by the mayor's comments, and they blamed her for inflaming the problems in their neighborhood, leading to delinquency.

''These guys were 5 or 10 years old when the mayor was elected,'' said Salim Dlih, 42, who grew up in La Monnaie and had returned for a community gathering to protest the mayor's words. ''If she had kept the same programs that I had when I was young, if they had the same chance as I had, maybe they would be working as engineers at companies like me.''

He added, ''Her hand was also on the knife.''

Sitting in a coffee shop in the city's charming historic district, a few minutes away by car, Joseph Guinard, another city councilor, said he felt conflicted. His grandson was among those injured that night and he was among the nine witnesses who heard racist words against whites.

Mr. Guinard concurred that La Monnaie had experienced cuts. But poverty did not explain carrying a knife to a ball and stabbing someone, he said.

''Before I thought everyone was good. I found excuses easily. It's more difficult now,'' said Mr. Guinard, 68. ''It's not a question of investments or money. It's a question of humanity.''

Aurelien Breeden contributed reporting from Paris, and Juliette Guéron-Gabrielle from Romans-sur-Isère, France.Aurelien Breeden contributed reporting from Paris, and Juliette Guéron-Gabrielle from Romans-sur-Isère, France.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/07/world/europe/france-stabbing-romans-sur-isere.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/07/world/europe/france-stabbing-romans-sur-isere.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Banners in Romans-sur-Isère's immigrant neighborhood of La Monnaie, denouncing racism, after the death of a white 16-year-old boy in which several suspects had North African ancestry.

A memorial to the victim, Thomas Perotto. The killing occurred at a ball in the nearby village of Crépol.

THOMAS HURIEZ, a city councilor in Romans-sur-Isère, France. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DMITRY KOSTYUKOV FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A4.

**Load-Date:** January 8, 2024

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[***Sliwa’s endgame strategy: Cast Adams as ‘Elite Eric.’***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:63XY-F1X1-DXY4-X3TK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 26, 2021 Tuesday 18:35 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 422 words

**Byline:** Dana Rubinstein

**Highlight:** Curtis Sliwa is expected to accentuate his ***working-class*** background, while portraying Eric Adams as a friend to the rich.

**Body**

Curtis Sliwa is expected to accentuate his ***working-class*** background, while portraying Eric Adams as a friend to the rich.

Curtis Sliwa and Eric Adams both had modest upbringings, and share ***working-class*** roots in New York City: Mr. Sliwa as the red-bereted founder of the Guardian Angels, and Mr. Adams as a former transit police officer.

But if recent past is prologue, Mr. Sliwa, the Republican mayoral nominee, is likely to use his last, best opportunity to make a dent in this year’s mayoral race by casting Mr. Adams as a bon vivant who revels in the company of billionaires — in contrast to the Democratic nominee’s carefully crafted image as the candidate of the ***working class***.

“Eric has been wined, dined, and pocket-lined by the uber-rich, realtors, developers, and hedge fund monsters,” Mr. Sliwa said in a recent news release accompanying a video of himself trying to enter a private club where he said Mr. Adams was socializing. “Elite Eric has been bossed and bought.”

Mr. Sliwa, the founder of the Guardian Angels patrol group and a popular AM radio personality, lives in [*a 320-square-foot apartment*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/22/nyregion/curtis-sliwa-mayor-cats.html) on the Upper West Side with his fourth wife and more than a dozen cats. In recent weeks, he has mocked Mr. Adams’s tailored suits and his predilection for frequenting an exclusive private club in NoHo, Zero Bond.

Mr. Adams, who grew up in poverty before becoming a police captain, state senator and Brooklyn borough president, has in fact displayed a taste for New York City’s exclusive nightlife. He has made repeat appearances in the New York Post’s Page Six, after spending [*multiple nights*](https://pagesix.com/2021/09/12/eric-adams-hits-nyc-hotspot-two-nights-in-a-row/) at Zero Bond, whose patrons include Paris Hilton, and at Rao’s, the famously exclusive Italian joint in East Harlem.

After Mr. Adams went on a post-primary vacation to a European country he declined to name, [*Politico reported the destination was Monaco*](https://www.politico.com/states/new-york/albany/story/2021/09/23/adams-spent-vacation-in-monaco-1391382), a principality known for its popularity with the idle rich.

“Who goes to Monaco?”[*Mr. Sliwa asked during last week’s debate*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/20/nyregion/nyc-mayoral-debate-takeaways.html).

Mr. Adams has won the support of [*several billionaires*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/21/nyregion/mayor-super-pacs-money.html), who have [*donated to him directly*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/27/nyregion/eric-adams-donors-mayor.html) and funded a super PAC that campaigned on his behalf in the Democratic primary.

In recent days, Mr. Sliwa has also cast himself as the pro-motorist candidate, while Mr. Adams recently won the endorsement of StreetsPAC, a group that wants to rein in drivers on city streets.

PHOTO: Curtis Sliwa, the Republican mayoral nominee, has invited reporters to his 320-square-foot studio home in Manhattan. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Desiree Rios for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** October 26, 2021

**End of Document**



[***Just How Wealthy Were the McCallisters?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69YB-0CF1-JBG3-62J2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 25, 2023 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1327 words

**Byline:** By Amanda Holpuch

**Body**

Fans have been debating the McCallister family's wealth for years. We asked the Federal Reserve for answers.

The battle in ''Home Alone'' between 8-year-old Kevin McCallister (Macaulay Culkin) and two burglars known as the Wet Bandits has unfolded on screens around the world every Christmas since the film premiered in 1990.

And each year, for some viewers, the McCallisters' grand home and lifestyle inspires its own tradition: wondering just how rich this family was.

The New York Times turned to economists and people involved with the film to find the answer.

The McCallisters are the 1 Percent.

Early in the film, one of the burglars, Harry (Joe Pesci), tells his fellow Wet Bandit, Marv (Daniel Stern), that the McCallister home is their top target in a wealthy neighborhood.

''That's the one, Marv, that's the silver tuna,'' Harry says, before speculating that the house contains a lot of ''top-flight goods,'' including VCRs, stereos, very fine jewelry and ''odd marketable securities.''

The home is the best clue as to how much money the McCallisters have.

The silver tuna, or its exterior anyway, is a real-world house at 671 Lincoln Avenue in the Chicago suburb of Winnetka, one of the most expensive neighborhoods in the United States, according to Realtor.com. It appears to have enough space for Kevin and his four siblings to each have their own rooms, but also can accommodate an army of visitors.

In 1990, the house was affordable only for the top 1 percent of Chicago household incomes, and that would still be the case today, according to economists at the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago.

The economists -- Max Gillet, a senior research analyst; Cindy Hull, an assistant vice president and interim head of the financial markets group; and Thomas Walstrum, a senior business economist -- made this determination after looking at data including household incomes in the Chicago metropolitan statistical area for 1990 and 2022, the house's property value, prevailing mortgage rates at the time, and typical taxes and insurance.

Working with the assumption that the McCallisters did not spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing, the economists also determined the home would have been affordable to a household with an income of $305,000 in 1990 (about $665,000 in 2022).

In the middle of 2022, a similar house would cost about $2.4 million, based on the Zillow estimate for the ''Home Alone'' house. A home of that value would be affordable to a household with income of $730,000, which would be in the top 1 percent of Chicago-area households, the economists said.

How are they so rich?

''Home Alone'' never explains what the parents do for work.

On the internet, where this question regularly pops up, some people have suggested Kate McCallister is a fashion designer, because the house has several mannequins inside, which later feature in one of Kevin's attempts to trick the burglars into thinking he is not, in fact, home alone.

Todd Strasser, who wrote the official novelizations of ''Home Alone'' and two of its sequels, said in an interview that he was not closely supervised by the filmmakers. The guidance, he said, was essentially: ''Here's the script, do whatever you want.''

So in the book, he made Kevin's mom a fashion designer, because of the mannequins, and Kevin's dad a businessman, because it was ''a safe bet,'' he said.

He said it never occurred to him to explain in detail how the McCallisters had come by their money; he thought they were ''upper middle class'' but not ''super rich.''

The family has other trappings of significant-but-not-stratospheric wealth: They wear nice clothes and hire multiple vans to take them to the airport, yes, but when Kate is trying to bribe an elderly couple to give up their tickets from Paris so she can get home, she offers jewelry and cash, but hints that her Rolex might be fake.

''I don't know how much the McCallisters made, but it sure did a lot for my bank account,'' Strasser said.

One fan theory posits that Peter McCallister is involved with organized crime. Under this theory, the McCallister home was specifically targeted as some sort of vendetta, and Kevin's brutal violence against the burglars is the product of an upbringing exposed to criminal activity.

The Times could not rule out this theory.

Uncle Rob paid for the flights.

A commonly cited data point on the family's wealth is their Christmas trip to Paris.

Flying 15 people to Paris is expensive, especially with the four adults flying first class, but Kevin's parents don't pay for the airplane tickets. Early in the film, Kate McCallister tells a police officer -- who is actually Harry in disguise -- that her husband's brother paid for the flights.

That brother is Uncle Rob. He is a minor figure in the first film, but the few mentions he does get suggest that he is loaded. He pays for the tickets, and he has an apartment in Paris that has a clear view of the Eiffel Tower and can somehow house 15 of his family members. (The film's sequel, ''Home Alone 2: Lost in New York,'' further suggests that Uncle Rob is wealthy, but this analysis is based only on the first film.)

A third brother, Uncle Frank (the mean one), lives in Ohio and travels with the family from Illinois to Paris. We do not learn anything about his income, but we do know he is cheap. At his brother's house in Illinois, he avoids paying the $122.50 pizza bill. On the plane, dining in first class, he tells his wife to slip the crystal salt and pepper shakers in her purse.

This behavior could suggest that he is wealthy. Shoplifting was ''significantly more common'' among people with family incomes over $70,000, according to a 2008 article published in The American Journal of Psychiatry.

Uncle Frank is also a typical adult character in the world of John Hughes, who wrote and produced ''Home Alone,'' said Robert Bulman, a sociology professor at Saint Mary's College of California who studies the representation of teens and high schools in film.

He said that a common mark of a Hughes film is dramatic tension fueled by conflict between young people and adults, which almost always resolves in favor of the younger person.

He noted that in Hughes's teen films -- including ''The Breakfast Club,'' and ''Pretty in Pink'' -- class tensions are also often prominent and drive the story forward.

''His stories usually favor the perspective of the ***working class*** kid or the poor kid who is trying to gain access to a wealthier peer group, for instance,'' Professor Bulman said. ''But in 'Home Alone,' it's unmistakably a victory for Kevin as a child, but also Kevin as a rich kid defending his impressive fortress.''

The movie is not about the money.

Eve Cauley, the set decorator for ''Home Alone,'' was responsible for decor such as the furniture and wallpaper inside of the McCallister home, which was filmed on built sets in a local high school.

She said in an email that the home was not expensively furnished but had a deliberately ''stately, upscale look.''

When the film was made, navy blue and dusty pink were popular interior design colors, Cauley said. But she was inspired by Norman Rockwell paintings and antique Christmas cards to use saturated reds, greens and golds in the family home.

Hughes told her that he wanted the house to have a ''timeless look,'' she said. ''He told me he likes his films to look a bit nicer and cleaner than reality, since his purpose in making movies is to entertain the audience and uplift them,'' she said.

Cauley also had some advice for people looking for an answer about the family's income.

''To me, with respect, fans who argue about the parents' income, or house cost, should, instead, simply enjoy the movie,'' she said.

Hughes and the director Chris Columbus ''created this heartwarming and comic film as entertainment for the audience, to uplift spirits for the holidays,'' she said. ''It did, and still does, lift spirits.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/20/movies/home-alone-mccallisters-wealth.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/20/movies/home-alone-mccallisters-wealth.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: The ''Home Alone'' movies never explain what Kevin's parents do for work, so people have filled in the gaps. The McCallister family home is a real house in Winnetka, Ill., a wealthy suburb of Chicago. In 1990, a family would have needed a household income of $305,000 (or $665,000 in 2022) to live there. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY 20TH CENTURY FOX

ERIN HOOLEY/CHICAGO TRIBUNE VA GETTY IMAGES) (B1)

The family has other trappings of significant-but-not-stratospheric wealth. (PHOTOGRAPH BY 20TH CENTURY FOX) (B5) This article appeared in print on page B1, B5.

**Load-Date:** December 25, 2023

**End of Document**



[***A New York Art Debut, a Los Angeles Love Song***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B4P-57F1-JBG3-6028-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 19, 2024 Friday 13:46 EST

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**Section:** ARTS; design

**Length:** 1664 words

**Highlight:** Film, music and scent combine in Cauleen Smith’s immersive ode to her city. Her touchstone is Wanda Coleman, a great poet of L.A.

**Body**

Film, music and scent combine in Cauleen Smith’s immersive ode to her city. Her touchstone is Wanda Coleman, a great poet of L.A.

A couple of months ago, the artist and filmmaker [*Cauleen Smith*](https://moranmorangallery.com/artists/cauleen-smith/) gathered a bare-bones crew for a guerrilla-style shoot — no permits; the locations half-scouted, half-figured-out on the fly — around the land that she calls her home and her obsession: Los Angeles.

They were filming the city — four days and nights in a van, shooting from the ocean to East L.A., from humble Watts blocks to the San Gabriel foothills. But more than this, they were tuning into the city’s signals, as you might on an old radio — with the words of a Los Angeles poet, Wanda Coleman, as their tonal and emotional compass.

They made long tracking shots of the beach or roads lined with fast-food outlets and auto shops. They took slow panoramas from hilltops, and held still for minutes, sometimes hours, on downtown garment-shop blocks or railroad crossings. If people entered the frame they kept filming, letting the city come to them.

This week, Smith premieres the film, “[*The Wanda Coleman Songbook*](https://www.52walker.com/exhibitions/the-wanda-coleman-songbook),” at 52 Walker, a gallery in TriBeCa, through March 16. It’s a New York debut but a deeply Los Angeles project — an ode by a resident seeking language to make sense of L.A.’s seductions and precarity, while honoring a creative precursor — [*Coleman died in 2013 at age 67*](https://www.latimes.com/local/obituaries/la-me-wanda-coleman-20131124-1-story.html) — in whom she finds insight and strength.

Video — four channels projected floor-to-ceiling — is just one part of this multi-sensory experience. In lieu of a soundtrack there’s an album of seven specially commissioned songs from musicians like Meshell Ndegeocello and Kelsey Lu — each one a free interpretation of a Coleman poem. Visitors may lounge on sofas and drop the stylus on the EP, which runs the same length as the video but can be started at any point.

Completing the immersive effect, shadows projected on the rear wall evoke Los Angeles street art and sights — an Olmec head; a raven on a power line. A bespoke scent — inspired by the earth and flora of Griffith Park — wafts through the gallery.

With its layers and synesthetic appeal, the project, which was curated by Ebony L. Haynes, the director of 52 Walker, explores Smith’s conflicted love for a city that is hard and getting harder — notably for the poor and for the city’s declining Black community, now [*8.2 percent of its population*](https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP1Y2022.DP05?q=Los%20Angeles%20city,%20California&amp;y=2022) — yet infused with disconcerting beauty.

“I find L.A. beautiful and horrific, and I love trying to see it that way,” Smith said. “You can have such profound rage at the city and then be gobstopped at a giant feral bush of bougainvillea. And there’s someone sleeping underneath that bush. It’s all of it at once.”

Smith, 56, who grew up in Sacramento, has had an [*unusual creative journey*](https://www.artforum.com/features/siddhartha-mitter-on-the-art-of-cauleen-smith-243121/) back to Los Angeles, where she lived in the 1990s. She emerged as a filmmaker with experimental works and a feature, “Drylongso,” which earned praise at Sundance in 1999 but failed to secure distribution — consistent with Hollywood’s low interest at that time in Black female directors and topics.

Decamping from the industry, she moved to Texas and then Chicago. There, she reinvented herself as an interdisciplinary artist, expanding into drawings, textile banners, installations, performances and processions — even wallpaper. After years under the radar in both film and art worlds, she appeared in the [*2017 Whitney Biennial*](https://whitney.org/exhibitions/2017-biennial?section=52#exhibition-feature), with multiple [*museum*](https://icaphila.org/exhibitions/cauleen-smith-give-it-or-leave-it/) [*shows*](https://massmoca.org/event/cauleen-smith/) [*since*](https://whitney.org/exhibitions/cauleen-smith).

Honors too have followed, including the Studio Museum in Harlem’s [*Wein Prize in 2020*](https://www.studiomuseum.org/press/2020-joyce-alexander-wein-artist-prize) and the [*Heinz Award for the Arts*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b1k2E3itOWM) [*in 2022*](https://www.artnews.com/art-news/news/cauleen-smith-vanessa-german-heinz-art-awards-1234640240/). And last year the long unfindable “[*Drylongso*](https://www.criterion.com/current/posts/8236-drylongso-a-refuge-of-their-own)” came out of obscurity with a restoration, theatrical release and induction in the [*Criterion Collection*](https://www.criterion.com/films/31648-drylongso).

In both film and other projects, Smith makes a practice of honoring her important influences, folding into her work their words or music, or filming at sites important in their lives. Sun Ra and Alice Coltrane recur frequently in these ways.

Her brilliant 2018 film, “[*Sojourner*](https://americanart.si.edu/artwork/sojourner-117715),” invokes an expanded pantheon, including the assemblage artist Noah Purifoy, the feminist Combahee River Collective, and Rebecca Cox Jackson, who founded a 19th-century Black Shaker community. An ongoing drawing series, meanwhile, depicts covers of [*Black feminist*](https://www.sfmoma.org/read/cauleen-smith-loaner-library/) and [*other books*](https://www.thecut.com/2017/05/cauleen-smith-human-reading-list-art-institute-of-chicago.html) that have shaped Smith intellectually.

But when she turned to Coleman, who was informally called the “poet laureate of Los Angeles” but less-known elsewhere, it was to address, Smith said, a downright existential concern.

Smith had moved back to Los Angeles in 2017 to teach at the California Institute of the Arts. (She now teaches at the University of California, Los Angeles.) On returning, she said, she found her love for the city undimmed, yet the circumstances of ordinary people, especially Black people, increasingly dire.

Reading [*Coleman*](https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/05/18/the-fearless-invention-of-one-of-las-greatest-poets) — another Black female artist with love and anger for the city — helped Smith find her bearings. “Black people have been displaced and erased from L.A. in a way that continues to shock and infuriate me,” she added. “This idea of a Black L.A., which honestly was like the 20th-century fuel of this city, is struggling for life now. I was trying to find something to latch onto to think about this or put language to it. And that was Wanda.”

Coleman was intense, charismatic, an [*L.A. original*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F7wzNRf6mJs). “A force of nature … the conscience of the L.A. literary scene,” the [*Los Angeles Times critic David Ulin*](https://www.latimes.com/books/jacketcopy/la-et-jc-remembering-wanda-coleman-20131123-story.html) wrote in an appreciation after her death. “A real in-the-flesh, flesh-eating poet who also happened to be a real black woman,” said the poet Terrance Hayes, introducing a [*volume of her selected works*](https://godine.com/book/wicked-enchantment/) in 2019.

Raised in Watts, she dropped out of college for 1960s militant politics, but soon made writing her radical practice — sustained (barely) by various service, clerical and “pink-collar” jobs. She briefly edited Players, a soft-core magazine for Black men, in the early 1970s. She later won an Emmy as a writer for the soap “Days of Our Lives.”

Her poetry, published since the late 1970s by Black Sparrow Press, was raw, often rude, sexually explicit, bitingly funny, full of cleareyed fury at the systems and biases she faced as a ***working-class*** Black woman — and acerbically insightful on intimacy across class and race. It was also virtuosic, playing with forms from sonnets to the blues and a plethora of literary references. [*She read it*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CPJTI8WWI0E) like jazz.

In the 1990s, Smith was vaguely aware of Coleman. “I had read a poem or two,” she said. Now, diving into the complete oeuvre, she was struck by how its perspective brought back her own precarious early days in the city, carless and riding the bus — and by the fierce dignity the author claimed for herself and the people she depicted.

Coleman wrote “without self-pity, but with total clarity,” Smith said. When she writes about violence and abuse, “what you are experiencing is the processing of this terror and violence and a desire to survive it — a belief that your life has value and you’re going to make your way.”

Before long, Smith said, she was thinking of Coleman as she moved through the city, attentive to those on its margins. “When you’re sitting in your car in L.A., Wanda is the best guide,” she said. But once her project hatched, it was not with a film in mind.

Instead, she wanted to make a record album: To share poems with musicians she admired, “to know if they connect with Wanda, how they connect, what it sounds like.” Shot after the music was recorded, the video “is a wrapper or blanket that’s trying to envelop you while you listen to what these artists do with Wanda’s work.”

The seven tracks were made separately, with different artists, yet the result — somewhere in the realm of jazz and avant-garde soul — is lyrical and cohesive. The roster is impressive: [*Alice Smith*](https://www.alicesmith.com/); [*Jamila Woods*](https://www.jamila-woods.com/) and Standing on the Corner; [*moor mother*](https://moormother.net/) and [*Aquiles Navarro*](https://www.aquilesnavarro.com/); [*Jeff Parker*](https://www.jeffparkersounds.com/) and Ruby Parker; [*Shala Mille*](https://www.smille.co/)r; [*Ndegeocello*](https://www.meshell.com/) and [*Lu*](https://kelsey.lu/).

Woods, who is based in Chicago, said she felt resonance between Gwendolyn Brooks’s street-level feel for that city and Coleman’s Los Angeles. She picked the poem “Wanda in Worryland” for its “gritty vulnerability,” she said — “the intrusive thoughts and external pressures and assumptions that haunt your interior space.”

Alice Smith found Coleman “very intense — I had to really figure it out,” she said by phone. Her lush, echoing track builds off a few lines of “In That Other Fantasy Where We Live Together.” She found herself wishing tenderness on Coleman, who she felt “could use a little bit of somebody to handle her with some kind of care.”

By the time of the shoot, Cauleen Smith said, Coleman’s work felt like a trusted guide in looking closely at her city.

It pulled her toward long slow takes, allowing life to happen: “Can we just stare at this strip mall for 10 minutes? Can we just watch people go in and out of the liquor store?” And when things got uncomfortable — how long is it appropriate or productive to show a person disoriented at a bus stop, or laboriously pushing a cart across the street? — thinking about Coleman helped her sense where to draw the line.

Coursing through Coleman’s work, Smith said, is deep love for the total Los Angeles with all its contradictions. “She drank up this whole city,” Smith said. “She understood it so well.”

Now Smith, too, has found that the more she loves on Los Angeles, the more it loves her back — like the strangers she encountered while shooting, who were kind and funny. “It’s really disarming,” she said. “The distance between the political rhetoric of the city, which is cruel, and the tenderness and joy of the people is wild.”

PHOTOS: Cauleen Smith, above, who created an immersive installation that melds sight, sound and scent to explore Los Angeles, inspired by the poetry of Wanda Coleman. Left, video stills from “The Wanda Coleman Songbook,” which runs through March 16 at the 52 Walker gallery in TriBeCa. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY PHYLICIA J.L. MUNN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; CAULEEN SMIT) This article appeared in print on page AR16.

**Load-Date:** January 21, 2024

**End of Document**



[***The Clearest Lesson of Javier Milei’s Thumping Victory; Ross Douthat***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69P9-9R01-DXY4-X0RW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 22, 2023 Wednesday 07:20 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1199 words

**Byline:** Ross Douthat

**Highlight:** Why the age of populism looks different outside Europe and America.

**Body**

The [*election*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/20/world/americas/javier-milei-argentina-trump.html) of Javier Milei, a wild-haired showboating weirdo with five cloned mastiffs and a habit of psychic communion with their departed pet of origin, as president of Argentina has inspired a lot of discussion about the true nature of right-wing populism in our age of general discontent.

Milei has many of the signifiers of a Trumpian politics: the gonzo energy, the criticism of corrupt elites, the rants against the left, the support from social and religious conservatives. At the same time, on economic policy he is much more of a [*doctrinaire libertarian*](https://compactmag.com/article/how-javier-milei-defeated-peronism) than a Trump-style mercantilist or populist, a more extreme version of Barry Goldwater and Paul Ryan rather than a defender of entitlement spending and tariffs. Whereas the party that he defeated, the Peronist formation that has governed Argentina for most of the 21st century, is actually more economically nationalist and populist, having ascended in the aftermath of the 2001 financial crisis that ended Argentina’s most notable experiment with neoliberal economics.

You can interpret the Trump-Milei divergence in several ways. One reading is that the style of right-wing populism is the essence of the thing, that its policy substance is negotiable so long as it puts forward figures who promise national rebirth and embody some kind of [*clownish, usually masculine rebellion*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/17/opinion/ted-kaczynski-silvio-berlusconi-cormac-mccarthy.html) against the norms of cultural progressivism.

Another reading is that, yes, the policy is somewhat negotiable but there are actually [*deep ideological affinities*](https://www.unpopularfront.news/p/dont-cry-for-argentina) between right-wing economic nationalism and what might be called paleolibertarianism, despite their disagreement on specific issues. In American terms, this means that Trumpism was anticipated in different ways by Ross Perot and Ron Paul; in global terms, it means that we should expect the parties of the populist right to move back and forth between dirigiste and libertarian tendencies, depending on the economic context and political winds.

Here is a third interpretation: While popular discontents have undermined the neoliberal consensus of the 1990s and 2000s all across the developed world, the age of populism is creating very different alignments in the Latin American periphery than in the Euro-American core.

In Western Europe and the United States, you now consistently see a center-left party of the professional classes facing off against a populist and ***working-class*** coalition on the right. The center-left parties have become more progressive on economic policy relative to the era of Bill Clinton and Tony Blair, but they have moved much more sharply left on cultural issues while retaining their mandarin and meritocratic leadership, their neoliberal flavor. And they have mostly been able to contain, defeat or co-opt more radical left-wing challengers — Joe Biden by overcoming Bernie Sanders in the 2020 Democratic primaries, Keir Starmer by marginalizing Corbynism in Britain’s Labour Party, Emmanuel Macron by forcing French leftists to cast a lesser-of-two-evils ballot in his favor in his runoffs against Marine Le Pen.

The populist right, meanwhile, has often found success by moderating its libertarian impulses in order to woo downscale voters away from the progressive coalition, yielding a right-of-center politics that usually favors certain kinds of protectionism and redistribution. That could mean a Trumpian defense of entitlement programs, the halfhearted attempts by Boris Johnson’s Tories to invest in the neglected north of England or the spending on family benefits that you see from Viktor Orban in Hungary and the recently unseated populist coalition in Poland.

You can imagine the gulf between these two coalitions keeping the West in a state of simmering near crisis — especially with Trump’s crisis-courting personality in the mix. But you can also imagine a future in which this order stabilizes and normalizes somewhat and people stop talking about an earthquake every time a populist wins power or democracy being saved every time an establishment party wins an election.

The situation is quite different in Latin America. There the neoliberal consensus was always weaker, the center more fragile, and so the age of populist rebellion has created a clearer polarization between further left and further right — with the left culturally progressive but usually more avowedly socialist than Biden, Starmer or Macron and the right culturally traditional but usually more libertarian than Trump, Orban or Le Pen.

The new alignment in Argentina, with its libertarian revolutionary overcoming a populist-nationalist left, is one example of this pattern; the contest between Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil last year was another. But the recent swings in Chilean politics are [*especially instructive*](https://americanaffairsjournal.org/2023/11/whats-the-matter-with-chile/). In the early 2010s Chile seemed to have a relatively stable political environment, with a center-left party governing through a market-friendly Constitution and a center-right opposition at pains to distance itself from the Pinochet dictatorship. Then popular rebellions cast this order down, creating a wild yaw leftward and an attempt to impose a new left-wing Constitution that yielded backlash in its turn — leaving the country divided between an unpopular left-wing government headed by a former student activist and a temporarily ascendant right-wing opposition led by a Pinochet apologist.

In each case, relative to the divides of France and the United States, you see a weaker center and a deeper polarization between competing populist extremes. And if the question for Latin America now is how stable democracy itself will be under such polarized conditions, the question for Europe and America is whether the Argentine or Chilean situation is a harbinger of their own futures. Perhaps not immediately but after a further round of populist rebellions, which could await beyond some crisis or disaster or simply on the far side of demographic change.

In such a future, figures like Biden and Starmer and Macron would no longer be able to manage governing coalitions, and the initiative on the left would pass to more radical parties like Podemos in Spain or the Greens in Germany, to Alexandria Ocasio-Cortezan progressives in the U.S. Congress, to whatever kind of politics emerges from the encounter between the European left and the continent’s growing Arab and Muslim populations. This would give the populist right an opportunity to promise stability and claim the center — but it would also create incentives for the right to radicalize further, yielding bigger ideological swings every time an incumbent coalition lost.

Which is, in a way, the clearest lesson of Milei’s thumping victory: If you can’t reach stability after one round of populist convulsion, there’s no inherent limit on how wild the next cycle of rebellion might get.

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PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Juan Ignacio Roncoroni/EPA, via Shutterstock FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** November 24, 2023

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[***A Small-Town Stabbing Takes On a Larger Significance for France***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B23-54J1-JBG3-61MD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 7, 2024 Sunday 12:49 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; europe

**Length:** 1575 words

**Highlight:** The death might have been just a local tragedy. But some of the suspects were from an immigrant community, turning the case into a cause célèbre for the far right.

**Body**

The death might have been just a local tragedy. But some of the suspects were from an immigrant community, turning the case into a cause célèbre for the far right.

The traditional village ball 18 minutes outside the city ended in the traditional way: young men fighting outside.

What made it different were the flashing knives.

Three young men were rushed to the hospital early in the morning on Nov. 19. One, the 16-year-old captain of a local rugby team, died en route from a stab wound to his heart.

What might have been considered a local tragedy for the residents of Romans-sur-Isère, a ***working-class*** city 60 miles south of Lyon, quickly became a national story for one reason: race. The victim was a white teenager from the countryside, while many of the suspects were of North African ancestry and from La Monnaie, a rough city neighborhood notorious for drug dealing.

Almost immediately, far-right supporters, politicians and the right-wing media pounced on the case as proof that France’s traditional values were under threat from immigrants, and their descendants, who they say have refused to assimilate.

Nourished by this interpretation, 50 to 100 ultraright nationalists later descended on the city to avenge what they characterized as an anti-white murder. Armed with iron bars and baseball bats, they chanted, “Islam get out of Europe.”

For others, it was the far right’s [*growing strength*](https://www.francetvinfo.fr/politique/front-national/image-du-rn-pour-la-premiere-fois-depuis-1984-les-francais-sont-plus-nombreux-a-penser-que-le-parti-ne-presente-pas-de-danger-pour-la-democratie_6230319.html) and audacity that posed the biggest threat to the country and their own safety. Many residents of La Monnaie said they now stayed at home, fearing they would be targeted for wearing hijabs or for their North African roots.

“The far right today wants to push us into a civil war,” Interior Minister Gérald Darmanin declared on national radio.

The events have left many residents of Romans-sur-Isère, a city that clings to its former glory as France’s luxury shoe manufacturing capital, in a state of numb bewilderment.

“The horror of it — you send your child to a party, and they return dead or murderers,” said Thomas Huriez, a city councilor.

“We are all restless and hypersensitive,” he said. “We are all a bit lost in it, but the majority, we want things to calm down and to know the truth.”

The truth will have to wait until the vast criminal investigation finishes. More than 100 gendarmes are on the case. Two days after the bloody scene, they swept in to arrest nine young men and teenage boys, seven of whom had fled 300 miles west to Toulouse. They face charges of murder and attempted murder in an organized gang. Several other suspects are still at large.

The ball was held in the sleepy nearby village of Crépol, population 530. Weekend balls are a tradition in villages across France, and some 400 people crowded into the stucco community center tucked down a thin road behind the supermarket.

As the party was winding down, a petty insult about a hairstyle triggered a fight that was taken outside. Brawls at the end of village balls are so common, local seniors recount them almost nostalgically — but this one quickly took violence to a shocking level.

A knife wound to Thomas Perotto, the youngest son of a restaurant owner, proved lethal.

Other details and motives remain murky. At the outset of the investigation, as the prosecutor tried to tame far-right conjecture raging on social media, he offered official reports. But after charges were officially brought, the investigation was handed over to two investigating judges, who have remained silent.

The official story, to date, comes from the first 100 or so witnesses interviewed, who told investigators that members of the small group from La Monnaie — reinforced by others who arrived in cars — threw rocks and metal fences and pulled out knives.

Nine of the scores of witnesses said they heard hostile comments toward “whites” during the fight.

Since then, investigators have conducted hundreds more interviews, according to the local prefect, Thierry Devimeux.

“We only have one side of the story,” said Mr. Devimeux, the top state official in the region. “I’m not sure that there weren’t equally ugly words in the other direction.”

In Crépol, however, many are still convinced the city boys came not to dance and talk to girls, but to attack white people.

Weeks after the confrontation, rain-soaked bouquets and burned-out candles decorated the entrances of the hall, which remained a sealed crime scene. One hand-painted sign summoned the local resistance movement to the Nazi occupiers. “Fight against the thugs,” it said.

“Two populations live in France, one of which must constantly flee the attacks of the other increasingly violent faction,” wrote Éric Zemmour, the head of France’s extreme-right party Reconquête. He reposted on social media a list of North-African sounding names, purporting them to be the suspects.

A week after the ball, the right-wing mayor of Romans-sur-Isère, Marie-Hélène Thoraval, declared that there were some 50 irredeemable “savages” in La Monnaie who, fueled by drugs and radicalization, represented a worrying trend across the country.

“The city of Romans crystallizes the national feeling of being fed up over this criminality,” said Ms. Thoraval, releasing a list of five local public buildings that had been burned down in recent years, including a community center and nursery.

“I just said and translated what’s been the reality,” she said in an interview. “And this truth, it hurts.”

She has been placed under police protection after recent death threats.

But her opponents on the City Council accuse her of cutting funding to local programs in La Monnaie since her election in 2014.

The closures include a neighborhood association building that had offered jobs to locals and after-school programs for young children.

In 2016, teachers published [*“a cry of alarm”*](https://educationavenirromanssurisere.wordpress.com/2016/11/20/nouveau-blog-pour-defendre-leduction-et-lavenir-de-lecole-sur-romans-sur-isere/) about the services that had been stripped away.

Like suburbs around the country, La Monnaie’s subsidized apartment buildings went up after World War II to house workers for new factories. Over time, the factories shut, unemployment rose, and those who remained were increasingly poor immigrants.

Many buildings were felled and never replaced, leaving forlorn fields. The scars from burned cars dot the streets. Drug deals occur openly at night.

Locals agree there is a clutch of drug dealers and thugs who commit arson in La Monnaie. Mothers at the neighborhood’s busy Saturday market recounted worries that their children would get mixed up with them. But they did not consider them personally threatening, nor think of their neighborhood as dangerous. They described it as close-knit place where neighbors send over bowls of dinner.

They showed online photographs of some of the accused at the ball that night dancing. One of them was also stabbed.

“Stop saying these youth went there to attack. That’s not the truth. They went to have fun, and it ended in a brawl,” said Samira, a mother of four who withheld her last name out of fear, as her daughter was threatened after photographs of her with one of the accused circulated online.

Many residents of La Monnaie said they now feared being targeted by far-right supporters, who were only stopped from entering the neighborhood during their march by police officers in riot gear. Families of the accused received death threats online and delivered by mail. One mother gave up the lease of her home and moved away.

More than a dozen of the ultraright protesters were arrested; six were tried immediately and sent to prison for assaulting officers and taking part in a violent group.

“My daughter is so terrified, she didn’t send her children to school this week,” Ajela Idir, 67, a retired shoe factory worker shopping with her sisters, said in December.

Many said they felt stigmatized by the mayor’s comments, and they blamed her for inflaming the problems in their neighborhood, leading to delinquency.

“These guys were 5 or 10 years old when the mayor was elected,” said Salim Dlih, 42, who grew up in La Monnaie and had returned for a community gathering to protest the mayor’s words. “If she had kept the same programs that I had when I was young, if they had the same chance as I had, maybe they would be working as engineers at companies like me.”

Sitting in a coffee shop in the city’s charming historic district, a few minutes away by car, Joseph Guinard, another city councilor, said he felt conflicted. His grandson was among those injured that night and he was among the nine witnesses who heard racist words against whites.

Mr. Guinard concurred that La Monnaie had experienced cuts. But poverty did not explain carrying a knife to a ball and stabbing someone, he said.

“Before I thought everyone was good. I found excuses easily. It’s more difficult now,” said Mr. Guinard, 68. “It’s not a question of investments or money. It’s a question of humanity.”

Aurelien Breeden contributed reporting from Paris, and Juliette Guéron-Gabrielle from Romans-sur-Isère, France.

Aurelien Breeden contributed reporting from Paris, and Juliette Guéron-Gabrielle from Romans-sur-Isère, France.

PHOTOS: Banners in Romans-sur-Isère’s immigrant neighborhood of La Monnaie, denouncing racism, after the death of a white 16-year-old boy in which several suspects had North African ancestry.; A memorial to the victim, Thomas Perotto. The killing occurred at a ball in the nearby village of Crépol.; THOMAS HURIEZ, a city councilor in Romans-sur-Isère, France. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DMITRY KOSTYUKOV FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A4.

**Load-Date:** January 8, 2024

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[***12 Democrats on BidenAnd the Party's Future***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69R5-R421-DXY4-X04C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 26, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section SR; Column 0; Sunday Review Desk; Pg. 12

**Length:** 2398 words

**Byline:** By Margie Omero, Laura Reston and Adrian J. Rivera

**Body**

THE party of the people. The Democracy. The New Dealers. The Democrats have gone by many names over the years, and what they stand for -- what it means to be a Democrat -- has changed, too. But as President Biden braces for a brutal campaign, the party may face a challenge it didn't see coming.

When Times Opinion asked 12 Democrats to tell us what it means to be a Democrat, many of them hesitated or said the lines between the two parties had grown so blurry, they could barely tell the difference. The participants said they held core values: tolerance, respect, an unshakable belief in the freedom to choose. And they shared deep concerns about the divisions in this country. In general, they even believed that the Democrats were focused on the right problems -- gun violence, student debt, climate change and homelessness. But they had little confidence that the Democrats could fix those problems. No focus group can ever truly capture the electorate in all its contradictions and complexities. Ours included a California climate scientist, a mom from Delaware and a machine operator in Georgia: Twelve ordinary Democrats, consumed by day-to-day worries about the prices of baby formula and gas, about the decline in civility and respect. Their conversation took place weeks before the first primary votes and before the president will begin campaigning in earnest -- before he even has an official Republican opponent. But the themes that emerged from our talk -- moderated by the veteran focus group leader Margie Omero and condensed for clarity -- ought to provide an early warning for the party. For more than an hour, the participants considered its future and the people who might lead them into it. The president's name didn't come up until we asked about him, more than 75 minutes in. It was as if he had receded so far from how they imagined the future of their party that he barely even factored into its present. The participants said they wanted a party with more ''bite.'' An orator who could ''speak and let people hear what they're saying.'' And on student loans, more than any other issue, they felt betrayed. ''We need the action,'' one said. ''We don't just need them to promise us the world and not show up.'' Comments like that offer up a glimpse of how much trust is lost every time voters see another promise unfulfilled or make another painful student loan payment or watch their dollars disappear at the gas station. Most of this group still believed that the Democrats remained the party of the people. But for these 12, at least, too rarely has it delivered results. PARTICIPANTS Andres 41, Latino, Fla. Austin 27, white, Ga. Christopher 31, white, Calif. Emil 71, Black, N.Y. Kimberly 40, Black, Conn. Lindsay 41, white, N.C. Mary 62, white, Ill. Mary-Beth 72, white, Mo. Michele 56, Black, Md. Sam 48, white, Wash. Travis 29, Asian, Pa. Yvonne 60, Latina, Del. How would you define the Democratic Party? What do you feel it stands for? Lindsay: I might have had a clearer answer many years ago. But I don't know anymore. It's so blurry to me. Everyone's just trying to be a people pleaser. Moderator: When you said a couple of years ago, you would have had a clearer answer, what was your clear answer then? Lindsay: I just think there was more cohesion amongst the parties and you could kind of put in a box that this is what the Democrats believed in and this is what the Republicans believed in. And you kind of chose to go to the middle or to one side. And now, again, it just feels really confusing. Mary-Beth: Well, the Democrats actually have a platform. And they've published it. Now, within the Democratic Party, not everybody agrees on every issue. But there's a lot of room in that party. Moderator: So what does it stand for for you? How would you define it? Mary-Beth: For me, it stands for what I consider my progressive values. I want to see people thrive and succeed, no matter their origins, and have some opportunity within our country. And whether that's addressing food insecurity or housing or the economy, I see the Democrats as working toward that common good in those goals. Emil: To me, the Democrats are a party of the people, and the Republicans are a party of businessmen and big business. Kimberly: Very similar, I was going to say that Democrats seem to care about people. I feel like the Republicans, when they pass rules, it just seems like they just want to pass something just to say that they won. They're not thinking about the person on the other side of that law or that rule. I don't agree with everything in the Democratic Party, but it seems like they're more focused on wanting to make sure that everyone's OK, everyone's thriving and can live sustainably, which is hard right now. Michele: I guess I'm indifferent because, like the gentleman said, I've crossed party lines and voted for Republicans. Sometimes it gets a little blurry. Andres: For me the party aligns more with the values that I believe in. Historically, Democrats are generally known for looking out for the ***working class***, the middle class and for being a little bit more socially liberal and inclusive. Live and let live, freedom to choose. That's the sort of thing that I generally stand for as well. But it is kind of blurry nowadays. Moderator: A couple people have used this word, ''blurry.'' What's blurry that you would like to see more in focus, Andres? Andres: There's just the lack of one unified voice. There's a lot of infighting and disagreement, where you think, ''Well, there's a bill that makes a ton of sense,'' but then there's people on your side that are opposing it. So it's just like, ''Wait. What? This particular person that has this letter capital D next to the name, they don't believe in this?'' Yvonne: Right. We need the action. We need their policies to come through. We don't just need them to promise us the world and not show up. Who do you see the Democratic Party as fighting for? Who are they most trying to listen to or help? Christopher:In an ideal world, they're fighting for the people who don't have the resources to advocate for themselves. Homelessness is a good example of that. A lot of homeless people don't have the political know-how or the time or the money to advocate for better homeless policies. Climate change -- your average person walking down the street doesn't have the resources themselves to solve climate change. And so I think in an ideal world, the Democratic Party kind of unifies around these community issues and lifts up the community as a whole. Travis: I believe the Democratic Party is for the working people. But there are times where it's just a little bit more talk -- the show, showmanship -- than the action. The student loan issue, for example, I have friends that owe money. And I have actually looked into the reason why it failed. It was a court order that blocked it or something. Unfortunately, the effort is there, but there's a lot of weird -- I don't know who's really dictating like, ''Hey, we should block this.'' Michele: The Democrats are fighting for themselves. They've all got this cushy job, thousands of dollars a year. Some of them that have been in that position for forever, since the golden ages. They don't want to give up their seat. They won't let no one else come in, you know what I mean? So no new information or new breath of life is coming in. Yvonne: They can close down this government because they still get their paycheck. They have nothing to lose. Christopher: Yeah. I think in the last 10 or 15 years, the Republican Party has become a lot more belligerent, but it's working for them. They're having a lot of success. In a way, I feel like the Democratic Party is too polite. And they're really reluctant to take a victory lap and show what they've achieved. And as a result, it feels like they get close a lot of the time, but they never quite achieve it. And if they had a little more bite, I think maybe they would achieve a little more. Emil:I happen to disagree with Christopher. The Republicans are belligerent and sound belligerent. The Democrats operate in a friendlier way, but that's not the exact word I'm looking for. They're not sticking their chest out and saying, ''Oh, look what I've done.'' Mary-Beth: Democrats don't tout their accomplishments enough. And Democrats tend to be a little more reticent, especially now. Moderator: How important is being a Democrat to your personal identity? Sam: Not important at all. I do think the Democrats are doing some of the right things socially overall. But I also look at the first two years they were in office. And we saw the danger that our democracy was put in by the former president. The Democrats could have put some limitations on the power of the president's office, term limits, some of appointing judges, this type of thing. They didn't do any of that. They didn't make any real change to our democracy to protect it. Travis:Yeah, I don't really see being a Democrat as something that's personal. It doesn't really describe me as a person. Andres: It's definitely very important to me, but I wouldn't say it's my identity, because I do have beliefs that cross both sides of the aisle. Kimberly: It changes how people view you when you say you're a Democrat. I think it's like, ''Oh, OK, so she cares about social issues. She cares about climate change and gun control and the economy.'' When you say you're a Republican, you could get kind of the opposite reaction. Moderator: What kind of characteristics would you want in an ideal Democratic candidate for president? Sam: Well, I think somebody that can unify both parties, somebody that can reach across the aisle and find the compromises. The first person that came to my mind was J.F.K. So somebody that embodies the best and can get everybody to cooperate. Travis: Someone who understands the background of the average American, the underdog that actually came from nothing, not someone handed a silver spoon. Andres: I think someone maybe as eloquent and articulate as Obama. When I first heard his inauguration speech, I was just moved. The way he was able to use his words and speech to kind of unify people was just so, so powerful. Kimberly: Someone who has overall intelligence, someone with street smarts but who also knows how the government works, who has some experience but hasn't been in government for 60 years. And someone respectful. Emil: To be able to orate, to be able to speak clearly, concisely, is a unifying factor. When I say that, I think about Clinton, Ronald Reagan and Obama. They seem to have brought the country together. Christopher: I feel like Obama is kind of the archetype right now of a good president. He came from a grass-roots background. He's a diverse person but very well versed in the government. And he fought for really big, hard things when he was president -- the health care, for example. He had a lot of battles along the way, but by and large, we still have an Obamacare system. He really embodies what the party should be moving to or moving back towards. Moderator: Do you see somebody out there who you think should be a leader in the party? Travis: The girl in New York, the young one. I forgot her name right now. A.O.C. Alexandria, right? That's the name. Mary-Beth: Yeah. Travis: Yeah, she kind of comes to mind because I'm from Philly. She's from New York City. She didn't come from a privileged background. She was a ***working-class*** bartender making ends meet. Andres: I do like A.O.C. She has some really good ideas, but I know she gets criticized a lot. Mark Cuban is one that I kind of look up to. He's got business acumen. He didn't come from a whole lot. He kind of built stuff, entrepreneur. And he's very vocal about his beliefs. Christopher: Pete Buttigieg is a really nice example of an up-and-coming leader in the party. He speaks so eloquently. I've seen videos of him speaking to Fox News audiences. And he won't flinch once in terms of his values. But the audience comes away completely won over by what he said, even though walking into the room I'm sure they totally disagreed. Austin: I was actually thinking Dwayne ''The Rock'' Johnson. He's someone who kind of started from nothing and kind of worked his way up, so he kind of understands everything. And I don't know, for some reason I just -- I've always pictured that. Michele: I love Hillary Clinton. I think she would have did great. But you know . . . . Emil: Andrew Cuomo. If he wasn't so badly tarnished, I like Andrew Cuomo to lead the Democratic Party. Mary-Beth: Cory Booker would make an ideal president. What are your thoughts on President Biden? Which of his policies would you want to see continued? Which would you want to see the Democrats move away from? Christopher:It'd be nice to see the next president, whoever it is, continue the student loan fight, because that's one that affects so many people and a lot of people who aren't big and influential -- kind of normal, everyday people. I think Biden has fought really hard on that, but there needs to be some more work done. Lindsay: Keeping with the fight on gun control and the ban on assault rifles. Yvonne: Gun control and the student loans, for sure. Yes. Emil:I would really like to see the Democratic Party move in the direction of bipartisanship. He did a great job of that with the infrastructure bill, as far as getting both parties together to do something about our infrastructure. I would like to see the Democrats do a lot more of that crossing the aisle and getting things done. Michele: If they took the energy that they have to get Trump out and keep him out and press charges and all that, take that energy to keep him from coming back, if they use that energy, moving forward, I think we'll be great. Moderator: Andres, you said that Biden shouldn't run again. Why is that? Andres: I guess I'm on the fence. I am the most confident that if he does run, he will defeat Trump. So for that reason, yes, he should. But I'm just kind of worried about his age. That's the one factor. But I still am confident that he will get re-elected. But yeah, that's the only factor. Yvonne: His age is showing a lot. He's not so strong. We need someone stronger. We need someone to defeat the other side, unfortunately, if it's Trump, especially. And unfortunately, I like the man, but I think his time is done.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/24/pageoneplus/25-12dems-rxn.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/24/pageoneplus/25-12dems-rxn.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page SR12.

**Load-Date:** November 26, 2023

**End of Document**



[***‘The Spirit of ’45’ Review: Here Comes Nationalization***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67ST-SRS1-JBG3-63BJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 16, 2023 Thursday 13:12 EST

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**Section:** MOVIES

**Length:** 350 words

**Byline:** Ben Kenigsberg

**Highlight:** A documentary from Ken Loach sees the end of World War II as a brief moment of possibility for socialism in Britain.

**Body**

A documentary from Ken Loach sees the end of World War II as a brief moment of possibility for socialism in Britain.

“[*The Spirit of ’45*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_c86Gwsb5LY)” is, atypically, a documentary from Ken Loach, whose tireless chronicles of Britain’s ***working class*** (“Kes,” “Sorry We Missed You”) have generally been dramas.

It is also not new. The documentary had its premiere at the Berlin International Film Festival in 2013 and opened in Britain shortly after that. Released for the first time in the United States, it is relevant in a perennial sense but somewhat dated. The people interviewed in this movie could not know that their despised Tories would still hold power today. (The 2016 Brexit vote — indeed, any mention of the European Union — is also conspicuous by its absence.)

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](http://youtube.com/embed/FZOjbhxK00I)]

The film’s central idea is that Britain had reached a rare moment of possibility after World War II and the general election of 1945, when the Labour leader Clement Attlee became prime minister with an avowedly socialist agenda. Loach charts the nationalization of Britain’s health service, transportation sectors and coal mines. Britons who remember the changes share stories of how those shifts and new plans for quality housing almost universally improved their lives (although there is mention of some missed opportunities with the mines). “The Spirit of ’45” then flashes forward to show how the conservative prime minister Margaret Thatcher and her successors rolled those policies back.

As in much of his recent fiction work (including the Palme d’Or-winning “I, Daniel Blake”), Loach largely ignores counterarguments. Even viewers sympathetic to his politics may roll their eyes at how infrequently the film acknowledges trade-offs and price tags, except when the costs relate to the inefficiencies of privatization. There is a powerful historical case to be made here, but it requires engaging with nuance, not merely expressing conviction.

The Spirit of ’45

Not rated. Running time: 1 hour 34 minutes. In theaters.

Not rated. Running time: 1 hour 34 minutes. In theaters.

This article appeared in print on page C8.

**Load-Date:** March 17, 2023

**End of Document**



[***A Composer Explores Other Worlds***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69P3-04K1-JBG3-600J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 21, 2023 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1130 words

**Byline:** By Andrew Dickson

**Body**

The Irish composer blends everyday items with Dada-like theatricals. But there's a serious purpose to her explorations.

A few weeks ago, Jennifer Walshe was backstage at a concert hall in Essen, Germany, searching for the exit when she paused near the green room. A double bass bow was laid out, ready for the evening's performance; attached to it, wobbling in the air, were several black-and-white balloons. Walshe grinned and pulled out her phone to snap a picture.

This esoteric musical apparatus had been prepared for a new piece, composed by Walshe, that would be premiering in a few hours' time. Called ''Some Notes on Martian Sonic Aesthetics, 2034-51,'' it invites a chamber ensemble to impersonate a musically trained crew who have set up a colony on Mars and are beaming performances back to Earth.

While researching the piece, Walshe, 49, said that she had asked NASA how sound waves travel in carbon-dioxide rich atmospheres (''you don't hear high-end frequencies''). She had also requested that packets of freeze-dried food be placed on the percussionists' tables, so that the audience could hear the sound of astronauts chowing down, along with cans of compressed air to imitate the hiss of airlocks opening and closing.

And the helium-filled balloons? Here to make the double bassist's bow feel 60 percent lighter, as though he were playing in Martian gravity. ''I'm a hardcore science fiction fan,'' Walshe said as she strode onto the street. ''I want things to be as accurate as possible.''

Otherworldly though the Mars piece may be, by the standards of Walshe's oeuvre, it isn't that outlandish. In 2003, she produced a 35-minute opera, ''XXX Live Nude Girls,'' whose protagonists were Barbie dolls manipulated by puppeteers, their voices supplied by female vocalists. In 2017 came ''My Dog & I,'' a piece for cello, dancer, film, electronics -- and the cellist's pet, who curled up onstage.

A few years later, Walshe began work on a knowing tribute to her homeland called ''Ireland: A Dataset,'' in part created by feeding gobbets of ''Riverdance,'' Enya, James Joyce and Irish sean nos folk song into an artificial-intelligence-generated composition engine. In the piece, which Walshe described as ''a slightly bizarre radio play,'' the results play out alongside video mash-ups and an instrumentalist and vocalists performing skits, one of which pokes fun at Irish American tourists visiting the country in search of their roots.

It would be wrong to think of these pieces as jokes, but not entirely wrong: a vein of anarchic humor does run through much of what Walshe does, as well as a taste for hectic, Dada-like theatricals. She often appears as a vocalist in her own pieces, makes accompanying films and writes scripts and essays, in addition to her day job as a professor of composition at the University of Oxford.

''It's hard to keep up with her,'' said Kate Molleson, a critic and broadcaster. ''Her mind is so restless and inquisitive. I can't think of a composer more interested in the way the contemporary world functions.''

Walshe said she sees what she does as a way of paying attention: ''I want to be present, and curious and engaged,'' she said over dinner one night. ''The work is how I do that.''

Born in Dublin to a ***working-class***, artistically inclined family (her father worked for IBM, her mother was a writer), Walshe began as a trumpeter -- initially in local youth orchestras, before studying the instrument at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Glasgow.

At college, she said, she felt like the odd one out: She would practice and attend concerts, and work on her own compositions, but she was also fascinated by visual art, literature, film and a million other things. These obsessions were ''regarded as my weird hobby,'' she said with a laugh.

She felt more at home when she did graduate work at Northwestern in Chicago, discovering not just avant-garde composer-performers like La Monte Young and Laurie Anderson, but also the city's rambunctious comedy and free jazz scenes. Despite never having taken vocal training, she began to sing and improvise, and the boundaries of her creativity exploded.

It is Walshe's creed that practically everything can be material: text messages, memes, irritating conversations overheard on the train, old TV shows and movies unearthed from YouTube, online message boards, Samuel Beckett and the band One Direction have all appeared in her work.

The other week, she said, she had been asked to record her dentist as he performed a procedure: ''The second you say, 'Let's pay attention to this and see what's going on,' maybe that's something interesting.''

But it would be wrong to interpret her work, extraordinary as it often is, as irreverent for the sake of it, Molleson said. ''There's a real compassion and tenderness there. And she's fascinated by big issues. Take A.I., which she was exploring a decade ago: She was way ahead of most of us.'' For all of its high jinks, in performance ''Some Notes on Martian Sonic Aesthetics'' was a disconcertingly moving meditation on the loneliness of space exploration.

Later this month, Walshe will travel to the northern English town of Huddersfield, where she will be the resident composer at its annual contemporary music festival. ''Ireland: A Dataset,'' premiered online during the coronavirus pandemic, will have its first in-person performance on Nov. 24. And a gallery will host an exhibition of Walshe's work, titled ''13 Ways of Looking at A.I.: Art and Music,'' which will develop the composer's recent thinking on a subject that has preoccupied and fascinated her for the last decade, and which increasingly seems to infiltrate her output.

The festival will open on Friday with another recent work, ''Personhood,'' created with the accordionist Andreas Borregaard. It explores what selfhood looks like in an era of unremitting technological surveillance -- with many of our movements tracked, and much of our data scraped and mined.

According to Walshe, Borregaard and the ensemble are instructed to perform choreography as if being controlled by a ''mind cult.'' The conductor will be equipped with the kind of clicker used by dog trainers, and there will be references to characters resembling Elon Musk and Jeff Bezos.

A rumination on how it feels to cling to individuality when tech corporations seem intent on trying to turn people into biological fodder for algorithms, ''Personhood'' is both funny and deeply serious, like so much of Walshe's work.

''Perhaps it sounds earnest, but the way I think of my role as an artist is to try and look at the world around me, and process that,'' Walshe said. ''It's how I understand what's going on.''

Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival

Through Nov. 26; hcmf.co.uk

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/15/arts/music/jennifer-walshe.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/15/arts/music/jennifer-walshe.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: The composer Jennifer Walshe at the University of Oxford. ''I want to be present, and curious and engaged,'' she said. ''The work is how I do that.'' (PHOTOGRAPH BY TOM JAMIESON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (C1)

Jennifer Walshe during a performance of ''Some Notes on Martian Sonic Aesthetics 2034-51'' in Germany. (PHOTOGRAPH BY TOBIAS RASOKAT) (C4) This article appeared in print on page C1, C4.

**Load-Date:** November 21, 2023

**End of Document**



[***The Candy That Grew From Kernel to Icon***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69HK-DRN1-DXY4-X00V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 31, 2023 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 965 words

**Byline:** By Derrick Bryson Taylor

**Body**

Sitting in her Wiggins, Miss., home one fall afternoon, Wanda King began counting all of the candy corn flavors she has collected over the years.

She quickly ran out of fingers.

There is sea salt chocolate, caramel, peppermint, cookies, Starburst, Sour Patch Kids, apple pie, pumpkin pie, s'mores and three separate coffee flavors. Others are slightly more imaginative, like blackberry cobbler. Some are holiday themed, like eggnog and witch's teeth, which are off white with green tips. Others in her collection try to mimic meals -- like a brunch-flavored bag with kernels that taste like French toast, waffles and pancakes.

Catching her breath, Ms. King, 62, said she had amassed nearly 40 varieties, which she stores neatly in Mason jars in a guest bedroom.

''It is the ultimate survival sugar rush,'' she said, noting that she'd recently checked the freshness of a batch from 2017. ''Candy corn don't go bad. It'll last forever.''

Ms. King and her husband, Danny King, run a YouTube channel dedicated to their 10-acre homestead about 30 miles north of Gulfport. Her connection to candy corn started as a running joke about six years ago and took off with the help of their viewers, some of whom have sent bags for her to try.

Although Ms. King is referred to as a ''candy corn queen'' by some of her friends, there is a line she will not cross.

''I couldn't see a turkey-tasting candy corn,'' she said. ''And people sent me a meme of a pizza with candy corn, and I can't see eating a candy corn pizza. I just can't.''

Chicken feed, as candy corn was originally called because of its appearance, was invented by the Wunderle Candy Company in the late 1880s during a candy boom in the United States, said Susan Benjamin, a food historian and president of True Treats, a research-based candy store in West Virginia.

Chicken feed and other treats like it were marketed toward ***working-class*** children. ''It was the first time they could see themselves as part of the middle class because they could go out and purchase something,'' Ms. Benjamin said. ''That something was made for them and geared to their taste and that was candy.''

Chicken feed was initially popular year-round. It's unclear when it became a near-exclusive Halloween sensation, but research suggests it was most likely around the middle of the 20th century.

By the 1940s, trick-or-treating was taking off in the United States in part because candy manufacturers became adept at packaging smaller snacks. ''That would explain why candy corn became the natural fit for trick-or-treating, because it had everything,'' Ms. Benjamin said, adding that it reminded people of harvest rituals, it was festive in appearance, and it was inexpensive.

''The triumph of candy corn is the triumph of getting past all of these thousands of candies that were made in the 1800s to be one of the few that survived today,'' she said. Ever heard of Sen-Sen, spruce resin gum or banana split taffy? Probably not. But candy corn, she said, is ''still around and we still use it.'' She added, ''You still find it in decorations and food all over the place.''

Candy corn today is widely sold across the United States. Jelly Belly Candy Company, which has manufactured candy corn since 1898, when it was called the Goelitz Confectionery Company, produced about 65 million kernels of candy corn the last fiscal year, a spokesman said. Brach's, a competitor, produces about 30 million pounds of candy corn each year, a spokeswoman said. Brach's claims to be the No. 1 producer of candy corn, making up 88 percent of the candy corn sold in the United States.

With so much candy corn on the market, who's eating it? And how? Fifty-one percent of Americans eat the whole piece at once, and 31 percent start nibbling the tiny pieces at the narrow white end, according to a recent survey by the National Confectioners Association. The remaining 18 percent start with the yellow end.

No matter how it's eaten, candy corn regularly tops the list of most divisive treats alongside black licorice and circus peanuts, Ms. Benjamin said. Each fall, when pumpkins take center stage and candy is sold by the bucket, discord breaks out between the lovers and haters of candy corn.

Key Lee, 29, a content creator in New York City, is among the haters. ''This didn't need to be made,'' she said, calling the intensely sweet flavor, which she described as like maple syrup, off putting.

The comedian Lewis Black dislikes what he calls its mealy texture. ''I don't even know how to describe its flavor because it's one of the few things on the planet that tastes like poop,'' he said.

And it's been about 30 years since Ray Garton, 60, a horror novelist in Northern California, last had candy corn. ''It's the consistency, how it feels between my teeth and the taste,'' he said. ''It's just too sweet. It makes me shudder just thinking about it.''

On the opposite end of the spectrum is Melissa Cady, 38, an Etsy shop owner in Hollis, Maine. While she likes eating candy corn, she prefers dressing up like it. ''If I see candy corn stuff, I kind of automatically gravitate toward it,'' she said. ''I've been collecting candy corn things for a while.''

Ms. Cady has candy-corn-colored buttons, earrings, headbands, sweaters, dresses and other knickknacks, including a ceramic candy corn tree. ''It feels like big box retailers have caught on to the whole, like, candy corn craze and that there's money to be made in it, outside of the actual candy itself,'' she said.

Each year, she shares one bag with her husband, and they have no plans to give it up. ''I totally get all the people who are like: 'It's disgusting. It has like a weird, waxy texture,''' she said. ''I totally know where they're coming from, but I'll still eat it. Is that weird?''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/26/style/candy-corn-history-halloween.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/26/style/candy-corn-history-halloween.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDRIA LO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (B1)

Wanda King has collected nearly 40 varieties of candy corn that she keeps in Mason jars, with flavors including pumpkin pie, eggnog and French toast.

Ms. King and her husband, Danny, run a YouTube channel devoted to their 10-acre property and home, Deep South Homestead, near Wiggins, Miss. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ELIJAH BAYLIS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (B5) This article appeared in print on page B1, B5.

**Load-Date:** October 31, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Democratic Senate Loss in Ohio Raises the Bar for Brown in 2024***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66X7-M261-DXY4-X22H-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 21, 2022 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1414 words

**Byline:** By Trip Gabriel

**Body**

Tim Ryan's loss to J. D. Vance is another reminder that Ohio is no longer a swing state. Can Mr. Brown, the Democratic incumbent, hold the seat in what's shaping up as a crucial Senate election in 2024?

Both John Fetterman of Pennsylvania and Tim Ryan of Ohio sought Senate seats this year as Democrats appealing to the ***working class***.

But the fates of Mr. Fetterman, now senator-elect, and Mr. Ryan, who decisively lost, illustrate how their two states, once politically conjoined, have taken dramatically divergent paths. While Pennsylvania is a battleground that in a good Democratic year votes blue, Ohio has all but fallen from the list of competitive states.

That is a troubling sign for Democrats who in two years must protect their narrow control of the Senate on a highly unfavorable map. In 2024, Democrats will defend Senate seats in red states that include Montana, West Virginia and Ohio.

With the victory of J.D. Vance over Mr. Ryan fresh in mind -- a Republican triumph in broadly disappointing midterms for the party -- Ohio Republicans this week were sharpening knives in anticipation of taking on Senator Sherrod Brown, the Democrat whose long-term credibility with blue-collar voters was a template for Mr. Ryan.

At the same time, some Republicans cautioned that Mr. Brown would be a more formidable opponent. One strategist, Jai Chabria, who was Mr. Vance's chief campaign adviser, called Mr. Ryan ''the zero-calorie Sherrod Brown.''

Mr. Brown said last week that he planned to seek a fourth term in 2024, though his comments were short of an announcement. If he follows through, his survival as a gruff-voiced champion of what he calls ''the dignity of work'' will be acutely tested.

''The state dynamics have changed,'' said Bob Paduchik, the chairman of the Ohio Republican Party, at a postelection autopsy before the state Chamber of Commerce. ''The Ohio Republican Party is a ***working-class***, conservative party. Sherrod has portrayed himself as a ***working-class*** Democrat, and there just aren't many of those left around in Ohio.''

Mr. Brown, through a spokesman, declined to comment. His top political adviser, Justin Barasky, who also worked on Mr. Ryan's race, acknowledged that ''the national Democratic Party brand has suffered significantly with ***working-class*** voters,'' including Black and Hispanic voters. But Mr. Barasky said that Ohio had not slipped entirely from Democrats' grasp, like some other formerly competitive Midwest states.

''Ohio is not going the way of Missouri and Iowa, that's why we have a Democratic senator, and they don't,'' he said. ''But we're not Pennsylvania anymore, and we're not Wisconsin and we're not Michigan.''

''Yes, Tim lost, and the governor's race was a blowout, so it's very simple to say, 'Oh, man, Sherrod is in big trouble,''' he added. Yet, a detailed look at the results, he said, ''leads you to believe Sherrod is in a relatively strong position.'' He cited Mr. Ryan's higher share of votes in most counties that Joseph R. Biden Jr. won in 2020, among other factors.

Once a battleground like those northern industrial neighbors, Ohio voted twice for former President Barack Obama before swinging hard to former President Donald J. Trump, who appealed to the cultural and economic grievances of white voters without college degrees.

This year, Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania all delivered strong results for Democrats. The party won the governorship of all three states, and Mr. Fetterman won his Senate race. Ohio's Democratic candidate for governor, Nan Whaley, the former mayor of Dayton, lost by 25 percentage points to the Republican incumbent, Gov. Mike DeWine, who was not penalized for signing one of the nation's most restrictive abortion bans.

The contrast between Pennsylvania and Ohio seems especially jarring because both states held Senate races for open seats of retiring Republicans. While Mr. Fetterman won by 4.5 points -- one of Democrats' biggest midterm victories -- Mr. Ryan, with a similar political persona, lost by 6.5 points.

The grandson of a steelworker, Mr. Ryan ran on an anti-China, pro-union message, telling voters if they wanted a culture war, ''I'm not your guy.'' Both he and Mr. Fetterman, who touted his years as mayor of a hard-hit steel town outside Pittsburgh, adopted the hooded sweatshirt as a proletarian uniform.

Northeast Ohio, which Mr. Ryan has represented in Congress for 20 years, was once the most Democratic area of the state, built on the power of organized labor when heavy industry dominated the economy. But Northeast Ohio has moved more to the right than any part of the state.

Mahoning County, which includes Youngstown in Mr. Ryan's district, not only voted for Mr. Vance, but also gave him a larger share of votes than what the county cast for Mr. Trump in 2020. It was the first time in nearly 50 years a Republican presidential candidate won Mahoning County.

The swing away from Democrats in Northeast Ohio gives some party strategists agita about Mr. Brown's race.

''Youngstown should be the heart and soul of the Democratic brand -- it's not,'' said Irene Lin, a Democratic strategist in Ohio. ''Can Sherrod survive? I'm not sure.''

Ohio and Pennsylvania have many demographic similarities, including nearly identical percentages of Black and white residents and similar levels of educational attainment, according to the census.

But there are also differences that tilt the tables toward the G.O.P. in Ohio. The population of Pennsylvania's major cities, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, which lean heavily Democratic, outnumbers Ohio's similarly Democratic-leaning big cities, Columbus, Cleveland and Cincinnati.

Ohio has nothing comparable to the heavily populated suburban band outside Philadelphia, which has become strong Democratic terrain.

Democratic strategists argued that despite the demographic headwinds, Mr. Ryan outperformed expectations this year, improving by two points on Mr. Biden's 2020 loss in Ohio. They also predicted Mr. Brown would be able to run a much more competitive race in 2024. He has a statewide brand and a history of defeating leading state Republicans in earlier Senate races, including Mr. DeWine in 2006 and Josh Mandel, a former state treasurer, in 2012.

Mr. Brown will also have an advantage that Mr. Ryan lacked: the all-but-certain support of millions of dollars from outside Democratic groups who want to protect the Ohio seat, after the same groups left Mr. Ryan on his own.

Democrats are hardly in full retreat in the state. In three races for the House of Representatives this year, the party's candidates flipped a Cincinnati-based seat, held a Toledo-based district that Mr. Trump had carried and won the state's most competitive race, an open seat in the Akron area.

To Republicans, Mr. Ryan lost because the reach-across-the-aisle persona he campaigned on -- ducking the Democratic label and boasting of voting with Mr. Trump on trade -- was belied by his overall record of support for Mr. Biden's agenda and by some past statements that aligned with the left.

''The theory of our case was that he was a fraud, was pretending to be something he wasn't,'' said Mr. Chabria, Mr. Vance's chief strategist.

He predicted there would be many well-funded Republicans drawn to the Senate primary, sensing an opportunity to flip a seat. ''Sherrod Brown is ripe for the picking,'' he said. ''I think that there's a huge opportunity.''

Republicans in Ohio who are said to be exploring a run include Frank LaRose, the newly re-elected secretary of state; Mark Kvamme, a venture capitalist; and Matt Dolan, a co-owner of the Cleveland Guardians baseball team who finished third in this year's G.O.P. Senate primary.

Scott Milburn, a Republican who was a top aide to former Gov. John Kasich of Ohio, said Mr. Vance's seemingly comfortable win belied some weaknesses. Chiefly, his 6.5-point margin victory was far narrower than the double-digit victories of most other Republicans in statewide races this year.

Mr. Milburn said that if Republicans nominate a 2024 candidate with similar weaknesses -- Mr. Vance was attacked as a carpetbagger and as an abortion hard-liner -- Republicans will struggle against Mr. Brown, who has a demonstrated ability to connect with voters.

''Sherrod is an incredible retail politician,'' Mr. Milburn said. ''That guy can work a parade and make you think you're the only one in it. I've run candidates in the same parades as him and seen it happen.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/20/us/politics/sherrod-brown-ohio-senate.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/20/us/politics/sherrod-brown-ohio-senate.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: The Democratic Senate nominee Tim Ryan filled out his ballot with his son Brady on Nov. 8 in Warren, Ohio, left. A motorcycle ridden by a member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers at a Ryan event on Nov. 6 in Gahanna, Ohio, above. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRIAN KAISER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A17.

**Load-Date:** November 21, 2022

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[***American Standard***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69Y4-X7F1-DXY4-X3TR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 24, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1393 words

**Byline:** By Dwight Garner

**Body**

A new biography sheds light on her humble beginnings and prolific, genre-defining career.

BECOMING ELLA FITZGERALD: The Jazz Singer Who Transformed American Song, by Judith Tick

Ella Fitzgerald was born in 1917 in Newport News, Va., but spent most of her childhood in a poor section of Yonkers, N.Y. Her father, a longshoreman, left the family when she was young. Her mother did domestic work, and toiled in a commercial laundry.

Ella didn't make it past junior high. She worked briefly as a lookout for a brothel, and was arrested for truancy. She spent time in an institution for troubled youth. She later told a relative she had been molested as a girl. She thought she might become a dancer.

Her break came when she was 17, at an amateur night at the Apollo Theater. She got over a bad case of stage fright and sang a Hoagy Carmichael song, ''Judy.'' A young Benny Carter was the musical director that night. Among those taken with her in the shows to come was the band leader Chick Webb, whose music had a hot, powerful style. He hired her.

''Big-band girl singers were fresh bait in those days,'' Margo Jefferson has written, ''dangled in front of audiences to soothe their souls and stir their hormones.'' Some thought Fitzgerald was too plain-looking for the role. But her multi-octave voice and high spirits removed all doubts. Her first hit was ''A-Tisket A-Tasket,'' which teased jazz out of a nursery rhyme.

In ''Becoming Ella Fitzgerald: The Jazz Singer Who Transformed American Song,'' Judith Tick recounts, almost concert by concert, how Fitzgerald was thrown straight into the deep end. In 1938, at the Savoy Ballroom, Count Basie's band faced off against Webb's in a battle of the bands. Billie Holiday was singing with Basie, so it was a battle of vocalists as well. Louis Armstrong and Benny Goodman were in the audience.

In his novel ''The Interrogative Mood'' (2009), the one in which every sentence is a question, Padgett Powell asks, ''Have you decided yet what historical moment you would have most like to have witnessed with your own eyes and ears?'' That night at the Savoy would surely be high on many lists.

A slew of recording sessions and a lot of travel followed. Goodman tried to poach Fitzgerald from Webb. After Webb died of tuberculosis in 1939, at 34, Fitzgerald briefly led his band.

Before long, she was recording with Armstrong, whom she learned to lovingly imitate, and touring with Dizzy Gillespie. She performed in the all-star concert series Jazz at the Philharmonic. Oscar Peterson played with her, and in his memoir he recounted her ''imperturbable musical confidence.'' She was fronting the greatest jazz musicians alive, but she was unfazed:

On the finale each night, she courageously took on the front line horns, regardless of who they were ... Ella traded fours, eights, sixteens or whatever they wanted with them and never got hurt. As a matter of fact, on various nights when some of the horns got a smidgen careless, Fitz would run up over them and keep right on going.

Fitzgerald stared down the jazz critics, too, who felt that vocalists (especially female vocalists) cheapened jazz, diluted it and stole attention from the playing.

Tick is a professor emerita of music history at Northeastern University whose books include a biography Ruth Crawford Seeger, the modernist composer who also happened to be Pete Seeger's stepmother. She chronicles the slights and insults Fitzgerald faced as a Black woman on tour, especially in the South. During the civil rights era, some wished Fitzgerald had been more outspoken. She felt she spoke more clearly through her work.

Tick's biography builds toward, and finds its sweet spot in, Fitzgerald's eight initial ''Song Book'' albums for Verve, recorded between 1956 and 1964. She had impeccable taste. She revisited and modernized songs by Cole Porter, Rodgers and Hart, Duke Ellington, Irving Berlin, George and Ira Gershwin, Harold Arlen, Jerome Kern and Johnny Mercer. In the process, Tick writes, ''she laid the foundational stones for what would soon be known as the Great American Songbook.''

Fitzgerald has proved to be a difficult subject for biographers. She could be remote in person, and withholding in interviews. A previous biography, by Stuart Nicholson in 1994, devolved in its second half into a blur of concert dates. Tick's book delivers the same blur. It's as if a Bob Dylan archivist were dryly printing every set list on his Never Ending Tour. Like Dylan, Fitzgerald was a hardened road warrior, as if performing nonstop would keep depression, and even death, at bay. There are decades of television appearances, on every talk and variety show from Glen Campbell's to Flip Wilson's, to chronicle as well. None of this takes us closer to her.

Academic language creeps like mold into this biography. (Aretha Franklin's song ''Respect'' is an ''intersectional anthem.'') Elsewhere the verbiage is as impersonal as a rental car agreement: ''Black variety entertainment flourished in a separate cultural milieu through entrepreneurial adaptation and new social relationships.'' Tick clearly reveres Fitzgerald's music, but her prose is buttoned-up. She can't quite transmit her enthusiasms or make her distinctions stick.

Many listeners, then and now, find Fitzgerald's recordings to be aloof and impersonal. In her introduction to a 2016 book on Billie Holiday, Zadie Smith, channeling Holiday, writes: ''All respect to Ella, all respect to Sarah, but when those gals open their mouths to sing, well, to you it's like someone just opened a brand-new Frigidaire. A chill comes over you.''

It doesn't matter that Tick doesn't use Smith's comment. But there is a sense of easy layups missed. There are relatively few female voices in this book, which makes one miss Margo Jefferson's devastatingly fine writing on Fitzgerald. Jefferson has described being embarrassed to watch Fitzgerald on television when she was a teenager, because Fitzgerald would sweat onstage. The perspiration threatened to ''drag her back into the maw of ***working-class*** Black female labor.''

In a book short on humanizing detail, I was surprised to find a single sentence devoted to Fitzgerald's cookbook collection. Tick doesn't describe this collection, nor tell you that the 300 or so titles are housed at Radcliffe's Schlesinger Library. Apparently, Fitzgerald didn't cook from these books, but simply loved to read them, which makes her a kindred spirit to me. It's poignant to note that she had diabetes, so she surely could not always have eaten what she longed to.

She annotated her cookbooks in the margins. Who would not want to know, in two or three paragraphs, what she put there? Tick doesn't say. Nor does she note that Fitzgerald was said to have floor-to-ceiling bookshelves in every room in her house, and that she kept letters and other things inside her books.

It's poor sportsmanship, perhaps, to write about what isn't in a book as opposed to what is. But even browsing a Sotheby's catalog of Fitzgerald memorabilia auctioned in 1997 gives you a deeper sense of her personal style than Tick manages to convey. According to The Chicago Tribune, a pair of her fake eyelashes sold for $900.

Nor does Tick describe Fitzgerald's Beverly Hills house, though there are many photos online -- it looks a bit like Larry David's place on ''Curb Your Enthusiasm'' -- or her rare and elegant cars. (She didn't drive, but enjoyed being chauffeured.) Unanalyzed too is what catnip Fitzgerald was to many of the last century's most incisive photographers, including Lee Friedlander and Annie Leibovitz. Her supposedly plain looks were a blank canvas, of a sort, into which others read volumes.

Tick's book warms again as she approaches the end of Fitzgerald's life, in 1996. When she was in failing health, she liked to listen to her old records and try to remember everything. On one of her last days, her son hired a trio of excellent musicians to play for her. They were downstairs, she was upstairs, and the beautiful sound traveled up to find her.

BECOMING ELLA FITZGERALD: The Jazz Singer Who Transformed American Song | By Judith Tick | Norton | 560 pp. | $40Dwight Garner has been a book critic for The Times since 2008. His latest book is ''The Upstairs Delicatessen: On Eating, Reading, Reading About Eating, and Eating While Reading.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/04/books/review/becoming-ella-judith-tick.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/04/books/review/becoming-ella-judith-tick.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Ella Fitzgerald in 1954. (PHOTOGRAPH BY LARRY C. MORRIS/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page BR14.

**Load-Date:** December 24, 2023

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[***Surging inequality has benefi ted wealthy Americans above all. But increasingly, the global economy's biggest winners are elsewhere.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69Y4-X7F1-DXY4-X3YS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 24, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section MM; Column 0; Magazine Desk; Pg. 16; POST-NORMAL

**Length:** 1457 words

**Byline:** By David Wallace-Wells

**Body**

In 1974, the libertarian political philosopher Robert Nozick famously defended inequality by offering a thought experiment involving Wilt Chamberlain. Imagine you lived in a society, he proposed, where the distribution of wealth had been orchestrated to be just -- perhaps even egalitarian. But then imagine that a seven-foot celebrity superstar athlete arrived, and the citizens of that society were given the opportunity to pay to watch him. Who could argue he shouldn't get rich? This was, for Nozick, an illustration of his more general ''entitlement theory,'' with Chamberlain an undeniable example of exceptional merit's deserving, by rights, exceptional rewards.

The previous year, Chamberlain's salary was a quarter of a million dollars, about 20 times the median household income. Today a basketball player earning 20 times the median wouldn't be making much more than the N.B.A.'s minimum salary for rookies of $1.1 million. Those who play even a few minutes a game are typically -- compared with Americans earning average paychecks -- several times richer than Chamberlain ever was. Superstars are many times richer still. The most high-profile new contract this season was signed by Jaylen Brown of the Celtics, and it pays more than $60 million per year, about 800 times the median U.S. salary. Compared with the gap between the American median and Chamberlain's exceptional rewards, that is a fortyfold increase. And Brown is hardly a household name like Wilt, or for that matter Steph or LeBron. This year, he may be only the fifth-best player on his team. As Boston fans know all too well, he can't even really dribble.

Athletes, like entertainers, have always been complicated case studies in American oligarchy. They are both entrepreneurs and labor, wealthy and yet often exploited, and have operated for 50 years in an endless boom cycle for the business of sports. But as avatars of the superstar-economy era, athletes -- like the entertainers Taylor Swift and Beyoncé, whose tours this year have apparently had a notable effect on national G.D.P. -- play an outsize role in illustrating the country's inescapable economic morality tale: that while an awful lot has changed about America and the world since 1974, it sometimes seems that the biggest and most important change is the social fact of exploding income inequality.

In the aftermath of the financial crisis, the country was given a crash course, first by the Tea Party and Occupy Wall Street, then by Thomas Piketty and his book ''Capital in the 21st Century.'' We learned about the Gini coefficient, which measures the relative inequality of a society, and we learned that, in recent decades, it had grown considerably. We learned that the ratio of chief-executive pay to worker pay grew to 200-to-1 today from 60-to-1 in 1989 from 20-to-1 in 1965. And we watched the rise of Bernie Sanders and the presidency of Donald Trump -- who in accepting the Republican nomination directed his gaze at those left behind by financialization and globalization and announced, ''I am your voice'' -- and interpreted them alongside Brexit and Boris Johnson and Jair Bolsonaro as facets of a hodgepodge international backlash to the neoliberal era and the inequalities it produced.

Culturally, the age of inequality is still churning: Over just the last six months, we've had ''Rich Men North of Richmond'' and Shawn Fain's leading the United Auto Workers into a triumphant labor war with Detroit's Big Three while wearing an ''Eat the Rich'' T-shirt. But at the structural level, our picture of American inequality also seems to be changing. According to some measures, U.S. income inequality hasn't meaningfully grown over the last decade, the very period in which it has become such a potent cultural and political meme. And in the last few weeks, several high-profile critiques of Piketty's narrative-setting work have been published, both in academic journals and in outlets like Bloomberg and The Financial Times -- with mostly right-of-center commentators suggesting that the story of ballooning inequality, and of our return to the robber barons of the Gilded Age, was all methodological illusion and that inequality hadn't actually been growing at all.

Piketty compares this to climate denial, and almost certainly the critique is oversold -- it's not just Piketty and his colleagues who have documented significant increases in inequality since 1980 but also the Government Accountability Office, the Congressional Budget Office, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Census Bureau and the Federal Reserve. You can quibble about which data set to use and exactly how to measure things, the Serbian American economist Branko Milanovic says, and you get somewhat different estimates for the size of the effect. ''But I think if you take 1980 and take 2006, I think there is no doubt that -- throughout the '80s and '90s and early 2000s -- inequality just went up.''

One of the leading scholars of global inequality, Milanovic is best known for his ''elephant chart,'' which measures relative gains along the world's income spectrum. The chart shows that in recent decades, the world's poor saw their incomes grow significantly, as did the world's very rich, with those in between -- the global upper middle class, made up of the working and middle classes of places like the United States and Europe -- stagnating.

There are shortcomings to the elephant chart: In documenting only percentage improvement in annual incomes, it equates much smaller absolute gains among the world's poor with much larger absolute gains by the world's rich. But Milanovic believes that in focusing so obsessively on growing divides within countries, we are missing what he calls a great convergence, in which income inequality is in fact declining, and quite rapidly. The global 1 percent is still going strong, he says, but at lower rungs on the income ladder, economic status is undergoing a great rearrangement, with profound implications for the way almost everyone on the planet will live -- and feel -- in the decades to come.

''Poor Westerners for decades have ranked among the highest-earning people in the world,'' Milanovic wrote this summer in Foreign Affairs. ''That will no longer be the case as non-Westerners with rising incomes will displace poor and middle-class Westerners from their lofty perches.'' As a result, a whole suite of privileges once enjoyed by working people in the richer parts of the world may soon pass out of their reach: international travel, for instance, both to exotic vacation destinations and to things like the World Cup, or the newest and most advanced electronics, like smartphones. Already, status markers like spots in prestigious Western universities are increasingly the site of fierce international competition. Housing markets in many global capitals have been squeezed by foreign buyers, as well. ''Drill down to the level of a single person,'' he writes, ''and what becomes apparent is probably the greatest reshuffling of individual positions on the global income ladder since the Industrial Revolution.''

To this point, it has been China doing most of the reshuffling. Between 1988 and 2018, a ***working-class*** Italian, for instance, has seen his income fall by 17 percentiles in global terms. Over the same period, a Chinese urbanite earning a median local income would have seen his rise by roughly 20 percentiles -- to the 70th from the 50th.

At the very top of the global pecking order, the makeup of the world's wealthiest has remained relatively secure, in part because few wealthy Chinese have penetrated the top 5 percent of incomes, 80 percent of which are still earned by Westerners. ''And it's useful to think of the top 5 percent as essentially American,'' Milanovic says, ''because 40 percent of the people in the top 5 percent globally are us -- the global rich are actually us.''

Soon enough, that will change radically: Even though Chinese growth rates have slowed, if they nevertheless remain several percentage points above America's, the Chinese share of the world's richest is likely to pass America's by 2050 or perhaps even 2040 -- meaning that, within 70 years of Mao's death, a once-impoverished country would boast more of the planet's wealthy than the ''world's richest country.'' Probably, we're going to have to retire that phrase and stop pretending it means the world is our playground -- at least, ours alone.

Illustrations by Ibrahim Rayintakath

David Wallace-Wells is a staff writer for the magazine and the author of ''The Uninhabitable Earth: Life After Warming.''David Wallace-Wells is a staff writer for the magazine and the author of ''The Uninhabitable Earth: Life After Warming.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/14/magazine/surging-inequality-has-benefited-wealthy-americans-above-all-but-increasingly-the-global-economys-biggest-winners-are-elsewhere.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/14/magazine/surging-inequality-has-benefited-wealthy-americans-above-all-but-increasingly-the-global-economys-biggest-winners-are-elsewhere.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page MM16, MM17.

**Load-Date:** December 24, 2023

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[***Hong Kong***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B1W-NT21-DXY4-X02B-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 6, 2024 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; Travel Desk; Pg. 8

**Length:** 1470 words

**Byline:** By Tiffany May

**Body**

Friday

3:30 p.m. | Visit historic shops

Travel back in time in Sheung Wan, a charming neighborhood where traditional stores sell tea and spices, just as they did more than a century ago, when the city was a colonial trading outpost. One shop, Cheung Hing Tea Hong, sells a variety of Chinese, European and Ceylon black teas, as well as coffee beans. Its tea master, who has worked there for more than six decades, nimbly folds and tucks the shop's signature tea variety, tieguanyin (about 160 Hong Kong dollars, or $20.50, for 150 grams), into an artful, palm-size paper package, using no tape or string. Midway down a wide outdoor stairway, Yuan Heng Spice Company offers all manner of spices, including Sichuan peppercorns, cinnamon bark and aged citrus peels. The shop's majestic cats are neighborhood fixtures. (Check out @hongkonghistoricalshops on Instagram for more gems.)

5 p.m. | Search for a speakeasy

The handling of colonial-era buildings, which can be painful reminders of oppression, is fraught in Hong Kong. One reimagined site is Tai Kwun, a 19th-century prison and police station in the city center, which was converted into a public arts compound in 2018. Make a game of seeking out 001, a speakeasy behind an unmarked black door, hidden in a maze of walkways (Tai Kwun employees will help you find it, if you ask). Once you're inside, reward yourself for the search with an Earl Grey martini (158 dollars). At Tai Kwun Contemporary, the art gallery in the complex, the exhibition ''Green Snake: Women-Centred Ecologies'' (free, runs through April 1) explores mythology amid the climate crisis through the lens of 30 female artists. Use Tai Kwun's app for self-guided tours of the compound. Some focus on architecture; others highlight the best spots for photos.

7:30 p.m. | Eat in an ex-warehouse

For a refined Chinese dinner near Tai Kwun, head to the Fringe Club, a performing arts space in an oval brick building that served as a dairy warehouse in the 19th century. Ascend neon-lit stairs to reach its restaurant, Nove at the Fringe, where you can order watermelon in a numbing mala chile sauce (65 dollars) and honey-glazed char siu pork (165 dollars, half portion). Afterward, go to Penicillin, a sustainable cocktail bar that ferments food scraps in its ''stinky room'' and invents new drinks in its laboratory using unlikely ingredients like cacao husks, soy sauce and charred chive sprigs (cocktails from 125 dollars). The name of Lockdown, a new bar from the same owners, refers to Hong Kong's pandemic restrictions, and the offerings include experimental versions of American Prohibition-era cocktails (from 120 dollars) served in an elegant space (in spite of the toilet displayed in its front window).

Saturday

10 a.m. | Enjoy a teahouse

Begin your morning with a stroll past ponds full of koi, turtles and water lilies at Hong Kong Park, a family-friendly, 20-acre green space converted from British Army barracks. On the ground floor of Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware, a Greek Revival mansion in the park where the commander of British forces in Hong Kong once lived, is LockCha, a tranquil teahouse with dark wood accents and elegant grooved panels. Choose from more than 100 kinds of white, yellow and green tea (starting at 58 dollars; customers order their own pot). Vegetarian dim sum options are limited in Hong Kong, so LockCha's fully vegetarian menu is a rare treat. Try the black truffle vegan siu mai (48 dollars, two pieces), steamed custard buns (35 dollars, two pieces) and the black fungus salad with sesame sauce (48 dollars).

12:30 p.m. | Explore bold art

See one of the world's largest collections of contemporary Chinese art at M+, a museum that opened in 2021 amid pandemic restrictions (entry, 120 dollars). Shaped like a giant inverted T, the 700,000-square-foot museum has more than 8,000 works in its permanent collection. Even with the ongoing crackdown on free expression, the museum offers bold and nuanced critiques: The satirical installation ''Old People's Home,'' by Sun Yuan and Peng Yu, shows life-size wax figures resembling world leaders riding in motorized wheelchairs and colliding into one another. Some artists capture political disillusionment in China, such as in Fang Lijun's large painting of a man sinking into azure water. The museum also has a library lounge devoted to video works. Visit the rooftop garden for an expansive view of the harborfront.

3 p.m. | Follow the incense

Stroll or take a taxi to Yau Ma Tei, a former fishing port where shops still sell incense and wood sculptures originally used by fishermen in rituals to protect them. Start at Tai On Coffee and Tea Shop, a classic Cantonese diner with cheery yellow walls and décor that pays homage to famous diner scenes in Hong Kong films, like with a cardboard cutout of the actor Maggie Cheung's character from Wong Kar-wai's film ''In the Mood for Love.'' Try the egg tart set (58 dollars); they come in several unorthodox flavors. The owner has commissioned illustrated maps of the historic shops nearby, available at no charge. Nearby, Cheung Shing Fans Factory sells incense sticks and essential oils (300 dollars per vial) and pricey sandalwood fans. See the artisans at Kwok Kee Wood Ware Sculpture who often sit outside the shop, carving and painting figures traditionally used by fishing families for ancestor worship.

4:30 p.m. | Hit a creative district

Sham Shui Po is a wholesale garment district that has been transformed into a creative hub where you might stumble on vintage toy shops, a vinyl trove or an umbrella repair stall. Visit Parallel Space, a small independent gallery that shows emerging Hong Kong artists who don't shy away from social commentary. On the third floor of an old building, Book Punch is an independent store whose selection includes literary fiction, poetry and children's books on emotional intelligence; staff members thank their customers by giving them vegetables or snacks. Bound Kowloon is a lively, neon-lit coffee shop and bar known for its rebellious spirit and bonhomie. It also hosts concerts ranging from punk rock to jazz. Take some time out there with a warm shochu-and-ginger cocktail called a Sunday Morning (108 dollars).

6 p.m. | Take a short night hike

Go on an easy urban hike and be rewarded by a view of the sunset from Garden Hill. Starting near the YHA Mei Ho Youth Hostel in Shek Kip Mei, a neighborhood near Sham Shui Po, ascend the stairs (it takes about 10 minutes) until you reach a flat concrete area with a grove of trees at the edge of the hill. From there, you'll spot candy-colored residences, including Shek Kip Mei Estate, Hong Kong's first public housing complex, among taller towers. In contrast to the skyline of glitzy skyscrapers seen from Victoria Peak, a hill popular with tourists, this view conjures an image of Hong Kong's ***working-class*** resilience. Garden Hill is well known, but not overly crowded; it's popular among photographers and young couples on dates.

8:30 p.m. | Order clay pot rice

Hong Kong is hot and humid for the greater part of the year, but in the winter long lines form outside Hing Kee at Temple Street (there are several restaurants with this name in Hong Kong), a no-frills restaurant that specializes in clay pot rice, a comforting dish cooked over a charcoal fire with aromatic toppings like Chinese sausage and seafood (starting at around 60 dollars, cash only). Pour a generous amount of sweet soy sauce and enjoy the satisfying crunch of the rice at the edge of the pot. Although the semi-outdoor restaurant sprawls across five storefronts, you can still expect a wait during peak meal times; the turnover is relatively fast.

Sunday

9 a.m. | Ride a ferry to an island

Spend half a day exploring Sharp Island, a tranquil sanctuary northeast of Hong Kong's center that offers verdant hiking trails, volcanic rocks and pristine beaches. Other destinations like Lamma Island and Cheung Chau Island are more accessible, but Sharp Island's beauty and relative privacy make the 60- to 90-minute journey worth it. At the public pier in Sai Kung (15 miles from the city center, accessible by public transport), find a private boat operator going to Sharp Island (tickets around 40 dollars) then pick up pineapple buns at Sai Kung Cafe and Bakery (13 dollars, cash only) as you wait to board. Get off at the Hap Mun Bay stop and follow the signs for the hiking trail to Kiu Tsui Beach. Along the trail, look for small ceramic sculptures inspired by the island from the Sai Kung Hoi Arts Festival. When the tide is low, cross the Sharp Island Sand Levee, a path filled with monzonite boulders nicknamed ''pineapple bun'' rocks for their resemblance to the crust of the local pastry. It's the perfect spot to break out those treats you brought along.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/29/travel/06hours-hong-kong-print.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/29/travel/06hours-hong-kong-print.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Top, Hong Kong's skyline. Middle row, from left: antiques in the Sheung Wan neighborhood

pan-fried turnip cakes, black truffle vegan siu mai, and enoki and veggie steamed dumplings at LockCha. Above from left, a table at Kwok Kee Wood Ware Sculpture

the view from Garden Hill. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANTHONY KWAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page C8.

**Load-Date:** January 6, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Stream These Ryan O’Neal Movies***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69TW-MHS1-JBG3-646M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 8, 2023 Friday 09:21 EST

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**Section:** MOVIES

**Length:** 1234 words

**Byline:** Jason Bailey

**Highlight:** The actor became one of the most bankable stars in Hollywood, and proved himself equally adept at drama, comedy and action.

**Body**

The actor became one of the most bankable stars in Hollywood, and proved himself equally adept at drama, comedy and action.

Ryan O’Neal’s [*death Friday at the age of 82*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/08/movies/ryan-oneal-dead.html) followed decades in which the actor was better known for his personal life (and struggles) than for his work. But few stars shone brighter in the 1970s, when O’Neal — originally known for his role on the prime-time soap opera “Peyton Place” — became one of the most bankable stars in Hollywood, and proved himself equally adept at drama, comedy and action. Here are a few of his finest films from that period, and where to stream them.

‘Love Story’ (1970)

[*Rent or buy it on major streaming platforms.*](https://www.justwatch.com/us/movie/love-story)

Television-to-film crossovers were rare in the 1970s, and O’Neal only landed the role of Oliver Barrett IV, a Harvard blue-blood who falls in love with a ***working-class*** Radcliffe girl, after several bigger names had passed, and at the insistence of the screenwriter Erich Segal and O’Neal’s co-star, Ali MacGraw. It’s easy to see why she fought for him; their chemistry is sweet but potent, and carries this lightweight story of young romance and terminal illness above its corny, weepy components. It became the highest-grossing movie of 1970. Critics were mostly unimpressed but The Times’s Vincent Canby [*praised O’Neal*](https://www.nytimes.com/1970/12/18/archives/screen-perfection-and-a-love-storyerich-segals-romantic-tale-begins.html) as “an intense, sensitive young man whose handsomeness has a sort of crookedness to it.” That’s an apt summary of not only O’Neal’s performance here, but also his entire appeal.

‘What’s Up, Doc’ (1972) / ‘The Main Event’ (1979)

Stream [*“What’s Up Doc” on Max.*](https://play.max.com/movie/4f8d95a5-07ac-498b-b5ce-433b2e75b9a4) Rent or buy [*“The Main Event” on major streaming platforms.*](https://www.justwatch.com/us/movie/the-main-event)

After the smashing success of “Love Story,” O’Neal teamed up with the director Peter Bogdanovich (himself white-hot off the success of “The Last Picture Show”) for the first of three memorable collaborations. “What’s Up, Doc?” paired O’Neal with Barbra Streisand in a rollicking homage to the screwball comedies of the ’30s and ’40s — specifically the Cary Grant-Katharine Hepburn team-up “Bringing Up Baby,” from which Bogdanovich lifted the central dynamic of, [*in his words*](https://books.google.com/books?id=J3ucTdpeE9YC&amp;lpg=PA133&amp;ots=2NTuT9jSjR&amp;dq=peter%20bogdanovich%20%E2%80%9Can%20uptight%20professor%20and%20a%20screwy%20girl.%E2%80%9D&amp;pg=PA133#v=onepage&amp;q=peter%20bogdanovich%20%E2%80%9Can%20uptight%20professor%20and%20a%20screwy%20girl.%E2%80%9D&amp;f=false), “an uptight professor and a screwy girl.” It was the perfect vehicle to showcase O’Neal’s range; his turn as the musicologist Dr. Howard Bannister was 180 degrees from Oliver Barrett IV, a study in frenetic farce that somehow never crosses the line from cartoony to caricature. His chemistry with Streisand was so potent that they reunited seven years later for the boxing rom-com “The Main Event,” and while its director Howard Zieff proved to be no Bogdanovich, the reunion affirmed that O’Neal’s skills as a light screen comedian were all but unmatched in the era.

‘Paper Moon’ (1973) / ‘Nickelodeon’ (1976)

Stream [*“Paper Moon” on Max.*](https://play.max.com/movie/aca465a3-c3d1-4250-83db-ba25405dcb53) Rent or buy [*“Nickelodeon” on major streaming platforms*](https://www.justwatch.com/us/movie/nickelodeon).

In the meantime, Bogdanovich and O’Neal followed “What’s Up, Doc?” with this adaptation of the novel “Addie Pray,” about a con man crossing Kansas selling Bibles to widows, with his precocious maybe-daughter in tow. Bogdanovich cast O’Neal’s real-life offspring Tatum in the latter role, masterfully capitalizing on their built-in rhythms and spiky relationship; they’re wonderful together, and it’s a joy to watch O’Neal’s gleefully amoral swindler begin to begrudgingly care for the smart-mouthed kid. (Tatum would win the Academy Award for best supporting actress for the role — at 10 years old, the youngest winner of a competitive Oscar to date.) Three years later, Bogdanovich and O’Neal teamed up for the last time to make “Nickelodeon,” an affectionate valentine to the earliest years of Hollywood, inspired by Bogdanovich’s interviews with the legends of the silent era. It was not as well-received as their earlier pictures, but it remains a delightful mash-up of film history and slapstick comedy, with a charmingly seat-of-his-pants turn by O’Neal as an incompetent lawyer who stumbles into a career as a screenwriter and film director.

‘Barry Lyndon’ (1975)

[*Rent or buy it on major platforms.*](https://www.justwatch.com/us/movie/barry-lyndon)

Some cynics were skeptical of Stanley Kubrick’s decision to cast the decidedly 20th-century O’Neal in the title role of his adaptation of William Makepeace Thackeray’s 18th-century-set novel. But Kubrick, as usual, saw something more in O’Neal — or perhaps he saw the link between his “Paper Moon” con man and the title character, a social-climbing rogue who uses his good looks to marry into considerable money. The actor’s razor-sharp comic timing was rarely so elegantly deployed, and he clearly relished the opportunity to turn his matinee-idol image on its head, deftly conveying a character ultimately undone by his own moral rot.

‘A Bridge Too Far’ (1977)

[*Rent or buy it on most major platforms.*](https://www.justwatch.com/us/movie/a-bridge-too-far)

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](http://youtube.com/embed/yPPycZo8H7c)]

For his dramatization of the failed Operation Market Garden during World War II, the director Richard Attenborough gathered an eye-popping, all-star cast that included James Caan, Michael Caine, Sean Connery, Elliott Gould, Anthony Hopkins, Gene Hackman, Laurence Olivier, Robert Redford and Liv Ullman. That’s not an easy group to make an impression in, but O’Neal pulls it off. As Gen. James M. Gavin, one of the leaders of the American faction of the Allied operation, O’Neal takes a direct approach to the material, eschewing the theatrics of many castmates and honing in on Gavin’s straight-shooting style and somewhat cynical worldview.

‘Tough Guys Don’t Dance’ (1987)

[*Stream it on Amazon Prime Video.*](https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/0GDW81NL9E5TZN1P81IDDY0J24/ref=atv_dl_rdr?tag=justus1ktp-20)

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](http://youtube.com/embed/ARjauXcHVBE)]

As the ’70s rolled into the ’80s, O’Neal’s commercial successes grew more rare, and he found himself fronting fewer big movies — so he made his leading roles count. One of the strangest was this bleakly funny riff on hard-boiled crime noir, written and directed by Norman Mailer (adapting his own novel). “Tough Guys” is notorious in some circles for [*an out-of-context moment that went quite viral*](https://youtu.be/Y9KyBdPeKHg?si=Jn0y6Dd5nSC6ODrX) (a take that O’Neal reportedly begged Mailer not to use), but that grand, oddly melodramatic moment is indicative of the wild tonal ride that is “Tough Guys,” which feels like the bastard child of David Lynch, Douglas Sirk, Dashiell Hammett, and Mailer in the midst of a particularly rough hangover. O’Neal ends up being the steadying force of this unorthodox stew, and his grounded performance frequently keeps the picture from floating off into the ether.

‘Zero Effect’ (1998)

[*Rent or buy it on major platforms*](https://www.justwatch.com/us/movie/zero-effect).

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](http://youtube.com/embed/eSH8Y3h5j-g)]

In the ’90s and through to the end of his life, O’Neal’s acting was increasingly consigned to television work and small supporting roles. But he turned out to be a fine character actor as well, and one of the best films of that period is this clever, melancholy mash-up of comedy, drama and mystery from the writer-director Jake Kasdan. Bill Pullman plays Daryl Zero, “the world’s most private detective,” a brilliant but reclusive Sherlock Holmes type; Ben Stiller is the Watson to his Holmes. O’Neal turns up as Gregory Stark, a millionaire who hires Zero to find the key to his safe deposit box. As is customary for such characters, there’s more to this man than meets the eye, and O’Neal bracingly does what only the best actors can do: he projects furtiveness, while seeming to have nothing to hide. That duality and complexity was part of what made him such a special and distinctive screen presence for so long.

PHOTO: Ryan O’Neal, left, with Ali MacGraw, in “Love Story.” (PHOTOGRAPH BY Paramount Pictures FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** December 9, 2023

**End of Document**



[***In the Early Days of Lockdown, a Writer Considers a Perplexing Age; Fiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69HC-TW31-JBG3-60GT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 30, 2023 Monday 15:20 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 941 words

**Byline:** Dwight Garner

**Highlight:** Set during the pandemic, Sigrid Nunez’s new novel, “The Vulnerables,” is a story of unlikely companionship and personal reflection.

**Body**

Set during the pandemic, Sigrid Nunez’s new novel, “The Vulnerables,” is a story of unlikely companionship and personal reflection.

THE VULNERABLES, by Sigrid Nunez

Animals and uncomfortable topics: Count on these in a Sigrid Nunez novel. Her slim, discursive, minor yet charming new one, “The Vulnerables,” is no exception.

The animal is a parrot, a sociable macaw named Eureka. The narrator, an unnamed writer, moves into a friend’s apartment in Manhattan to care for Eureka when his owner gets stuck on the West Coast. It’s the spring of 2020 and America is in Covid lockdown. The bird needs company. Macaws have egos. They can go mad, like the rest of us, if neglected for too long.

The apartment, a condo near Madison Square Park, is luxury squared. It is described as “the collision of great imagination, great taste and a whole lot of money.” The owners also have a place upstate, and a third in (obviously) Marfa, Texas. If there is one thing Covid taught us, Nunez writes, it’s that more people than we thought have places upstate.

“The Vulnerables” is Nunez’s ninth novel. Her best-known remains “[*The Friend*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/05/books/review-friend-sigrid-nunez.html),” which won a National Book Award in 2018. This one comes across as a Covid diary, with a light scaffolding of incident to hold its meditations up.

The narrator’s interactions with the parrot are funny and moving. Not having more pets is among her central regrets. Playing with Eureka makes her melancholy, because “animals having fun can be a poignant spectacle — I suppose partly because it narrows the gap between us and them.”

I can do without animals, most of the time, in novels. But Nunez is a closer observer than most, and she is wittier. She reports on a cockatoo that has been taught to say Bette Davis’s [*famous line*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S3zShjyaTr8), parodied by [*Elizabeth Taylor*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xWoAOohbr5M) in “Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?”: “What a dump!”

The uncomfortable topics are mostly the narrator’s instinctive pushback against what Robert Hughes called the culture of complaint. “When men appear in fiction now,” she writes, “it’s usually to be criticized or denounced for something. The one thing you’re never prepared to hear is that the men will do the right thing.” It isn’t just women showing men in a relentlessly bad light, each one a “bungler or loser or some kind of creep,” Nunez goes on. Anyone who reads novels on a regular basis will recognize the veracity of her follow-up:

And now male writers bend over backward to emphasize the superiority of their female characters. I meet the same paragon in book after book: high I.Q., great personality, firm moral purpose, dazzling wit. And the trick is to get across that she’s also very attractive without ever appearing to be somehow disrespecting her. It would be funny if it weren’t so boring.

Seven times out of 10, she fails to mention, the young woman will have green eyes.

This book’s title refers to the fact that, because she is on the far side of 65, the narrator is “a vulnerable” in the face of Covid. Every novel is about aging, in a way, but Nunez is especially attuned to old age’s tender humiliations. When a handsome young man arrives to share the apartment with her, she is unhappy. She had expected to be alone.

He makes her feel her age. Is sex over for her? A friend says that life can be a minefield in middle age, because “you’re not quite ready to give up, but your sexual radar can get a bit skewed, and you have to worry more and more about making a spectacle of yourself.”

Nunez can be relied upon to carry her thoughts one beat further than most writers. Thus her narrator recalls the horror of being a very young person forced to confront, on a class trip on Valentine’s Day to a nursing home, the very old:

We did not want to go to that place. Those people — holy moly, what had happened to them? What calamity had bleached and bent and shriveled them? … The warbly voices, the shakes, the drool, the munching mouths.

Like certain storms, this novel churns intensely in one place. There is a bit more plot. The narrator joins old friends at a funeral. They stay up late, talking and passing a joint. The narrator has insomnia; her writing is going poorly; she can’t concentrate. She wanders happily in an emptied-out Manhattan. She embodies John Ashbery’s comment, in his poem “[*The Bungalows*](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/47762/the-bungalows),” that “sometimes standing still is also life.”

She lives near the Union Square Greenmarket, so she doesn’t need to have food delivered. But she quotes a viral tweet that described lockdown as “the middle class hiding while ***working-class*** people bring them things.”

I am committed, until one of us dies, to Nunez’s novels. I find them ideal. They are short, wise, provocative, funny — good and strong company. Her narrator marshals a defense of the short, semifictional novel. “The traditional novel has lost its place as the major genre of our time,” she writes. “It may not be dead yet, but it will not long abide. No matter how well done, it seems to lack urgency. No matter how imaginative, it seems to lack originality.”

She concludes: “Perhaps what is wanted in our own dark anti-truth times, with all our blatant hypocrisy and the growing use of story as a means to distort and obscure reality, is a literature of personal history and reflection: direct, authentic, scrupulous about fact.”

You don’t have to follow her all the way, and start digging the novel’s grave, to sense that she is onto something. It has always been true: Being told about life, by a perceptive writer, can be as good as, if not better than, being told a story.

THE VULNERABLES | By Sigrid Nunez | Riverhead | 242 pp. | $28

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY CLEMENT PASCAL FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page C7.

**Load-Date:** November 2, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Democratic Senate Loss in Ohio Raises Bar for Sherrod Brown in 2024***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66X2-H381-JBG3-62W0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 20, 2022 Sunday 11:30 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1456 words

**Byline:** Trip Gabriel

**Highlight:** Tim Ryan’s loss to J. D. Vance is another reminder that Ohio is no longer a swing state. Can Mr. Brown, the Democratic incumbent, hold the seat in what’s shaping up as a crucial Senate election in 2024?

**Body**

Tim Ryan’s loss to J. D. Vance is another reminder that Ohio is no longer a swing state. Can Mr. Brown, the Democratic incumbent, hold the seat in what’s shaping up as a crucial Senate election in 2024?

Both John Fetterman of Pennsylvania and Tim Ryan of Ohio sought Senate seats this year as Democrats appealing to the ***working class***.

But the fates of Mr. Fetterman, now senator-elect, and Mr. Ryan, who decisively lost, illustrate how their two states, once politically conjoined, have taken dramatically divergent paths. While Pennsylvania is a battleground that in a good Democratic year votes blue, Ohio has all but fallen from the list of competitive states.

That is a troubling sign for Democrats who in two years must protect their narrow control of the Senate on a highly unfavorable map. In 2024, Democrats will defend Senate seats in red states that include Montana, West Virginia and Ohio.

With the victory of J.D. Vance over Mr. Ryan fresh in mind — a Republican triumph in broadly disappointing midterms for the party — Ohio Republicans this week were sharpening knives in anticipation of taking on Senator Sherrod Brown, the Democrat whose long-term credibility with blue-collar voters was a template for Mr. Ryan.

At the same time, some Republicans cautioned that Mr. Brown would be a more formidable opponent. One strategist, Jai Chabria, who was Mr. Vance’s chief campaign adviser, called Mr. Ryan “the zero-calorie Sherrod Brown.”

Mr. Brown [*said last week*](https://twitter.com/ReshadHudson/status/1592588672230391809?s=20&amp;t=lHDA3Ufdw4w09JWE3vnCLA) that he planned to seek a fourth term in 2024, though his comments were short of an announcement. If he follows through, his survival as a gruff-voiced champion of what he calls “the dignity of work” will be acutely tested.

“The state dynamics have changed,” said Bob Paduchik, the chairman of the Ohio Republican Party, [*at a postelection autopsy*](https://www.cleveland.com/news/2022/11/fresh-off-yet-another-loss-ohio-democrats-look-for-answers-with-sherrod-browns-2024-reelection-campaign-on-the-horizon.html) before the state Chamber of Commerce. “The Ohio Republican Party is a ***working-class***, conservative party. Sherrod has portrayed himself as a ***working-class*** Democrat, and there just aren’t many of those left around in Ohio.”

Mr. Brown, through a spokesman, declined to comment. His top political adviser, Justin Barasky, who also worked on Mr. Ryan’s race, acknowledged that “the national Democratic Party brand has suffered significantly with ***working-class*** voters,” including Black and Hispanic voters. But Mr. Barasky said that Ohio had not slipped entirely from Democrats’ grasp, like some other formerly competitive Midwest states.

“Ohio is not going the way of Missouri and Iowa, that’s why we have a Democratic senator, and they don’t,” he said. “But we’re not Pennsylvania anymore, and we’re not Wisconsin and we’re not Michigan.”

“Yes, Tim lost, and the governor’s race was a blowout, so it’s very simple to say, ‘Oh, man, Sherrod is in big trouble,’” he added. Yet, a detailed look at the results, he said, “leads you to believe Sherrod is in a relatively strong position.” He cited Mr. Ryan’s higher share of votes in most counties that Joseph R. Biden Jr. won in 2020, among other factors.

Once a battleground like those northern industrial neighbors, Ohio voted twice for former President Barack Obama before swinging hard to former President Donald J. Trump, who appealed to the cultural and economic grievances of white voters without college degrees.

This year, Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania all delivered strong results for Democrats. The party won the governorship of all three states, and Mr. Fetterman won his Senate race. Ohio’s Democratic candidate for governor, Nan Whaley, the former mayor of Dayton, lost by 25 percentage points to the Republican incumbent, Gov. Mike DeWine, who was not penalized for [*signing one of the nation’s most restrictive abortion bans*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/13/us/ohio-arrest-rape-abortion.html).

The contrast between Pennsylvania and Ohio seems especially jarring because both states held Senate races for open seats of retiring Republicans. While Mr. Fetterman won by 4.5 points — one of Democrats’ biggest midterm victories — Mr. Ryan, with a similar political persona, lost by 6.5 points.

The grandson of a steelworker, Mr. Ryan ran on an anti-China, pro-union message, telling voters if they wanted a culture war, “I’m not your guy.” Both he and Mr. Fetterman, who touted his years as mayor of a hard-hit steel town outside Pittsburgh, adopted the hooded sweatshirt as a proletarian uniform.

Northeast Ohio, which Mr. Ryan has represented in Congress for 20 years, was once the most Democratic area of the state, built on the power of organized labor when heavy industry dominated the economy. [*But Northeast Ohio has moved more to the right*](https://www.cnn.com/2022/10/26/opinions/ohio-us-senate-ryan-vance-meaning-sracic/index.html) than any part of the state.

Mahoning County, which includes Youngstown in Mr. Ryan’s district, not only voted for Mr. Vance, but also gave him a larger share of votes than what the county cast for Mr. Trump in 2020. It was the first time in nearly 50 years a Republican presidential candidate won Mahoning County.

The swing away from Democrats in Northeast Ohio gives some party strategists agita about Mr. Brown’s race.

“Youngstown should be the heart and soul of the Democratic brand — it’s not,” said Irene Lin, a Democratic strategist in Ohio. “Can Sherrod survive? I’m not sure.”

[*Ohio*](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/OH/PST045221) and [*Pennsylvania*](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/PA/PST045221) have many demographic similarities, including nearly identical percentages of Black and white residents and similar levels of educational attainment, according to the census.

But there are also differences that tilt the tables toward the G.O.P. in Ohio. The population of Pennsylvania’s major cities, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, which lean heavily Democratic, outnumbers Ohio’s similarly Democratic-leaning big cities, Columbus, Cleveland and Cincinnati.

Ohio has nothing comparable to the heavily populated suburban band outside Philadelphia, which has become strong Democratic terrain.

Democratic strategists argued that despite the demographic headwinds, Mr. Ryan outperformed expectations this year, improving by two points on Mr. Biden’s 2020 loss in Ohio. They also predicted Mr. Brown would be able to run a much more competitive race in 2024. He has a statewide brand and a history of defeating leading state Republicans in earlier Senate races, including Mr. DeWine in 2006 and Josh Mandel, a former state treasurer, in 2012.

Mr. Brown will also have an advantage that Mr. Ryan lacked: the all-but-certain support of millions of dollars from outside Democratic groups who want to protect the Ohio seat, after the same groups left Mr. Ryan on his own.

Democrats are hardly in full retreat in the state. In three races for the House of Representatives this year, the party’s candidates flipped a Cincinnati-based seat, held a Toledo-based district that Mr. Trump had carried and won the state’s most competitive race, an open seat in the Akron area.

To Republicans, Mr. Ryan lost because the reach-across-the-aisle persona he campaigned on — ducking the Democratic label and boasting of voting with Mr. Trump on trade — was belied by his overall record of support for Mr. Biden’s agenda and by [*some past statements*](https://twitter.com/PhilipWegmann/status/1567512847990591488?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1567512847990591488%7Ctwgr%5E243a9d5f0378fada352cfe638cf8adbba9a6cebc%7Ctwcon%5Es1_c10&amp;ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.foxnews.com%2Fpolitics%2Fohio-senate-democrat-nominee-tim-ryan-called-ban-gas-vehicles-2019)that aligned with the left.

“The theory of our case was that he was a fraud, was pretending to be something he wasn’t,” said Mr. Chabria, Mr. Vance’s chief strategist.

He predicted there would be many well-funded Republicans drawn to the Senate primary, sensing an opportunity to flip a seat. “Sherrod Brown is ripe for the picking,” he said. “I think that there’s a huge opportunity.”

Republicans in Ohio who are said to be exploring a run include Frank LaRose, the newly re-elected secretary of state; Mark Kvamme, a venture capitalist; and Matt Dolan, a co-owner of the Cleveland Guardians baseball team who finished third in this year’s G.O.P. Senate primary.

Scott Milburn, a Republican who was a top aide to former Gov. John Kasich of Ohio, said Mr. Vance’s seemingly comfortable win belied some weaknesses. Chiefly, his 6.5-point margin victory was far narrower than the double-digit victories of most other Republicans in statewide races this year.

Mr. Milburn said that if Republicans nominate a 2024 candidate with similar weaknesses — Mr. Vance was attacked as a carpetbagger and as an abortion hard-liner — Republicans will struggle against Mr. Brown, who has a demonstrated ability to connect with voters.

“Sherrod is an incredible retail politician,” Mr. Milburn said. “That guy can work a parade and make you think you’re the only one in it. I’ve run candidates in the same parades as him and seen it happen.”

PHOTOS: The Democratic Senate nominee Tim Ryan filled out his ballot with his son Brady on Nov. 8 in Warren, Ohio, left. A motorcycle ridden by a member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers at a Ryan event on Nov. 6 in Gahanna, Ohio, above. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRIAN KAISER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A17.

**Load-Date:** November 21, 2022

**End of Document**



[***The U.S. Lacks What Every Democracy Needs***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B47-9GP1-DXY4-X11S-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 17, 2024 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 22; GUEST ESSAY

**Length:** 1699 words

**Byline:** By Richard L. Hasen

**Body**

The history of voting in the United States shows the high cost of living with an old Constitution, unevenly enforced by a reluctant Supreme Court.

Unlike the constitutions of many other advanced democracies, the U.S. Constitution contains no affirmative right to vote. We have nothing like Section 3 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, providing that ''every citizen of Canada has the right to vote in an election of members of the House of Commons or of a legislative assembly and to be qualified for membership therein,'' or like Article 38 of the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany, which provides that when it comes to election of the Bundestag, ''any person who has attained the age of 18 shall be entitled to vote.''

As we enter yet another fraught election season, it's easy to miss that many problems we have with voting and elections in the United States can be traced to this fundamental constitutional defect. Our problems are only going to get worse until we get constitutional change.

The framers were skeptical of universal voting. The original U.S. Constitution provided for voting only for the House of Representatives, not for the Senate or the presidency, leaving voter qualifications for House elections to the states. Later amendments framed voting protections in the negative: If there's going to be an election, a state may not discriminate on the basis of race (15th Amendment), sex (19th Amendment) or status as an 18-to-20-year-old (26th Amendment).

Most expansions of voting rights in the United States have come from constitutional amendments and congressional action, not from courts. In fact, in Bush v. Gore, to give a relatively recent example, the Supreme Court reiterated that the Constitution does not guarantee citizens the right to vote for president and confirmed that states may take back the power to appoint presidential electors directly in future elections.

Some people think erroneously of the Supreme Court as a broad protector of voting rights, expanding them well beyond the text of the Constitution. Consider first the case of Sgt. Herbert N. Carrington, one of the lucky few whose right to vote the court protected. In 1946 he enlisted in the Army at age 18 in his home state, Alabama. When he was transferred in 1962 to White Sands, N.M., he moved with his family to nearby El Paso, Texas. Yet when he tried to register to vote in the Republican Party primary in Texas, he was surprised to learn he was ineligible. The state Constitution prohibited military members who were not Texas residents before joining the service from voting there.

Mr. Carrington filed a lawsuit against the state directly to the Texas Supreme Court in 1964, arguing, among other things, that his disenfranchisement violated the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment, a provision barring states from denying ''any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.'' When the case made it to the U.S. Supreme Court, Texas defended its Constitution, contending that it had ''a legitimate interest in immunizing its elections from the concentrated balloting of military personnel, whose collective voice may overwhelm a small local civilian community.''

The Supreme Court disagreed, striking down the Texas provision, in the 1965 case Carrington v. Rash. The right to vote, the court wrote in a key part of its 7-to-1 opinion, ''cannot constitutionally be obliterated because of a fear of the political views of a particular group of bona fide residents.'' Justice John Marshall Harlan, dissenting alone, argued that the equal protection clause was ''not intended to touch state electoral matters.''

It is hard to overstate how unusual it was for Mr. Carrington to get the Supreme Court to strike down his disenfranchisement. His lawsuit came during the only period in the 235-year history of the Supreme Court when it was hospitable to broad constitutional voting rights claims. The court, under Chief Justice Earl Warren, saw a broad expansion of voting rights in the 1960s, thanks mainly to its capacious reading of the equal protection clause.

Mr. Carrington fared better than many others who had brought their claims of disenfranchisement to the Supreme Court, including most importantly Virginia Minor and Jackson W. Giles. Their cases perpetuated the disenfranchisement of millions of women and African American voters despite constitutional amendments that appeared to protect their rights.

Ms. Minor was a white Missouri woman who argued to the Supreme Court in 1874 that the 14th Amendment gave her the right to vote as a citizen that Missouri denied because of her sex. The all-male Supreme Cour held, in Minor v. Happersett, that voting was a matter of state law, not a privilege or immunity of citizenship protected by the U.S. Constitution.

Mr. Giles was a Black man from Alabama who argued to the court in 1903 that his state was unconstitutionally denying him the right to vote because he was Black, despite the passage of the 15th Amendment, ratified in the wake of the Civil War, barring race discrimination in voting. In Giles v. Harris, a majority of the justices on the all-white Supreme Court held it could not grant relief to Mr. Giles, in part because it would be impossible for courts to enforce a rule requiring Alabama to register African American voters and allow them to vote.

It was not until the passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920 that women gained the right to vote nationally. And it was not until the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965 -- passed under Congress's power to enforce the 15th Amendment -- that the federal government began to enfranchise African American and other minority voters effectively. More recently, in its 2013 ruling in Shelby County v. Holder, the Supreme Court limited Congress's ability to pass strong voting laws like the preclearance section of the Voting Rights Act.

Since the passage of the 15th Amendment, voting rights proponents have argued that the lack of an affirmative right to vote in the Constitution is a fatal flaw, a point I first acknowledged on these pages in 2020. Since then, it's become clear that three American voting pathologies have emerged from the U.S. Constitution's lack of an affirmative right to vote.

First, states sometimes limit the franchise or put barriers in front of eligible voters, like onerous residency requirements or strict voter identification laws. Occasionally that effort is ideological, as when Texas worried about military voters swamping the power of longtime local residents. Often, voting restrictions are an effort to shape the universe of those who vote. Although both parties have played this game over time, today it is mostly Republican-led states that seek to limit the franchise, out of a belief that lower turnout, especially among those they expect to vote for Democrats, helps Republicans.

That belief about overall turnout is apparently false. In the most comprehensive study of the question of the relationship between voter turnout and partisan outcomes, the political scientists Daron Shaw and John Petrocik debunked the claim that low turnout necessarily helps Republicans and hurts Democrats.

Furthermore, trying to selectively lower turnout among likely Democratic voters can backfire. The past few elections demonstrated that discouraging Republican voters from voting early or by mail can hurt their electoral chances. Some Republican leaders have encouraged easier access to voting, recognizing that making voting harder can be self-defeating, especially with the Republican Party in transition and making new appeals to poorer, ***working-class*** voters. If enough Republicans could be persuaded that increasing turnout is in their interest or at least that increased turnout is not necessarily harmful, they might want to join with Democrats, who generally want to make voting easier, to support an amendment guaranteeing the right to vote.

The second pathology is an explosion of election litigation and uncertainty about election rules. Each year states and localities pass new voting rules, and those voting rules often get challenged in court, with mixed success. The amount of election litigation has nearly tripled since the disputed 2000 election. An affirmative right to vote in the Constitution could de-escalate the voting wars and decrease the amount of election litigation by simultaneously protecting voter access and ensuring election integrity.

An amendment would have to be written clearly enough that it would be hard for the Supreme Court to ignore its commands (and continue to thwart voter protections), and it would have to enhance Congress's powers to protect voters if the Supreme Court continued to resist. A system of automatic voter registration coupled with a means of identifying all voters in the country could minimize the need for litigation, ensure that all eligible voters would be able to cast a valid vote and deter election fraud by those few who exploit the current system. And it would do so without requiring a federal takeover of the election process.

The third pathology is the risk of election subversion. An explicit guarantee of the right to vote for president would moot any attempt to get state legislatures to override the voters' choice for president through the appointment of alternative slates of electors, as Donald Trump and his allies tried to do after the 2020 election. Rules that guarantee not only the right to vote but also the right to have that vote fairly and accurately counted would provide a basis for going after election officials who sought to disrupt the integrity of election systems. Leaks of voting system software or an administrator's lack of transparency in counting ballots could become constitutional violations.

It might seem anachronistic today that a conservative state like Texas would seek to disenfranchise military voters. But the Carrington example shows that no community's voting rights are safe from the whims of state legislatures and often have depended on the grace of the courts. It's an odd way to run a republic in which citizens are supposed to have an equal right to vote.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/opinion/voting-rights-constitution-28th-amendment.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/opinion/voting-rights-constitution-28th-amendment.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY H. ARMSTRONG ROBERTS/GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page A22.

**Load-Date:** January 17, 2024

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[***One Thing Keeping Democrats Up at Night; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BKN-P1M1-DXY4-X005-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 20, 2024 Wednesday 18:13 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 2870 words

**Byline:** Thomas B. Edsall Thomas B. Edsall has been a contributor to the Times Opinion section since 2011. His column on strategic and demographic trends in American politics appears every Wednesday. He previously covered politics for The Washington Post.

**Highlight:** There is no question that a substantial number of minority voters are shifting to the right, but is it a party realignment?

**Body**

The composition of the minority electorate in the United States is rapidly changing. This constituency was once dominated by Black voters loyal to the Democratic Party. Now, African American clout has been eclipsed or at least threatened by Hispanic, Asian American and other nonwhite voters whose less firm loyalty to the Democratic Party lowers the party’s Election Day margins among people of color overall.

This multiracial, multiethnic population constitutes one-third of the electorate, according to an article published by the Center for Politics at the University of Virginia, “[*The Transformation of the American Electorate,*](https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/the-transformation-of-the-american-electorate/)” which was written by Alan Abramowitz, a political scientist at Emory.

“Eight months out from the election, polls are still suggesting 2024 will be the largest racial realignment since the Civil Rights Act was passed,” Adam Carlson, a data analyst, [*posted*](https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/the-transformation-of-the-american-electorate/) on X (formerly Twitter) on March 5.

Three days later, [*John Burn-Murdoch*](https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/the-transformation-of-the-american-electorate/), the chief data reporter for The Financial Times, contended in “[*American Politics Is Undergoing a Racial Realignment*](https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/the-transformation-of-the-american-electorate/)” that

many of America’s nonwhite voters have long held much more conservative views than their voting patterns would suggest. The migration we’re seeing today is not so much natural Democrats becoming disillusioned but natural Republicans realizing they’ve been voting for the wrong party.

On March 15, the polling expert Nate Silver, citing Burn-Murdoch’s racial realignment article, posted “[*Democrats Are Hemorrhaging Support With Voters of Color*](https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/the-transformation-of-the-american-electorate/)” on his Substack.

These claims of a racial realignment in partisan politics have not gone unchallenged.

[*Brian Schaffner*](https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/the-transformation-of-the-american-electorate/), a political scientist at Tufts who oversees data collection at the [*Cooperative Election Study*](https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/the-transformation-of-the-american-electorate/), described his views in an email:

What I see is some fluctuation over the past two decades coinciding with unique presidential candidates, no major realignment. A lot of what people are prognosticating about is something that current polls suggest might happen in November, but at this point I don’t think we can say that there has been any kind of major shift yet.

Along similar lines, [*Jacob Grumbach*](https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/the-transformation-of-the-american-electorate/), a political scientist at the University of Washington, replied by email to my inquiry about racial realignment:

The overall takeaway is that we’ve seen some Latino movement toward Trump in some parts of the country and potentially some Asian American movement as well. It’s an important shift, but it’s uncertain how durable it is, and it’s not unseen in earlier periods, such as George W. Bush in 2004.

There was universal agreement among those I contacted that recent polling data is problematic for the Biden campaign, which is reflected in the [*RealClearPolitics analysis*](https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/the-transformation-of-the-american-electorate/) of the 13 most recent surveys, which, in aggregate, give Trump a 1.7 percentage point lead over Biden, 47.2 to 45.5.

The debate is over whether the adverse trends for Democrats are long lasting and structural or are vacillations unique to the current campaign.

Let’s take a look at the conflicting evidence.

Compare some of the results of the March 10 to 12 [*Economist/YouGov poll*](https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/the-transformation-of-the-american-electorate/) of 1,559 adults with those in the March 9 to 12 [*Civiqs/Daily Kos survey*](https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/the-transformation-of-the-american-electorate/) of 1,324 registered voters.

YouGov found Biden leading Trump 68 to 15 percent among Black Americans, 47 to 36 among Hispanic Americans and 56 to 29 among 18-to-29-year-olds. Civiqs found much higher levels of support for Biden among Black people (79 to 8) and Hispanics (71 to 17), but among 18-to-34-year-olds in the Civiqs survey, Trump had a substantial lead (49 to 36) over Biden.

Carlson has [*aggregated polling trends for subgroups*](https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/the-transformation-of-the-american-electorate/) by combining data collected in February 2024 from 10 polling firms to get a sample size of 11,288 people, including 1,134 Black voters, 1,161 Hispanic voters and 1,003 young voters ages 18 to 29.

The trends in these subgroups provide little comfort to the Biden campaign.

Among Black voters, Biden led Trump by 55 points (73 to 18), far less than his 83-point margin in 2020. Among Hispanics, Biden led by six points (48 to 42), compared with a 24-point advantage in 2020. Among 18-to-29-year-olds, Biden led by eight points (50 to 42) compared with 24 points in 2020.

Despite the erosion of Black, Hispanic and youth support since 2020, Biden remained competitive in Carlson’s data compilation — just two points behind Trump (47 to 45) among all respondents. This was possible because Biden made modest gains among very large subgroups: 1.3 points among 2,014 white college graduates, 0.6 point among 2,103 white non-college grads, four points among 923 voters ages 50 to 64, 1.8 points among the 2,208 voters 65 or older.

In an email, Carlson voiced caution about drawing conclusions based on the aggregated polling data:

We’ve seen zero evidence in recent election results that young voters and Black voters are abandoning voting for Democrats, so all of this is speculation based on polling. Among Latinos the evidence is a bit more mixed, but there’s more electoral evidence from 2020 and some from 2022 that they could be moving right.

Carlson, however, pointed to additional polling trends daunting to Democratic prospects.

Gallup [*reported*](https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/the-transformation-of-the-american-electorate/) on Feb. 7 that

in 2020 Black voters self-identified as +66 Democratic, and in 2023 they’re at +47. They find Hispanics at +12 Democratic now — an all-time low since 2011, but that decline has been more gradual. They’re also seeing a Democratic decline among age 18-29-year-olds (+21 in 2020 to +8 in 2023).

I asked Carlson how he could justify using “realignment” to describe what’s been happening, since that suggests a full-scale partisan conversion of the country or of a major constituency, as in the 1932-36 realignment that saw the electorate go from majority Republican to majority Democratic or the post-civil-rights realignment that saw the white South go from majority Democratic to majority Republican.

Carlson responded:

If what we’re seeing in recent polls regarding shifts among young, Black and Latino voters ends up happening in November, in my view “realignment” is the right term. It won’t be like 1932 or 1964, where the parties essentially swapped coalitions for the New Deal and civil rights, respectively.

Essentially it would be a continuation of the trends we saw in 2020 among Latinos, a sizable but not earth-shattering shift among Black voters (though even in the most pessimistic assessments Biden will still win at least 75 percent of Black voters) and a shift to roughly even among younger voters from a strong Dem advantage.

Carlson had this caveat: “For what it’s worth, I am skeptical that these swings will be this large once all is said and done in November, but that’s neither provable nor falsifiable until then.”

[*Data*](https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/the-transformation-of-the-american-electorate/) from the Cooperative Election Study, which conducts surveys of more than 50,000 voters every election cycle, does not support the case for a realignment of any major voting bloc.

The percentage of Black voters choosing Democratic House candidates does not reveal a consistent downward trend that would signal a slow-motion realignment. Instead, this measure of Black Democratic support shifts back and forth from lows of around 88 percent in 2010, 2016 and 2022 and highs of around 93 percent in 2008, 2012 and 2018.

Asian American support for Democratic House candidates fell from 75.4 percent in 2016 to 64.7 percent in 2022, but the 2022 level of support was higher than it was in the elections of 2008, 2010, 2012 and 2014.

Hispanic support for Democratic House candidates fell from a high of 71.4 in 2018 to 59.6 percent in 2022, but the 2022 percentage was very similar to the margins from 2008 to 2012.

Perhaps most significantly, more detailed election study data breaking down voting trends by race, ethnicity and ideology shows that the defections of Black and Hispanic voters from the Democratic Party to the Republican Party are heavily concentrated among those who describe themselves as conservative.

An estimated 16 percent of Black voters are conservative, and from 2012, when Barack Obama was at the top of the Democratic ticket, to 2022, their level of support for Democratic House candidates fell from 84.2 to 47.7 percent.

Some 32 percent of Hispanic voters identify themselves as conservative. From 2016 to 2022, their support for Democratic House candidates fell from 33.7 to 13.4 percent.

These trends among ideologically conservative minorities lend credence to Burn-Murdoch’s [*contention*](https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/the-transformation-of-the-american-electorate/) that

many of America’s nonwhite voters have long held much more conservative views than their voting patterns would suggest. The migration we’re seeing today is not so much natural Democrats becoming disillusioned but natural Republicans realizing they’ve been voting for the wrong party.

[*Matthew Blackwell*](https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/the-transformation-of-the-american-electorate/), a political scientist at Harvard, contended that the trend Burn-Murdoch cited is less consequential than it appears to be:

Burn-Murdoch is correct in the column that Black conservatives are increasingly voting for Republicans, but this also misses how the Black electorate has changed since the Obama era.

In 2014, 25 percent of Black voters reported themselves as “conservative” or “very conservative,” and 31 percent reported themselves as “liberal” or “very liberal.” In 2020, only 17 percent of Black voters put themselves in the conservative categories, and 41 percent put themselves into the liberal categories.

So while the connection between ideology and voting has become stronger for Black voters over the last 10 years, the overall voting rate has not changed nearly as much.

There is evidence that a substantial share of Black, Hispanic and other voters from multiracial, multiethnic backgrounds oppose some elements of the Democrats’ liberal social and cultural agenda.

A Jan. 22 to 27 YouGov survey, for example, asked whether it was “morally acceptable or wrong to have a sexual relationship with someone of the same gender?” Forty-four percent of Black voters answered “morally wrong,” and 17 percent said “morally acceptable.”

The same question was posed on the issue of identifying “with a gender different from the gender assigned at birth.” A plurality of Black voters said it was morally wrong, 39 to 13 percent, and Hispanics agreed, 30 to 15 percent.

By even larger margins, Black (51 to 17 percent) and Hispanic (49 to 27) respondents opposed policies that allow transgender athletes to play on sports teams that match their gender identity rather than their sex assigned at birth.

These numbers suggest that some aspects of Democratic liberal orthodoxy contribute to the exodus of conservative minorities from the party.

[*Marc Hetherington*](https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/the-transformation-of-the-american-electorate/), a political scientist at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, expanded on this line of analysis in an email:

Racial and ethnic minorities are out of step with white Democrats in their worldviews. The former are much more tradition-minded and authority-minded than the latter. White Democrats were enthusiastic about Sanders and Warren, who wanted to blow up the system. Minority Democrats were enthusiastic about Clinton and Biden, whose programs tended to work within the present system.

I suspect this divide has implications for Black and Hispanic men, in particular. For example, the source of traditional authority over generations has been men. However, Democratic leaders argue for greater gender equality, along with equality for all sorts for groups that have generally occupied lower rungs on the societal ladder. This is bound not to sit well with groups that have traditionally held power and influence.

In an email responding to my questions about minority voting, [*Emily West*](https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/the-transformation-of-the-american-electorate/), a political scientist at the University of Pittsburgh, argued that “nonwhite Americans who previously may have voted Democrat for identity-based reasons are increasingly likely to vote more sincerely according to their conservative ideology or policy preference and thus vote Republican.”

West, [*Bernard L. Fraga*](https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/the-transformation-of-the-american-electorate/) and [*Yamil R. Velez*](https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/the-transformation-of-the-american-electorate/), political scientists at Emory and Columbia, recently published “[*Reversion to the Mean, or Their Version of the Dream? Latino Voting in an Age of Populism*](https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/the-transformation-of-the-american-electorate/),” in which they maintained that there have been

significant pro-Trump shifts among ***working-class*** Latinos and modest evidence of a pro-Trump shift among newly engaged U.S.-born Latino children of immigrants and Catholic Latinos. These findings, coupled with an analysis of the 2022 C.E.S., point to a more durable Republican shift than currently assumed.

More specifically, Fraga, Velez and West showed that the strongest shift to Trump was among Latinos holding conservative views on crime and punishment, holding restrictionist beliefs on immigration, having the lowest education levels and making the least money.

These shifts do not, in the researchers’ view, constitute a realignment.

“Well over a majority of Latinos still support Democrats, so I hesitate to call it a realignment, but there are segments of the population that have grown more fond of the G.O.P. over time,” Velez wrote in an email elaborating on the paper. “There is much stronger evidence that some segments of the Latino population such as conservatives have shifted toward the G.O.P. and will stay there, but I’m skeptical that this is a broad-based racial realignment.”

Fraga also replied by email to my inquiry: “There is, indeed, a shift toward Republicans among voters of color, but I would characterize it less as a realignment and more a sort of ideological sorting, where the relatively small population of conservative voters of color are now voting for the party more closely aligned with their ideological preferences.”

The three authors concluded their paper by noting that

the Republican gains we describe align with two key processes shaping American politics: ideological sorting and educational polarization. Unlike the general population, these mechanisms have been notably delayed among Latino voters.

[*Eric Schickler*](https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/the-transformation-of-the-american-electorate/), a Berkeley political scientist and the author of the 2016 book “[*Racial Realignment: The Transformation of American Liberalism, 1932-1965*](https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/the-transformation-of-the-american-electorate/),” contended by email that “it is premature to say that there is a realignment among nonwhite voters, but the survey results suggest some erosion in Democratic support that is clearly worrisome for the party heading into 2024.”

The polling data “certainly suggests the possibility that something substantial could be happening,” Schickler continued. “I do not think one can just dismiss the evidence that Biden and the Democrats’ numbers with respect to nonwhite voters have been concerning for several months.”

[*Kirill Zhirkov*](https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/the-transformation-of-the-american-electorate/), a political scientist at the University of Virginia, suggested in an email that one of the factors driving Latinos from the Democratic Party could be Hispanic prejudice against African Americans.

The image of the Democrats as a Black political party, what Zhirkov called “the Democrats-Black schema” has the same effect “among Latinos and Asians,” Zhirkov wrote. “It is possible that as Latinos and Asians assimilate in the United States, some of them also (at least partially) acquire anti-Black prejudice as one of the organizing principles of anti-progressive politics.”

In support of his claim, Zhirkov cited his 2022 paper written with [*Nicholas Valentino*](https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/the-transformation-of-the-american-electorate/), a political scientist at the University of Michigan, “[*The Origins and Consequences of Racialized Schemas About U.S. Parties*](https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/the-transformation-of-the-american-electorate/),” and a 2016 paper, “[*The Political Consequences of Latino Prejudice Against Blacks*](https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/the-transformation-of-the-american-electorate/)” by [*Yanna Krupnikov*](https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/the-transformation-of-the-american-electorate/), a professor of communication at the University of Michigan, and [*Spencer Piston*](https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/the-transformation-of-the-american-electorate/), a political scientist at Boston University.

The conflict between competing analyses of recent voting and polling trends won’t be resolved until the votes are counted after Election Day, Nov. 5.

In the meantime, what can be made of the data currently available?

There is not yet adequate evidence to proclaim a racial or minority voting realignment. There may be significant and consequential defections from the Democratic Party among Black, Hispanic and Asian Americans, but it is very unlikely that any of these constituencies will cast a majority of their votes or anything close to it for Donald Trump.

It is also possible that the Biden campaign could make up for the losses it incurs among minority voters with improved margins among white liberals and moderates angered by the [*Supreme Court’s Dobbs decision*](https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/the-transformation-of-the-american-electorate/) ending women’s constitutional right to abortion and by the litany of stories describing the inability of women in red states to get medically necessary abortions.

Even so, Biden has his work cut out for him in the coming months. Voting data and polling data are in conflict, which confounds analysis — tiny shifts among white voters can still have an outsize impact. Biden knows he has to raise both the level of his support and the level of turnout among America’s minority voters if Democrats are going to have a decent chance of beating Trump.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/the-transformation-of-the-american-electorate/) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/the-transformation-of-the-american-electorate/). And here&#39;s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/the-transformation-of-the-american-electorate/).

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**Load-Date:** March 20, 2024

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[***The U.S. Lacks What Every Democracy Needs; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B41-PWS1-JBG3-600R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 16, 2024 Tuesday 15:37 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1707 words

**Byline:** Richard L. Hasen

**Highlight:** We should amend the Constitution to grant an affirmative right to vote.

**Body**

The history of voting in the United States shows the high cost of living with an old Constitution, unevenly enforced by a reluctant Supreme Court.

Unlike the constitutions of many other advanced democracies, the U.S. Constitution contains no affirmative right to vote. We have nothing like [*Section 3*](https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/how-rights-protected/guide-canadian-charter-rights-freedoms.html) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, providing that “every citizen of Canada has the right to vote in an election of members of the House of Commons or of a legislative assembly and to be qualified for membership therein,” or like [*Article 38*](https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_gg/englisch_gg.html#p0185) of the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany, which provides that when it comes to election of the Bundestag, “any person who has attained the age of 18 shall be entitled to vote.”

As we enter yet another fraught election season, it’s easy to miss that many problems we have with voting and elections in the United States can be traced to this fundamental constitutional defect. Our problems are only going to get worse until we get constitutional change.

The framers were skeptical of universal voting. The original U.S. Constitution provided for voting only for the House of Representatives, not for the Senate or the presidency, leaving voter qualifications for House elections to the states. Later amendments framed voting protections in the negative: If there’s going to be an election, a state may not discriminate on the basis of race (15th Amendment), sex (19th Amendment) or status as an 18-to-20-year-old (26th Amendment).

Most expansions of voting rights in the United States have come from constitutional amendments and congressional action, not from courts. In fact, in [*Bush v. Gore*](https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/531/98/case.pdf), to give a relatively recent example, the Supreme Court reiterated that the Constitution does not guarantee citizens the right to vote for president and confirmed that states may take back the power to appoint presidential electors directly in future elections.

Some people think erroneously of the Supreme Court as a broad protector of voting rights, expanding them well beyond the text of the Constitution. Consider first the case of Sgt. Herbert N. Carrington, one of the lucky few whose right to vote the court protected. In 1946 he enlisted in the Army at age 18 in his home state, Alabama. When he was transferred in 1962 to White Sands, N.M., he moved with his family to nearby El Paso, Texas. Yet when he tried to register to vote in the Republican Party primary in Texas, he was surprised to learn he was ineligible. The state Constitution prohibited military members who were not Texas residents before joining the service from voting there.

Mr. Carrington filed a lawsuit against the state directly to the Texas Supreme Court in 1964, arguing, among other things, that his disenfranchisement violated the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment, a provision barring states from denying “any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.” When the case made it to the U.S. Supreme Court, Texas defended its Constitution, contending that it had “a legitimate interest in immunizing its elections from the concentrated balloting of military personnel, whose collective voice may overwhelm a small local civilian community.”

The Supreme Court disagreed, striking down the Texas provision, in the 1965 case [*Carrington v. Rash*](https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/380/89/#:~:text=Held%3A%20A%20State%20can%20impose,member%20of%20the%20armed%20services.). The right to vote, the court wrote in a key part of its 7-to-1 opinion, “cannot constitutionally be obliterated because of a fear of the political views of a particular group of bona fide residents.” Justice John Marshall Harlan, dissenting alone, argued that the equal protection clause was “not intended to touch state electoral matters.”

It is hard to overstate how unusual it was for Mr. Carrington to get the Supreme Court to strike down his disenfranchisement. His lawsuit came during the only period in the 235-year history of the Supreme Court when it was hospitable to broad constitutional voting rights claims. The court, under Chief Justice Earl Warren, saw a broad expansion of voting rights in the 1960s, thanks mainly to its capacious reading of the equal protection clause.

Mr. Carrington fared better than many others who had brought their claims of disenfranchisement to the Supreme Court, including most importantly Virginia Minor and Jackson W. Giles. Their cases perpetuated the disenfranchisement of millions of women and African American voters despite constitutional amendments that appeared to protect their rights.

Ms. Minor was a white Missouri woman who argued to the Supreme Court in 1874 that the 14th Amendment gave her the right to vote as a citizen that Missouri denied because of her sex. The all-male Supreme Cour held, in [*Minor v. Happersett*](https://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/88/162), that voting was a matter of state law, not a privilege or immunity of citizenship protected by the U.S. Constitution.

Mr. Giles was a Black man from Alabama who argued to the court in 1903 that his state was unconstitutionally denying him the right to vote because he was Black, despite the passage of the 15th Amendment, ratified in the wake of the Civil War, barring race discrimination in voting. In [*Giles v. Harris*](https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/189/475/), a majority of the justices on the all-white Supreme Court held it could not grant relief to Mr. Giles, in part because it would be impossible for courts to enforce a rule requiring Alabama to register African American voters and allow them to vote.

It was not until the passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920 that women gained the right to vote nationally. And it was not until the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965 — passed under Congress’s power to enforce the 15th Amendment — that the federal government began to enfranchise African American and other minority voters effectively. More recently, in its 2013 ruling in [*Shelby County v. Holder*](https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/570/529/), the Supreme Court limited Congress’s ability to pass strong voting laws like the preclearance section of the Voting Rights Act.

Since the passage of the 15th Amendment, voting rights proponents have argued that the lack of an affirmative right to vote in the Constitution is a fatal flaw, a point I first [*acknowledged on these pages*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/29/opinion/sunday/voting-rights.html) in 2020. Since then, it’s become clear that three American voting pathologies have emerged from the U.S. Constitution’s lack of an affirmative right to vote.

First, states sometimes limit the franchise or put barriers in front of eligible voters, like onerous residency requirements or strict voter identification laws. Occasionally that effort is ideological, as when Texas worried about military voters swamping the power of longtime local residents. Often, voting restrictions are an effort to shape the universe of those who vote. Although both parties have played this game over time, today it is mostly Republican-led states that seek to limit the franchise, out of a belief that lower turnout, especially among those they expect to vote for Democrats, helps Republicans.

That belief about overall turnout is apparently false. In the most comprehensive study of the question of the relationship between voter turnout and partisan outcomes, the political scientists Daron Shaw and John Petrocik [*debunked*](https://global.oup.com/academic/product/the-turnout-myth-9780190089450) the claim that low turnout necessarily helps Republicans and hurts Democrats.

Furthermore, trying to selectively lower turnout among likely Democratic voters can backfire. The past few elections demonstrated that discouraging Republican voters from voting early or by mail can hurt their electoral chances. [*Some Republican leaders*](https://www.wkyt.com/2023/11/09/ky-secretary-state-seeking-better-election-funding-early-voting-expansion-second-term/) have encouraged easier access to voting, recognizing that making voting harder can be self-defeating, especially with the Republican Party in transition and making new appeals to poorer, ***working-class*** voters. If enough Republicans could be persuaded that increasing turnout is in their interest or at least that increased turnout is not necessarily harmful, they might want to join with Democrats, who generally want to make voting easier, to support an amendment guaranteeing the right to vote.

The second pathology is an explosion of election litigation and uncertainty about election rules. Each year states and localities pass new voting rules, and those voting rules often get challenged in court, with mixed success. The amount of election litigation has [*nearly tripled*](https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/epdf/10.1089/elj.2021.0050) since the disputed 2000 election. An affirmative right to vote in the Constitution could de-escalate the voting wars and decrease the amount of election litigation by simultaneously protecting voter access and ensuring election integrity.

An amendment would have to be written clearly enough that it would be hard for the Supreme Court to ignore its commands (and continue to thwart voter protections), and it would have to enhance Congress’s powers to protect voters if the Supreme Court continued to resist. A system of automatic voter registration coupled with a means of identifying all voters in the country could minimize the need for litigation, ensure that all eligible voters would be able to cast a valid vote and deter election fraud by those few who exploit the current system. And it would do so without requiring a federal takeover of the election process.

The third pathology is the risk of election subversion. An explicit guarantee of the right to vote for president would moot any attempt to get state legislatures to override the voters’ choice for president through the appointment of alternative slates of electors, as Donald Trump and his allies tried to do after the 2020 election. Rules that guarantee not only the right to vote but also the right to have that vote fairly and accurately counted would provide a basis for going after election officials who sought to disrupt the integrity of election systems. Leaks of voting system software or an administrator’s lack of transparency in counting ballots could become constitutional violations.

It might seem anachronistic today that a conservative state like Texas would seek to disenfranchise military voters. But the Carrington example shows that no community’s voting rights are safe from the whims of state legislatures and often have depended on the grace of the courts. It’s an odd way to run a republic in which citizens are supposed to have an equal right to vote.

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY H. ARMSTRONG ROBERTS/GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page A22.

**Load-Date:** January 17, 2024

**End of Document**



[***She's Still Creating Art at Full Emotional Volume***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69J7-BBR1-JBG3-602R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 3, 2023 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 2078 words

**Byline:** By Nancy Hass

**Body**

Tracey Emin carried around a giant tote decades before enormous handbags were fashionable. Back then, in the 1990s, when she was emerging as a gale-like force in a loosely affiliated group that came to be known as the Young British Artists, people often asked her -- journalists, fans on London streets -- What do you keep in there? She says the real answer was usually a sketch pad, her daily ration of three packs of Marlboro Lights, six Stella Artois beers and a fifth of brandy, but it was easier to say she needed a bag big enough to haul all her insecurities.

''Ironic now, thinking about that, right?'' she says, in her soft, ***working-class***-accent, on a chilly afternoon, as she tries to find a comfortable position on a sofa in her recently renovated townhouse on Fitzroy Square, a genteel, central-London pocket that was once home to both Virginia Woolf and George Bernard Shaw. She reaches into the large canvas carryall at her feet to pull out a plastic pouch of urine, which is connected under her loose cotton shift by a long tube to a stoma in her abdomen. She waves it slightly, a white flag, maybe, though because this is Emin, surrender has never been an option. ''Now, what I have in there is a bag of piss.''

Three years ago, at age 56, in the thick of the pandemic, she went to her gynecologist because she had fallen in love with a New York-based collector and critic, and, after 10 years of celibacy, was considering penetrative sex. Instead, she received a diagnosis of very aggressive bladder cancer and days later, had radical surgery to remove that organ as well as her uterus, her ureter, some of her colon, a slew of lymph nodes and half her vagina. ''I made them leave my clitoris,'' she says.

On Nov. 4, her first New York solo show in seven years, ''Tracey Emin: Lovers Grave,'' is set to open at the new Upper East Side outpost of White Cube, the London-based international gallery that has always represented her, and despite the pressures of that and her health, she seems at rueful peace. Her equanimity is unsurprising: surviving intense turmoil -- that which has been randomly doled out as well as that of her own creation -- is what Emin does best, what she's always done. Only Damien Hirst has had more fame among living British artists, but despite critics lashing Hirst and Emin together as the Y.B.A.s (along with Sarah Lucas, Gary Hume and several others), his work is a depersonalized mélange of dead animals floating in formaldehyde, spin art, a bejeweled skull and multicolor dots. Emin's oeuvre has only ever orbited one thing: herself, in her many mournful, voluptuous, warty, wild and furious incarnations.

In paintings, installations, quilts, monoprints, films, photographs, bronzes, neons and reams of text, the membrane between her work and her life has been not merely porous, but nonexistent. From her ragged childhood and dangerous underage sex with adult men in the bedraggled streets of seaside Margate, 90 minutes by train east of London, stints of homelessness, rapes (one at 13), two abortions, and now her illness, her traumas and thorny romantic entanglements are writ loud in her art.

The early installations that seared her into the public imagination were ''Everyone I Have Ever Slept With 1963-1995,'' a tent within which she had embroidered the 102 names of lovers, family members and two numbered aborted fetuses -- part of the seminal 1997 ''Sensation'' show in London -- and ''My Bed'' (1998), a recreation of her life after a post-breakup psychological breakdown, complete with filthy sheets, empty vodka bottles and underwear smeared in menstrual blood, but her corpus over the decades has been varied, all of it executed at full emotional volume.

Over the years, her public persona often overshadowed her prodigious output, especially in Britain, where she was stalked by rapacious tabloids. Critics carped about her solipsistic exhibitionism, the times she fell out of a taxi drunk, how she sacrificed credibility by becoming a muse for the clothing designer Vivienne Westwood (a notion that in our era of boundaryless collaborations between artists and the fashion world seems quaint). Some even speculated that her debauched life was a meta-gag, a performance of self.

In that pre-#MeToo world, her rage over her sexual abuse and honesty about her abortions seemed to strike them as, well, a bit dreary, or at least repetitive. When they did look at the paintings -- spidery nudes, often couples entwined amid or atop slashes of vivid abstraction -- some dismissed them as derivative of her acknowledged heroes, Egon Schiele and Edvard Munch.

It rankled some critics that she was volcanically successful, with collectors including Madonna and Elton John, and Tate eagerly acquiring her work. If she was going to make her art her life and her life her art, critics reasoned, wasn't it fair to critique the way she behaved? When ''Everyone I Have Ever Slept With'' was incinerated in a 2004 warehouse fire, with other important works owned by the Y.B.A. patron Charles Saatchi, there was a geyser of schadenfreude, to which she responded with her hurt stripped bare: ''They laugh at a disaster like a fire. It is just not fair and it's not funny and it's not polite and it's bad manners.''

Through it all, the New York art world seemed confused by her, and museum curators here largely ignored her. (One of the few Emins owned by the Museum of Modern Art is a series she collaborated on with Louise Bourgeois.) She never seemed a comfortable fit at her New York gallery, Lehmann Maupin, with which she parted ways in 2017.

''In England, she and the Y.B.A.s were part of the DNA, part of the post-Thatcher revolution, and their growth was incredibly meaningful,'' says Jay Jopling, founder of White Cube, in whose tiny original Duke Street gallery many of the group first showed. But when Tracey was shown in the U.S. in the early 2010s, ''she was on the cusp of returning to a more classical practice,'' he said. ''No one quite knew whether to regard her as a conceptual artist or a painter and sculptor.''

But there often was also a whiff of misogyny in reviews of a woman who depicted herself legs open, who asked in pink neon ''Is Anal Sex Legal?'' and who spelled out on a 6 by 8.5 foot appliqué blanket I DO NOT EXPECT TO BE A MOTHER BUT I DO EXPECT TO DIE ALONE. And then there was the issue of class, the thrumming subtext of her work and her life. Forever the central struggle of British society, its complexities never have resonated in the U.S. the way race does. In 2009, two years after Emin represented Britain at the Venice Biennale, Nancy Spector, then the chief curator of the Guggenheim Museum, dismissed her in The New York Times as ''having a lot in common with the sort of reality television that came out of Great Britain.''

But the world has changed, as has she. In person she remains alternately gentle and fierce, self-loving and self-loathing, but her famed restlessness seems subtly becalmed. Cancer and age have softened her, she says. She quit drinking two days before her surgery, which ''has changed me inside and out.'' The romantic relationship that led to her diagnosis has endured.

Still, one thing remains: She continues to create at a furious pace. She didn't mind not being able to work as she recovered -- her ''barbed-wire variety'' stitches made it hard even to sit up -- because she had been working so assiduously before her diagnosis, as though her body knew it would soon be unable to, she says. Emin is now painting and sculpting almost exclusively. Except for her creative director, Harry Weller, 32, who has been with her since he was 18 and often stands near her as she works, she has no assistants.

''The medium has changed,'' says Jopling, 60, ''but not the underlying ideas, and not her purity. I don't know a single other artist who is that pure.'' Almost all the 25 or so pieces at White Cube's new space, which occupies a 1930s former bank building on Madison Avenue, are acrylics, some as big as 6-by-9 feet. In icy blues and gashes of red, with scrawled figures writhing in ecstasy or pain, they embody the liminal space of her current existence -- post-cancer, making uneasy peace with a new body, in love.

Her awareness of her mortality also has intensified her other great passion: real estate, not as an investment, but to create a world to wrap around herself. In addition to her grand residence in Fitzroy Square, which she bought in 2020, she's long had a studio in the south of France, and an apartment overlooking Stuyvesant Square Park in Manhattan, which she rarely visits. ''I think my love of property is a matter of having so little growing up, being jammed together, being homeless.'' she says.

But after the 2016 death of her mother, who spent half her life in Margate, Emin has poured a great deal of passion into transforming her hometown of about 63,000, a former summer resort that for decades has been riven with poverty and opiate abuse, into a locus for artists. Even though Margate is the site of her childhood degradations, she ''can't let the place go.'' Aided by the opening of the Chipperfield-designed gallery Turner Contemporary in 2011 --J.M.W. Turner, the Romantic watercolorist, lived and painted there for 20 years in a boardinghouse on the rocky site -- she has been an unwavering civic booster, lately spending most of her time there.

In 2017, she and a former lover, the gallerist Carl Freedman, bought and split a 26,000-square-foot former newspaper printing plant, which now houses both Freedman's two-story space and, through a separate entrance, her gigantic, airy studio and elegant living quarters, which she intends to leave, along with several other contiguous studio spaces she has bought in the compound, as a public museum after her death. Long passionate about open-sea swimming, she built a full-size ground-floor lap pool for when the weather grows raw. She also recently bought three five-story houses nearby that she is redoing as a primary residence, guesthouse and yet another studio.

These days, Margate, where in 1921 T.S. Eliot wrote Part III of ''The Waste Land '' while recuperating from a mental collapse (''On Margate Sands./I can connect/Nothing with nothing.'') has struck a balance that often eludes gentrifying areas. It retains its earthy demeanor, with middle-aged daytripping couples bar-hopping, but the rickety, winsome vernacular houses on twisting lanes have attracted many young, largely ***working-class*** artists and craftspeople, affordable restaurants and thrift shops. Unlike, say, East London's Shoreditch, or its spiritual progenitor, Williamsburg, Brooklyn, the town isn't -- at least not yet -- a place for trust-funders or tech bros hoping to pass for bohemians.

Margate has been called Emin's Marfa, but unlike that Texas desert art mecca begun in the 1980s by the minimalist Donald Judd, Margate was no blank slate. Nearly 40 percent of the population lives below the poverty line, and once you wander beyond the old town, the wind blows trash around dilapidated buildings. To hurry the metamorphosis, in 2022, Emin began renovating a vacant bathhouse that now houses 11 subsidized studios for established artists who have moved to Margate. There is also an 18-month residency program for up to a dozen emerging talents; the current crop includes students from Brooklyn, Uganda and the Isle of Wight.

But even amid real estate deals and construction that never seems to end, and the anxiety-producing scans, the White Cube New York opening crowds her thoughts. On good days, she believes she deserves a fresh critical appraisal in a city that has never quite known where she fits in -- and some distance from her earlier work and her earlier self. ''I think people weren't sure that I was sincere, and I hope now maybe they'll see that I am, that I've always been.''

If that doesn't come to pass with this New York show, she'll likely be wounded, as she always is by rejection, but ''art is everything to me,'' she says, and she'll keep making it. ''I've always been judged by the way I live, and really, just the bad bits of it. I know that's rolled up in what I do, having no distance. But so much has changed. You have to wonder what people will see this time when they look.''

Tracey Emin: Lovers Grave

Nov. 4 through Jan. 13, 2024, White Cube New York, 1002 Madison Avenue, Manhattan; (212) 750-4232; whitecube.com/exhibitions/new-york.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/02/arts/design/with-lovers-grave-tracey-emin-returns-at-full-emotional-volume.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/02/arts/design/with-lovers-grave-tracey-emin-returns-at-full-emotional-volume.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: The artist Tracey Emin in her studio in England. Her latest show opens at White Cube New York on Saturday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHARLIE GATES FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (C1)

Center, Emin's ''There Was No Right Way'' (2022). Above, ''And I Said Eat Me -- Bring Me Back to Life'' (2023), which is one of her new works at White Cube New York. (C16)

Clockwise, work by Tracey Emin, from above: ''My Bed'' (1998), complete with filthy sheets, empty vodka bottles and underwear soaked in menstrual blood

''I Went Home'' (2023)

''Everyone I Have Ever Slept With 1963-1995'' (1995), which was the early installation that seared Emin into the public imagination, as she named lovers and friends. Opposite, Emin in her studio in late September. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY TRACEY EMIN

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CHARLIE GATES FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (C16

C17) This article appeared in print on page C1, C16, C17.

**Load-Date:** November 3, 2023

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[***What if We're the Bad Guys Here?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68VT-YBS1-DXY4-X1Y7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 4, 2023 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 18; DAVID BROOKS

**Length:** 1525 words

**Byline:** By David Brooks

**Body**

Donald Trump seems to get indicted on a weekly basis. Yet he is utterly dominating his Republican rivals in the polls, and he is tied with Joe Biden in the general election surveys. Trump's poll numbers are stronger against Biden now than at any time in 2020.

What's going on here? Why is this guy still politically viable, after all he's done?

We anti-Trumpers often tell a story to explain that. It was encapsulated in a quote the University of North Carolina political scientist Marc Hetherington gave to my colleague Thomas B. Edsall recently: ''Republicans see a world changing around them uncomfortably fast, and they want it to slow down, maybe even take a step backward. But if you are a person of color, a woman who values gender equality or an L.G.B.T. person, would you want to go back to 1963? I doubt it.''

In this story, we anti-Trumpers are the good guys, the forces of progress and enlightenment. The Trumpers are reactionary bigots and authoritarians. Many Republicans support Trump no matter what, according to this story, because at the end of the day, he's still the bigot in chief, the embodiment of their resentments and that's what matters to them most.

I partly agree with this story, but it's also a monument to elite self-satisfaction.

So let me try another story on you. I ask you to try on a vantage point in which we anti-Trumpers are not the eternal good guys. In fact, we're the bad guys.

This story begins in the 1960s, when high school grads had to go off to fight in Vietnam but the children of the educated class got college deferments. It continues in the 1970s, when the authorities imposed busing on ***working-class*** areas in Boston but not on the upscale communities like Wellesley where they themselves lived.

The ideal that we're all in this together was replaced with the reality that the educated class lives in a world up here and everybody else is forced into a world down there. Members of our class are always publicly speaking out for the marginalized, but somehow we always end up building systems that serve ourselves.

The most important of those systems is the modern meritocracy. We built an entire social order that sorts and excludes people on the basis of the quality that we possess most: academic achievement. Highly educated parents go to elite schools, marry each other, work at high-paying professional jobs and pour enormous resources into our children, who get into the same elite schools, marry each other and pass their exclusive class privileges down from generation to generation.

Daniel Markovits summarized years of research in his book ''The Meritocracy Trap'': ''Today, middle-class children lose out to the rich children at school, and middle-class adults lose out to elite graduates at work. Meritocracy blocks the middle class from opportunity. Then it blames those who lose a competition for income and status that, even when everyone plays by the rules, only the rich can win.''

The meritocracy isn't only a system of exclusion; it's an ethos. During his presidency, Barack Obama used the word ''smart'' in the context of his policies over 900 times. The implication was that anybody who disagreed with his policies (and perhaps didn't go to Harvard Law) must be stupid.

Over the last decades, we've taken over whole professions and locked everybody else out. When I began my journalism career in Chicago in the 1980s, there were still some old crusty ***working-class*** guys around the newsroom. Now we're not only a college-dominated profession; we're an elite-college-dominated profession. Only 0.8 percent of college students graduate from the super-elite 12 schools (the Ivy League colleges, plus Stanford, M.I.T., Duke and the University of Chicago). A 2018 study found that more than 50 percent of the staff writers at the beloved New York Times and The Wall Street Journal attended one of the 29 most elite universities in the nation.

Writing in Compact magazine, Michael Lind observes that the upper-middle-class job market looks like a candelabrum: ''Those who manage to squeeze through the stem of a few prestigious colleges and universities in their youth can then branch out to fill leadership positions in almost every vocation.''

Or, as Markovits puts it, ''elite graduates monopolize the best jobs and at the same time invent new technologies that privilege superskilled workers, making the best jobs better and all other jobs worse.''

Members of our class also segregate ourselves into a few booming metro areas: San Francisco, D.C., Austin and so on. In 2020, Biden won only 500 or so counties, but together they are responsible for 71 percent of the American economy. Trump won over 2,500 counties, responsible for only 29 percent. Once we find our cliques, we don't get out much. In the book ''Social Class in the 21st Century,'' the sociologist Mike Savage and his co-researchers found that the members of the highly educated class tend to be the most insular, measured by how often we have contact with those who have jobs unlike our own.

Armed with all kinds of economic, cultural and political power, we support policies that help ourselves. Free trade makes the products we buy cheaper, and our jobs are unlikely to be moved to China. Open immigration makes our service staff cheaper, but new, less-educated immigrants aren't likely to put downward pressure on our wages.

Like all elites, we use language and mores as tools to recognize one another and exclude others. Using words like ''problematic,'' ''cisgender,'' ''Latinx'' and ''intersectional'' is a sure sign that you've got cultural capital coming out of your ears. Meanwhile, members of the less-educated classes have to walk on eggshells because they never know when we've changed the usage rules so that something that was sayable five years ago now gets you fired.

We also change the moral norms in ways that suit ourselves, never mind the cost to others. For example, there used to be a norm that discouraged people from having children outside marriage, but that got washed away during our period of cultural dominance, as we eroded norms that seemed judgmental or that might inhibit individual freedom.

After this social norm was eroded, a funny thing happened. Members of our class still overwhelmingly married and had children within wedlock. People without our resources, unsupported by social norms, were less able to do that. As Adrian Wooldridge points out in his magisterial 2021 book, ''The Aristocracy of Talent,'' ''Sixty percent of births to women with only a high school certificate occur out of wedlock, compared with only 10 percent to women with a university degree.'' That matters, he continues, because ''the rate of single parenting is the most significant predictor of social immobility in the country.''

Does this mean that I think the people in my class are vicious and evil? No. Most of us are earnest, kind and public-spirited. But we take for granted and benefit from systems that have become oppressive. Elite institutions have become so politically progressive in part because the people in them want to feel good about themselves as they take part in systems that exclude and reject.

It's easy to understand why people in less-educated classes would conclude that they are under economic, political, cultural and moral assault -- and why they've rallied around Trump as their best warrior against the educated class. He understood that it's not the entrepreneurs who seem most threatening to workers; it's the professional class. Trump understood that there was great demand for a leader who would stick his thumb in our eyes on a daily basis and reject the whole epistemic regime that we rode in on.

If distrustful populism is your basic worldview, the Trump indictments seem like just another skirmish in the class war between the professionals and the workers, another assault by a bunch of coastal lawyers who want to take down the man who most aggressively stands up to them. Of course, the indictments don't cause Trump supporters to abandon him. They cause them to become more fiercely loyal. That's the polling story of the last six months.

Are Trump supporters right that the indictments are just a political witch hunt? Of course not. As a card-carrying member of my class, I still basically trust the legal system and the neutral arbiters of justice. Trump is a monster in the way we've all been saying for years and deserves to go to prison.

But there's a larger context here. As the sociologist E. Digby Baltzell wrote decades ago, ''History is a graveyard of classes which have preferred caste privileges to leadership.'' That is the destiny our class is now flirting with. We can condemn the Trumpian populists until the cows come home, but the real question is: When will we stop behaving in ways that make Trumpism inevitable?

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**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY EVAN VUCCI/ASSOCIATED PRESS) This article appeared in print on page A18.

**Load-Date:** August 4, 2023

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[***With ‘Lovers Grave,’ Tracey Emin Returns, at Full Emotional Volume***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69J1-RHB1-DXY4-X1JW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 2, 2023 Thursday 11:45 EST

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**Section:** ARTS; design

**Length:** 2215 words

**Byline:** Nancy Hass

**Highlight:** Her illness, her traumas and thorny romantic entanglements are writ loud in her art, on view at White Cube Nov. 4.

**Body**

Tracey Emin carried around a giant tote decades before enormous handbags were fashionable. Back then, in the 1990s, when she was emerging as a gale-like force in a loosely affiliated group that came to be known as the Young British Artists, people often asked her — journalists, fans on London streets — What do you keep in there? She says the real answer was usually a sketch pad, her daily ration of three packs of Marlboro Lights, six Stella Artois beers and a fifth of brandy, but it was easier to say she needed a bag big enough to haul all her insecurities.

“Ironic now, thinking about that, right?” she says, in her soft, ***working-class***-accent, on a chilly afternoon, as she tries to find a comfortable position on a sofa in her recently renovated townhouse on Fitzroy Square, a genteel, central-London pocket that was once home to both [*Virginia Woolf*](https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/blue-plaques/virginia-woolf/) and [*George Bernard Shaw*](https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/blue-plaques/george-bernard-shaw/). She reaches into the large canvas carryall at her feet to pull out a plastic pouch of urine, which is connected under her loose cotton shift by a long tube to a stoma in her abdomen. She waves it slightly, a white flag, maybe, though because this is Emin, surrender has never been an option. “Now, what I have in there is a bag of piss.”

Three years ago, at age 56, in the thick of the pandemic, she went to her gynecologist because she had fallen in love with a New York-based collector and critic, and, after 10 years of celibacy, was considering penetrative sex. Instead, she received a diagnosis of very aggressive bladder cancer and days later, had radical surgery to remove that organ as well as her uterus, her ureter, some of her colon, a slew of lymph nodes and half her vagina. “I made them leave my clitoris,” she says.

On Nov. 4, her first New York solo show in seven years, “Tracey Emin: Lovers Grave,” is set to open at the new Upper East Side outpost of [*White Cube,*](https://www.whitecube.com/gallery-exhibitions/tracey-emin-lovers-grave-2023) the London-based international gallery that has always represented her, and despite the pressures of that and her health, she seems at rueful peace. Her equanimity is unsurprising: surviving intense turmoil — that which has been randomly doled out as well as that of her own creation — is what Emin does best, what she’s always done. Only Damien Hirst has had more fame among living British artists, but despite critics lashing Hirst and Emin together as the Y.B.A.s (along with Sarah Lucas, Gary Hume and several others), his work is a depersonalized mélange of dead animals floating in formaldehyde, spin art, a bejeweled skull and multicolor dots. Emin’s oeuvre has only ever orbited one thing: herself, in her many mournful, voluptuous, warty, wild and furious incarnations.

In paintings, installations, quilts, monoprints, films, photographs, bronzes, neons and reams of text, the membrane between her work and her life has been not merely porous, but nonexistent. From her ragged childhood and dangerous underage sex with adult men in the bedraggled streets of seaside Margate, 90 minutes by train east of London, stints of homelessness, rapes (one at 13), two abortions, and now her illness, her traumas and thorny romantic entanglements are writ loud in her art.

The early installations that seared her into the public imagination were [*“Everyone I Have Ever Slept With 1963-1995,”*](https://www.widewalls.ch/magazine/tracey-emin-everyone-i-have-ever-slept-with) a tent within which she had embroidered the 102 names of lovers, family members and two numbered aborted fetuses — part of the seminal 1997 [*“Sensation’’ show*](https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2022/09/30/sensation-25-years-on-the-show-thrust-the-ybas-and-charles-saatchi-into-the-mainstreambut-not-everyone-was-happy) in London — and [*“My Bed”*](https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/emin-my-bed-l03662) (1998), a recreation of her life after a post-breakup psychological breakdown, complete with filthy sheets, empty vodka bottles and underwear smeared in menstrual blood, but her corpus over the decades has been varied, all of it executed at full emotional volume.

Over the years, her public persona often overshadowed her prodigious output, especially in Britain, where she was stalked by rapacious tabloids. Critics carped about her solipsistic exhibitionism, the times she fell out of a taxi drunk, how she sacrificed credibility by becoming a muse for the clothing designer Vivienne Westwood (a notion that in our era of boundaryless collaborations between artists and the fashion world seems quaint). Some even speculated that her debauched life was a meta-gag, a performance of self.

In that pre-#MeToo world, her rage over her sexual abuse and honesty about her abortions seemed to strike them as, well, a bit dreary, or at least repetitive. When they did look at the paintings — spidery nudes, often couples entwined amid or atop slashes of vivid abstraction — some dismissed them as derivative of her acknowledged heroes, Egon Schiele and Edvard Munch.

It rankled some critics that she was volcanically successful, with collectors including Madonna and Elton John, and Tate eagerly acquiring her work. If she was going to make her art her life and her life her art, critics reasoned, wasn’t it fair to critique the way she behaved? When “Everyone I Have Ever Slept With” was incinerated in a 2004 warehouse fire, with other important works owned by the Y.B.A. patron Charles Saatchi, there was a geyser of schadenfreude, to which she responded with her hurt stripped bare: “They laugh at a disaster like a fire. It is just not fair and it’s not funny and it’s not polite and it’s bad manners.”

Through it all, the New York art world seemed confused by her, and museum curators here largely ignored her. (One of the few Emins owned by the Museum of Modern Art is a series she collaborated on with Louise Bourgeois.) She never seemed a comfortable fit at her New York gallery, Lehmann Maupin, with which she [*parted ways*](https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2017/05/06/tracey-emin-and-lehmann-maupin-no-longer-in-bed) in 2017.

“In England, she and the Y.B.A.s were part of the DNA, part of the post-Thatcher revolution, and their growth was incredibly meaningful,” says Jay Jopling, founder of White Cube, in whose tiny original Duke Street gallery many of the group first showed. But when Tracey was shown in the U.S. in the early 2010s, “she was on the cusp of returning to a more classical practice,” he said. “No one quite knew whether to regard her as a conceptual artist or a painter and sculptor.”

But there often was also a whiff of misogyny in reviews of a woman who depicted herself legs open, who asked in pink neon “Is Anal Sex Legal?” and who spelled out on a 6 by 8.5 foot appliqué blanket I DO NOT EXPECT TO BE A MOTHER BUT I DO EXPECT TO DIE ALONE. And then there was the issue of class, the thrumming subtext of her work and her life. Forever the central struggle of British society, its complexities never have resonated in the U.S. the way race does. In 2009, two years after Emin represented Britain at the Venice Biennale, Nancy Spector, then the chief curator of the Guggenheim Museum, dismissed her in [*The New York Times*](https://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/14/arts/design/14emin.html) as “having a lot in common with the sort of reality television that came out of Great Britain.”

But the world has changed, as has she. In person she remains alternately gentle and fierce, self-loving and self-loathing, but her famed restlessness seems subtly becalmed. Cancer and age have softened her, she says. She quit drinking two days before her surgery, which “has changed me inside and out.” The romantic relationship that led to her diagnosis has endured.

Still, one thing remains: She continues to create at a furious pace. She didn’t mind not being able to work as she recovered — her “barbed-wire variety” stitches made it hard even to sit up — because she had been working so assiduously before her diagnosis, as though her body knew it would soon be unable to, she says. Emin is now painting and sculpting almost exclusively. Except for her creative director, Harry Weller, 32, who has been with her since he was 18 and often stands near her as she works, she has no assistants.

“The medium has changed,” says Jopling, 60, “but not the underlying ideas, and not her purity. I don’t know a single other artist who is that pure.” Almost all the 25 or so pieces at White Cube’s new space, which occupies a 1930s former bank building on Madison Avenue, are acrylics, some as big as 6-by-9 feet. In icy blues and gashes of red, with scrawled figures writhing in ecstasy or pain, they embody the liminal space of her current existence — post-cancer, making uneasy peace with a new body, in love.

Her awareness of her mortality also has intensified her other great passion: real estate, not as an investment, but to create a world to wrap around herself. In addition to her grand residence in Fitzroy Square, which she bought in 2020, she’s long had a studio in the south of France, and an apartment overlooking Stuyvesant Square Park in Manhattan, which she rarely visits. “I think my love of property is a matter of having so little growing up, being jammed together, being homeless.” she says.

But after the 2016 death of her mother, who spent half her life in Margate, Emin has poured a great deal of passion into transforming her hometown of about 63,000, a former summer resort that for decades has been riven with poverty and opiate abuse, into a locus for artists. Even though Margate is the site of her childhood degradations, she “can’t let the place go.” Aided by the opening of the Chipperfield-designed gallery [*Turner Contemporary in 2011*](https://www.dezeen.com/2011/05/03/turner-contemporary-by-david-chipperfield/) —J.M.W. Turner, the Romantic watercolorist, lived and painted there for 20 years in a boardinghouse on the rocky site — she has been an unwavering civic booster, lately spending most of her time there.

In 2017, she and a former lover, the gallerist [*Carl Freedman,*](https://carlfreedman.com/) bought and split a 26,000-square-foot former newspaper printing plant, which now houses both Freedman’s two-story space and, through a separate entrance, her gigantic, airy studio and elegant living quarters, which she intends to leave, along with several other contiguous studio spaces she has bought in the compound, as a public museum after her death. Long passionate about open-sea swimming, she built a full-size ground-floor lap pool for when the weather grows raw. She also recently bought three five-story houses nearby that she is redoing as a primary residence, guesthouse and yet another studio.

These days, Margate, where in 1921 T.S. Eliot wrote Part III of “The Waste Land ” while recuperating from a mental collapse (“On Margate Sands./I can connect/Nothing with nothing.”) has struck a balance that often eludes gentrifying areas. It retains its earthy demeanor, with middle-aged daytripping couples bar-hopping, but the rickety, winsome vernacular houses on twisting lanes have attracted many young, largely ***working-class*** artists and craftspeople, affordable restaurants and thrift shops. Unlike, say, East London’s Shoreditch, or its spiritual progenitor, Williamsburg, Brooklyn, the town isn’t — at least not yet — a place for trust-funders or tech bros hoping to pass for bohemians.

Margate has been called Emin’s Marfa, but unlike that Texas desert art mecca begun in the 1980s by the minimalist Donald Judd, Margate was no blank slate. Nearly 40 percent of the population lives below the poverty line, and once you wander beyond the old town, the wind blows trash around dilapidated buildings. To hurry the metamorphosis, in 2022, Emin began renovating a vacant bathhouse that now houses 11 subsidized studios for established artists who have moved to Margate. There is also an 18-month residency program for up to a dozen emerging talents; the current crop includes students from Brooklyn, Uganda and the Isle of Wight.

But even amid real estate deals and construction that never seems to end, and the anxiety-producing scans, the White Cube New York opening crowds her thoughts. On good days, she believes she deserves a fresh critical appraisal in a city that has never quite known where she fits in — and some distance from her earlier work and her earlier self. “I think people weren’t sure that I was sincere, and I hope now maybe they’ll see that I am, that I’ve always been.”

If that doesn’t come to pass with this New York show, she’ll likely be wounded, as she always is by rejection, but “art is everything to me,” she says, and she’ll keep making it. “I’ve always been judged by the way I live, and really, just the bad bits of it. I know that’s rolled up in what I do, having no distance. But so much has changed. You have to wonder what people will see this time when they look.”

Tracey Emin: Lovers Grave

Nov. 4 through Jan. 13, 2024, White Cube New York, 1002 Madison Avenue, Manhattan; (212) 750-4232; [*whitecube.com/exhibitions/new-york*](https://www.whitecube.com/exhibitions/new-york).

PHOTOS: The artist Tracey Emin in her studio in England. Her latest show opens at White Cube New York on Saturday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHARLIE GATES FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (C1); Center, Emin’s “There Was No Right Way” (2022). Above, “And I Said Eat Me — Bring Me Back to Life” (2023), which is one of her new works at White Cube New York. (C16); Clockwise, work by Tracey Emin, from above: “My Bed” (1998), complete with filthy sheets, empty vodka bottles and underwear soaked in menstrual blood; “I Went Home” (2023); “Everyone I Have Ever Slept With 1963-1995” (1995), which was the early installation that seared Emin into the public imagination, as she named lovers and friends. Opposite, Emin in her studio in late September. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY TRACEY EMIN; ALL RIGHTS RESERVED, DACS, LONDON/ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK; CHARLIE GATES FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (C16; C17) This article appeared in print on page C1, C16, C17.

**Load-Date:** November 3, 2023

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[***Three Questions About Iowa***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B3V-1P71-JBG3-601H-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 15, 2024 Monday 09:11 EST

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1753 words

**Highlight:** What to watch for in tonight’s caucuses.

**Body**

What to watch for in tonight’s caucuses.

So far, the 2024 presidential campaign looks to be the least competitive in decades. The incumbent president is likely to win the Democratic nomination easily, while a former president seems to be running away with the Republican nomination.

Of course, this conclusion is based only on opinion polls, rather than actual voting. By tonight, however, voting will have begun, at least on the Republican side, thanks to the Iowa caucuses. Today’s newsletter offers a preview, in the form of three questions.

1. What’s the biggest story tonight?

Don’t get distracted by secondary issues. The big question is whether Donald Trump wins the landslide victory that polls have forecast. If he does, it will be the clearest sign yet that he is on pace to join Richard Nixon, Franklin D. Roosevelt and only a handful of earlier politicians who won the nomination of a major party [*at least three-times*](https://hnn.us/blog/154756).

Recent polls have shown Trump receiving [*around 50 percent*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/13/us/politics/iowa-poll-trump-haley-desantis.html) of the Republican vote in Iowa, with Nikki Haley and Ron DeSantis both at 20 percent or below. The only other significant candidate remaining is Vivek Ramaswamy, who has been polling below 10 percent.

Even if Trump fares a little worse than polls indicate, a landslide win would suggest he is the overwhelming favorite for the nomination.

2. Who will finish second?

“If the polls are even in the ballpark, the only interesting race might be the one for second place,” Nate Cohn, The Times’s chief political analyst, [*wrote in his latest newsletter*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/15/upshot/iowa-caucus-new-hampshire-haley.html).

The best outcome for Trump’s detractors (short of a shocking upset) would be for either Haley or DeSantis to finish well ahead of the other one. That outcome could allow the second-place finisher to emerge as the clear alternative to Trump, with a chance to consolidate the anti-Trump vote starting in New Hampshire, which holds its primary a week from tomorrow.

In the short term, Haley may be the bigger threat to Trump because she has a better chance to win New Hampshire. It is home to many highly educated and moderate Republicans, who are Haley’s base. She also has some support among independents, who can vote in New Hampshire’s primaries. As Nate writes:

She had already pulled to within striking distance of Mr. Trump there before Chris Christie withdrew from the race. Historically, primary polling is extremely volatile, and the candidates who surge late often keep surging. Ms. Haley might still need just about everything to go right, and a burst of favorable media coverage after Iowa would only help.

Beyond New Hampshire, these affluent, moderate Republicans make up a smaller portion of the voters. Even if Haley were to surge in Iowa and then win an upset in New Hampshire, she would remain the underdog.

DeSantis, by contrast, now looks weaker than Haley. But if he could somehow revive his campaign with a strong second-place finish tonight, he might be better positioned than Haley in the long term. He can compete for the more conservative, ***working-class*** voters that are Trump’s base, and they will likely decide the outcome in many primaries that follow New Hampshire.

As Nate notes, Trump’s criminal trials inject more uncertainty into this nomination campaign than most campaigns. If Trump is convicted and Republican voters or delegates sour on him this spring or summer, a strong second-place finisher would be the obvious potential replacement. That runner-up could be either Haley or DeSantis.

(Here’s [*our recent guide to Trump’s trials*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/09/briefing/trump-court-cases-2024-election.html), with a focus on their timing.)

3. Why aren’t Democrats voting tonight?

For decades, Iowa Republicans and Democrats voted in caucuses on the same night. But Democratic officials recently decided to move back their contest and instead start with South Carolina, Nevada and Michigan. This latter group of states is more diverse, and better reflects the rest of the country, than Iowa and New Hampshire.

New Hampshire Democrats have decided to fight the change and will hold a primary next week even though the national party has said the result will not count toward the nomination. As [*my colleague Reid Epstein has explained*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/10/us/politics/iowa-new-hampshire-democrats.html), “Iowa Democrats, ashamed by a 2020 fiasco that included a dayslong wait for results that were nonetheless riddled with errors, have meekly accepted their fate as primary season also-rans.”

The candidates for the Democratic nomination, in addition to President Biden, are [*Dean Phillips*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/20/us/politics/dean-phillips-medicare-for-all-biden.html) (a member of Congress from Minnesota) and Marianne Williamson (an author who also ran in 2020).

More on the campaigns

* The candidates made [*their final pitches in Iowa*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/01/14/us/presidential-election-iowa-caucus), braving subzero temperatures to court voters at restaurants and rallies.
* These are forecast to be the coldest Iowa caucuses in history. The campaigns are worried the [*weather could affect turnout*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/15/us/politics/iowa-caucus-donald-trump-voter-turnout.html).
* DeSantis urged his supporters to show up at caucuses despite the forecast.

1. At his only rally of the weekend, in Indianola, Trump intensified his criticism of Haley, saying she was backed by people who “crave to destroy the MAGA movement.”
2. Haley told a crowd in Ames that America needed “a new generational leader that leaves the negativity and the baggage behind.”
3. Some college-educated conservatives are joining blue-collar voters [*to support Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/14/us/politics/trump-college-educated-voters.html).

More on Iowa

* Iowa’s caucuses are not like the traditional election. Meet some of the people whose job it is to [*sway attendees’ votes*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/15/us/politics/iowa-caucus-captains.html).

1. Super PACs have broken records with [*their spending in Iowa*](https://www.politico.com/live-updates/2024/01/14/iowa-caucus/super-pac-iowa-spending-00135460), Politico reports.
2. Jimmy Carter put the Iowa caucuses on the political map. [*Read a history of the caucuses*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2024/01/14/jimmy-carter-iowa-caucuses/) from The Washington Post.

THE LATEST NEWS

Middle East

* The U.S. said it [*shot down a Houthi missile*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/01/15/world/israel-hamas-news/the-us-says-a-fighter-jet-took-the-missile-down?smid=url-share) that was aimed at a Navy ship. Iran has [*pushed its proxies*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/14/world/middleeast/us-iran-mideast-war.html), including the Houthis, to make trouble for the American military.

1. Benjamin Netanyahu [*vowed to keep fighting in Gaza*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/14/world/middleeast/israel-hamas-war-gaza.html?smid=url-share) after lawyers at the world’s top court criticized Israel’s offensive.
2. Members of an Israeli group that recovers dead bodies responded to the Oct. 7 attacks. [*Read their stories*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/15/world/middleeast/they-thought-they-knew-death-but-that-didnt-prepare-them-for-oct-7.html).

* Some progressive Jews are [*embracing “diasporism”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/14/us/israel-jewish-america-diasporism.html) and reimagining their faith outside Israel.

War in Ukraine

* Some older Ukrainians can’t afford to leave their country. Others say they won’t [*abandon their homes*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/14/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-elderly.html).

1. The destruction of factories and the government’s wartime powers have curbed [*the influence of Ukraine’s oligarchs*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/15/world/europe/ukraine-oligarchs-crackdown.html).

More International News

* In Copenhagen, people celebrated the [*accession of Denmark’s new king*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/14/world/europe/king-frederik-denmark.html), Frederik X.
* Guatemala’s new president, Bernardo Arévalo, was sworn in after midnight, despite efforts by opponents to [*delay the ceremony*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/14/world/americas/guatemala-presidential-inauguration-arevalo.html).

1. India has 50 million criminal and [*civil cases pending*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/13/world/asia/india-judicial-backlog.html). At the current rate, it would take 300 years to clear the backlog.
2. In Dublin, soaring rents have left [*many struggling to afford homes*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/15/world/europe/ireland-housing-crisis.html). Two-thirds of younger adults in the city live with their parents.
3. Construction is altering the unique cultural identity of Greek islands. [*Locals are pushing back*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/15/world/europe/as-development-alters-greek-islands-nature-and-culture-locals-push-back.html).

Other Big Stories

* It’s freezing. [*Find the risk of frostbite*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/us/freezing-temperatures-cold-weather-map.html) where you are and see [*photos of the severe weather*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/14/us/winter-storm-extreme-weather-photos.html).

1. California reduced incentives for homeowners to install rooftop solar panels. Some renewable energy companies are [*leaving the state*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/14/business/energy-environment/california-rooftop-solar.html).
2. A majority of New York City seniors are immigrants. Many hoped to make enough to retire in their countries of origin — [*but they never did*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/13/nyregion/older-immigrants-retirement.html).
3. Recent plagiarism controversies at universities like Harvard are prompting [*questions about the quality of academic research*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/14/us/plagiarism-harvard-claudine-gay-neri-oxman.html).

Opinions

To [*solve the border crisis*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/15/opinion/immigration-biden-democrats-border.html), the U.S. needs to grow the economy across the Americas and prevent people from becoming migrants in the first place, Andrea Flores writes.

The problem with D.E.I. isn’t diversity, equity or inclusion, but [*the unconstitutional means*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/14/opinion/dei-diversity-unconstitutional.html) universities use to advance them, David French writes.

The DeSantis campaign is [*revealing what Republican voters really want*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/13/opinion/desantis-trump-iowa-republicans.html), Ross Douthat writes.

MORNING READS

A whale of a controversy: The beluga Hvaldimir escaped captivity and [*became a celebrity*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/14/magazine/hvaldimir-whale.html), but some are worried about his welfare.

Abergwyngregyn dispatch: Few know Wales for its whiskey, yet the country is [*experiencing a revival in production*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/14/world/europe/wales-whiskey.html).

History of hustling: The word “hustle” was first recorded in the 17th century. In the 20th, it took on [*an economic context in African American communities*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/14/reader-center/picking-pockets-moving-fast-and-working-hard-the-history-of-hustling.html).

Pilgrimage: Chicago’s latest attraction is [*a rat-shaped hole*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/13/us/chicago-rat-hole.html) in a sidewalk.

Metropolitan Diary: [*He got louder and louder*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/14/nyregion/metropolitan-diary.html).

Lives Lived: Joyce Randolph played Trixie Norton on the classic 1950s sitcom “The Honeymooners.” [*She died at 99*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/14/obituaries/joyce-randolph-dead.html).

SPORTS

N.F.L.: The Detroit Lions [*won their first playoff game*](https://theathletic.com/5199355/2024/01/14/lions-vs-rams-channel-start-time-streaming/) in 32 years, defeating the Los Angeles Rams, 24-23.

More playoffs: The Dallas Cowboys’ playoff curse continues — [*the Green Bay Packers*](https://theathletic.com/5198573/2024/01/14/cowboys-packers-stream-channel-odds/) upset them, 48-32. And the Houston Texans’ rookie quarterback C.J. Stroud shredded the Cleveland Browns defense, [*leading his team to a 45-14 win*](https://theathletic.com/5196652/2024/01/13/browns-texans-wild-card-results/).

Frozen: On Saturday, the [*Kansas City Chiefs*](https://theathletic.com/5201089/2024/01/14/chiefs-dolphins-cold-patrick-mahomes-rashee-rice/) beat the Miami Dolphins. It was was so cold that Patrick Mahomes’s [*helmet shattered*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cS9EULBKUU8) on a hard hit.

College football: [*Washington hired*](https://theathletic.com/5202171/2024/01/14/arizonas-jedd-fisch-washington-coach/) Arizona’s Jedd Fisch to replace Kalen DeBoer, who just departed to supplant Nick Saban at Alabama.

ARTS AND IDEAS

Relax with Pikachu: Netflix’s “Pokémon Concierge,” at first glance, might seem like childish fare, but it has found [*an audience among anxious millennials*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/13/arts/television/pokemon-concierge-netflix.html). In it, an overachieving young woman abandons her stressful life to work at an island resort for adorable monsters. It has no plot and incredibly low stakes; the Pokémon here would rather visit a spa than battle one another. It’s “a rare example of a franchise seizing upon how the culture and its fan base have changed,” the Times critic Maya Phillips writes.

More on culture

* The Emmy Awards are on tonight after the ceremony was postponed from the fall because of actor and writer strikes. “Succession” has 27 nominations. [*See how to watch*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/13/arts/television/emmys-how-to-watch.html).

1. Hit men are a staple of Hollywood thrillers. But in real life, [*murder plots are marred by ineptitude*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/14/nyregion/hit-men-are-easy-to-find-in-the-movies-real-life-is-another-story.html), experts say.

THE MORNING RECOMMENDS …

Roast salmon slathered in [*a creamy horseradish mayonnaise*](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1024479-horseradish-roasted-salmon-with-mustard-potatoes) alongside mustard potatoes.

Cook with Wirecutter’s favorite [*cast-iron skillet*](https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/reviews/best-cast-iron-skillet/).

Eat healthier [*with whole grains*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/15/well/eat/mediterranean-diet-whole-grains.html).

Brave snow with [*these winter boots*](https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/reviews/best-winter-boots-for-men-and-women/).

Take [*our news quiz*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/01/12/briefing/news-quiz-storms-trump.html).

GAMES

Here is [*today’s Spelling Bee*](https://www.nytimes.com/puzzles/spelling-bee). Yesterday’s pangram was actuality.

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

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

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PHOTO: Des Moines, Iowa. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Maansi Srivastava/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** January 15, 2024

**End of Document**



[***With Her Dad, Ben Vereen, by Her Side, Karon Davis Turns to Dance***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69N8-58V1-DXY4-X158-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 17, 2023 Friday 13:22 EST

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**Section:** ARTS; design

**Length:** 1125 words

**Byline:** Aruna D’Souza

**Highlight:** The focus of her art is on realities that Black dancers face in the world of ballet. First she sculpted real dancers; then she brought in a familiar face to help bring them to life.

**Body**

The focus of her art is on realities that Black dancers face in the world of ballet. First she sculpted real dancers; then she brought in a familiar face to help bring them to life.

“I come from show people,” the [*sculptor and installation artist Karon Davis*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/31/arts/design/karon-davis-underground-museum-deitch.html) said in an interview on Wednesday. “The minute I was born, I was handed tap shoes, ballet shoes.” She’s only half joking: her mother, Nancy Bruner, was a ballerina; her sister, Naja, who died at the age of 16, was an aspiring ballerina; and her father is the Tony- and Emmy-award-winning actor, dancer and singer Ben Vereen.

That immersion inspired her recent exhibition, [*“Beauty Must Suffer,” which opened on Oct. 12 at Salon 94*](https://salon94.com/exhibitions/beauty-must-suffer) in Manhattan. The show consists of life-size figures, cast from live models in gauze and plaster of Paris, arranged in installations on two floors of the gallery’s townhouse. On the second floor, plaster children practice at the barre, dancers rest, bow and stretch alongside floor-to-ceiling columns composed of pink tutus and piles of “dead” toe shoes. One of the sculpted dancers smokes; another ices her knee. The figures are clearly Black, though they’re made from the starkest white materials; some of them even “pancake” their shoes, covering the pink satin with makeup to match skin tones. ([*Until fairly recently, the major makers of ballet slippers didn’t produce a diverse range of colors*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/04/arts/dance/brown-point-shoes-diversity-ballet.html).)

Davis’s focus here is on the realities that dancers, and [*especially Black dancers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/07/opinion/black-dancer-american-ballet-theater.html?searchResultPosition=8), face in the world of ballet. “I feel like the art I’ve seen before on dancers has always just been about what happens onstage, which is perfection,” Davis, 46, said. “But I want to show what happens before you get to that point — all the labor, all the sacrifice, all the bloody toes and the sore muscles.”

On the third floor, visitors will find what Davis calls a “sculpted ballet,” in which a pair of cast figures replicate famous moments in the history of dance: Rudolf Nureyev and Margot Fonteyn performing “Paradise Lost,” choreography from Alvin Ailey’s “Revelations” and Julius Wenzel Reisinger’s “Swan Lake.”

[*On Saturday, as part of the Performa Biennial*](https://performa2023.org/beauty-must-suffer/), Davis will add another element to the mix: Two of the dancers who posed for the figures, Fabricio Seraphin and Vicky Lambert, will interpret Davis’s sculpted ballet — which she has titled “Echo and Narcissus” — in the Salon 94 gallery on the third floor.

At the dress rehearsal on Wednesday, Davis worked with Seraphin and Lambert. The choreography that emerged over the two-hour session described a tale of unrequited love: Echo falls passionately in love with Narcissus, who loves her back until he sees his own reflection. At that point, all is lost.

During the rehearsal, Ben Vereen, 77, dropped in from Los Angeles. He stayed close by his daughter’s side, coaching the two dancers on how to evoke the passage from passion and seduction to heartbreak and pain that the story calls for. At one point, he looked with satisfaction on a tiny, mournful shake of the head that Lambert, 52, had added to her graceful arabesque. “I think you just might have something here,” he said slyly to his daughter, causing the room to fall out in laughter.

“We’ve always been a creative duo,” said Davis, who said that even in her purely sculptural work, her father’s extensive knowledge of stagecraft has helped her with things like how to light her objects. But this is dance: “I told him what I was doing, and he got on a plane right away. He said, ‘I’m going to come to New York, let’s play.’”

“I was here for the opening, and saw the pieces come to life, and now Karon is taking it to another level,” Vereen told me. “Those statues already feel so alive. We’re just finding ways to represent the movement that’s already there.”

Davis had been working with Seraphin and Lambert for the better part of a year to create her sculptures, posing them individually, using props so they could hold their lines while she cast sections of their bodies. She then pieced the fragments together, over steel armatures. “I would come into Karon’s studio and see my body parts strewn around, and that was a head trip,” Lambert said.

This week’s rehearsals are the first time Lambert and Seraphin have actually danced together.

Being in the same space as their effigies is “surreal,” Seraphin, 28, said. Neither was expecting Vereen to be in the room — for Seraphin, who studied musical theater in his high school and played roles in a number of Bob Fosse set pieces, it was a special thrill. (Vereen won a Tony Award for his role in Bob Fosse’s “Pippin” in 1973, and worked closely with the choreographer over his career.)

Davis studied dance in her early years but ended up majoring in filmmaking at Spelman College; after moving to Los Angeles, she married [*the painter Noah Davis*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/02/arts/noah-davis-california-figurative-artist-and-founder-of-the-underground-museum-dies-at-32.html) in 2008. In 2012, the couple founded the Underground Museum in the Arlington Heights neighborhood of Los Angeles; part art gallery and part community center, it formed an important cultural hub for the area’s mostly Black, ***working-class*** residents. After her husband’s death in 2015, Davis continued as board president of the museum while developing her own career as an artist. (The museum [*closed*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/19/arts/design/underground-museum-los-angeles.html?searchResultPosition=3) in 2022.) Her last show in New York, at Jeffrey Deitch’s gallery, centered on the Black Panthers founder Bobby Seale and the 1969 Chicago 8 trial.

“Echo and Narcissus” is still developing. The second half of the piece will be performed to [*Dinah Washington and Max Richter’s “Bitter Earth,”*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jXHGoaEtmFM) but she’s still deciding on the music for the first half. At the end of the rehearsal, she decided that she needed to fashion a mirror that will be used as a prop on Saturday.

Before she ran off to get her hands in plaster, she reflected on what will be the first time she’s incorporated choreography into an art installation. “It feels so good to see it all come together,” she said. “I’ve always wanted to honor that part of me and honor my family and dancers in general.”

“Beauty Must Suffer” is on view through Dec. 23. “Echo and Narcissus” will take place on Saturday, Nov. 18, only, at 4 p.m. in the Salon 94 galleries; attendance is [*free with a reservation*](https://www.tickettailor.com/events/performa/1060060). Salon 94, 3 East 89th Street, Manhattan, 212-979-0001; salon94.com.

Beauty Must Suffer The exhibition runs through Dec. 23. The dance performance “Echo and Narcissus” will be on Saturday at 4 p.m.; Salon 94, 3 East 89th Street, Manhattan; 212-979-0001, salon94.com.

PHOTOS: Top, the dancers Vicky Lambert and Fabricio Seraphin at Salon 94. Left, Lambert among Karon Davis’s works. Bottom left, Davis and her father, Ben Vereen. Below and bottom, two works by Davis that are featured in her new exhibition, “Beauty Must Suffer.” (PHOTOGRAPHS BY CAITLIN OCHS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page C2.

**Load-Date:** November 20, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Defeat Trump, Now More Than Ever***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64VW-FK21-DXY4-X176-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 25, 2022 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 18; DAVID BROOKS

**Length:** 963 words

**Byline:** By David Brooks

**Body**

The democratic nations of the world are in a global struggle against authoritarianism. That struggle has international fronts -- starting with the need to confront, repel and weaken Vladimir Putin.

But that struggle also has domestic fronts -- the need to defeat the mini-Putins now found across the Western democracies. These are the demagogues who lie with Putinesque brazenness, who shred democratic institutions with Putinesque bravado, who strut the world's stage with Putin's amoral schoolboy machismo while pretending to represent all that is traditional and holy.

In the United States that, of course, is Donald Trump. This moment of heightened danger and crisis makes it even clearer that the No. 1 domestic priority for all Americans who care about democracy is to make sure Trump never sees the inside of the Oval Office ever again. As democracy is threatened from abroad it can't also be cannibalized from within.

Thinking has to be crystal clear. What are the crucial battlegrounds in the struggle against Trump? He won the White House by winning Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin with strong support from white voters without a college degree. Joe Biden ousted Trump by winning back those states and carrying the new swing states, Arizona and Georgia.

So for the next three years Democrats need to wake up with one overriding political thought: What are we doing to appeal to all ***working-class*** voters in those five states? Are we doing anything today that might alienate these voters?

Are the Democrats winning the contest for these voters right now? No.

At the start of 2021 Democrats had a nine-point advantage when you asked voters to name their party preference. By the end of 2021 Republicans had a five-point advantage. Among swing voters, things are particularly grim. A February 2022 Economist/YouGov survey found that a pathetic 30 percent of independents approve of Biden's job performance. ***Working-class*** voters are turning against Biden. According to a January Pew survey, 54 percent of Americans with graduate degrees approved of Biden's performance, but only 37 percent of those without any college experience did.

Are Democrats thinking clearly about how to win those voters? No.

This week two veteran Democratic strategists, William A. Galston and Elaine Kamarck, issued a report for the Progressive Policy Institute arguing that Democrats need to get over at least three delusions.

The first Democratic myth is, ''People of color think and act alike.'' In fact, there have been differences between Hispanics and Black Americans on issues like the economy, foreign policy and policing. Meanwhile ***working-class*** people have been moving toward the G.O.P. across racial lines.

''Today, the Democrats' ***working-class*** problem isn't limited to white workers,'' the veteran Democratic pollster Stanley Greenberg wrote in The American Prospect. ''The party is also losing support from ***working-class*** Blacks and Hispanics.''

The second Democratic myth is, ''Economics trumps culture.'' This is the idea that if Democrats can shower working- and middle-class voters with material benefits then that will overwhelm any differences they may have with them on religious, social and cultural issues -- on guns, crime and immigration, etc. This crude economic determinism has been rebutted by history time and time again.

The third myth is, ''A progressive ascendancy is emerging.'' The fact is that only 7 percent of the electorate considers itself ''very liberal.'' I would have thought the Biden economic agenda, which basically consists of handing money to the people who need it most, would be astoundingly popular. It's popular, but not that popular. I would have thought Americans would scream bloody murder when the expansion of the existing child tax credit expired. They haven't. Distrust in government is still astoundingly high, undercutting the progressive project at every turn.

What do Democrats need to do now? Well, one thing they are really good at. Over the past few years a wide range of thinkers -- across the political spectrum -- have congregated around a neo-Hamiltonian agenda that stands for the idea that we need to build more things -- roads, houses, colleges, green technologies and ports. Democrats need to hammer home this Builders agenda, which would provide good-paying jobs and renew American dynamism.

But Democrats also have to do something they're really bad at: Craft a cultural narrative around the theme of social order. The Democrats have been blamed for fringe ideas like ''defund the police'' and a zeal for ''critical race theory'' because the party doesn't have its own mainstream social and cultural narrative.

With war in Europe, crime rising on our streets, disarray at the border, social unraveling in many of our broken communities, perceived ideological unmooring in our schools, moral decay everywhere, Democrats need to tell us which cultural and moral values they stand for that will hold this country together.

The authoritarians tell a simple story about how to restore order -- it comes from cultural homogeneity and the iron fist of the strongman. Democrats have a harder challenge -- to show how order can be woven amid diversity, openness and the full flowering of individuals. But Democrats need to name the moral values and practices that will restore social order.

It doesn't matter how many nice programs you have; people won't support you if they think your path is the path to chaos.

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**Graphic**

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

**Load-Date:** February 25, 2022

**End of Document**



[***Income Inequality Has Been Transformed Globally; David Wallace-Wells***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69XB-0851-JBG3-605J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 20, 2023 Wednesday 11:16 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1406 words

**Byline:** David Wallace-Wells

**Highlight:** Will this be the end of middle-class privilege?

**Body**

In 1974, the libertarian political philosopher Robert Nozick famously defended inequality by offering a thought experiment involving Wilt Chamberlain. Imagine you lived in a society, he proposed, where the distribution of wealth had been orchestrated to be just — perhaps even egalitarian. But then imagine that a seven-foot celebrity superstar athlete arrived, and the citizens of that society were given the opportunity to pay to watch him. Who could argue he shouldn’t get rich? This was, for Nozick, an illustration of his more general “entitlement theory,” with Chamberlain an undeniable example of exceptional merit’s deserving, by rights, exceptional rewards.

The previous year, Chamberlain’s salary was $250,000, about 20 times the median household income. Today a basketball player earning 20 times the median wouldn’t be making much more than the N.B.A.’s minimum salary for rookies, $1.1 million. Those who play even a few minutes a game are typically — compared with Americans earning average paychecks — several times richer than Chamberlain ever was. Superstars are many times richer still. The most high-profile new contract this season was signed by Jaylen Brown of the Celtics, and it pays more than $60 million per year, about 800 times the median U.S. salary. Compared with the gap between the American median and Chamberlain’s exceptional rewards, that is a fortyfold increase. And Brown is hardly a household name like Wilt, or for that matter Steph or LeBron. This year, he may be only the fifth-best player on his team. As Boston fans know all too well, he can’t even really dribble.

Athletes, like entertainers, have always been complicated case studies in American oligarchy. They are both entrepreneurs and labor, wealthy and yet often exploited, and have operated for 50 years in an endless boom cycle for the business of sports. But as avatars of the superstar-economy era, athletes — like the entertainers Taylor Swift and Beyoncé, whose tours this year have apparently had a notable effect on national G.D.P. — play an outsize role in illustrating the country’s inescapable economic morality tale: While an awful lot has changed about America and the world since 1974, it sometimes seems that the biggest and most important change is the social fact of exploding income inequality.

In the aftermath of the financial crisis, the country was given a crash course, first by the Tea Party and Occupy Wall Street, then by Thomas Piketty and his book “Capital in the 21st Century.” We learned about the Gini coefficient, which measures the relative inequality of a society, and we learned that, in recent decades, it had grown considerably. We learned that the ratio of chief-executive pay to worker pay grew to 200-to-1 today from 60-to-1 in 1989 and from 20-to-1 in 1965. And we watched the rise of Bernie Sanders and the presidency of Donald Trump — who in accepting the Republican nomination directed his gaze at those left behind by financialization and globalization and announced, “I am your voice” — and interpreted them alongside Brexit and Boris Johnson and Jair Bolsonaro as facets of a hodgepodge international backlash to the neoliberal era and the inequalities it produced.

Culturally, the age of inequality is still churning: Over just the last six months, we’ve had the song “Rich Men North of Richmond” and Shawn Fain’s leading the United Auto Workers into a triumphant labor war with Detroit’s Big Three while wearing an “Eat the Rich” T-shirt. But at the structural level, our picture of American inequality also seems to be changing. According to some measures, U.S. income inequality hasn’t meaningfully grown over the last decade, the very period in which it has become such a potent cultural and political meme. And in the last few weeks, several [*high-profile*](https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/10.1086/728741) [*critiques*](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4532761) of Piketty’s narrative-setting work have been published, both in academic journals and in outlets like [*Bloomberg*](https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2023-11-15/america-s-top-1-don-t-make-as-much-as-you-might-think) and [*The Financial Times*](https://www.ft.com/content/8c23c566-cb73-4983-9773-b20917bc323f) — with mostly right-of-center commentators suggesting that the story of ballooning inequality, and of our return to the robber barons of the Gilded Age, was all methodological illusion and that inequality hadn’t actually been growing at all.

Piketty compares this to climate denial, and almost certainly the critique is oversold. It’s not just Piketty and his colleagues who have documented significant increases in inequality since 1980, but also the [*Government Accountability Office*](https://www.gao.gov/blog/u.s.-income-and-wealth-are-concentrated-top.-where-does-leave-older-americans), the [*Congressional Budget Office*](https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2023-11/59510-Slides.pdf), the [*Bureau of Labor Statistics*](https://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2015/beyond-bls/the-growth-of-income-inequality-in-the-united-states.htm), the [*Census Bureau*](https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/income-inequality.html) and the [*Federal Reserve*](https://www.federalreserve.gov/econres/notes/feds-notes/wealth-inequality-and-the-racial-wealth-gap-20211022.html). You can quibble about which data set to use and exactly how to measure things, the economist Branko Milanovic says, and you get somewhat different estimates for the size of the effect. “But I think if you take 1980 and take 2006, I think there is no doubt that — throughout the ’80s and ’90s and early 2000s — inequality just went up.”

One of the leading scholars of global inequality, Milanovic is best known for his [*“elephant chart,”*](https://academic.oup.com/wber/article-abstract/30/2/203/2224294?redirectedFrom=fulltext) which measures relative gains along the world’s income spectrum. The chart [*shows*](https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2018/2/2/16868838/elephant-graph-chart-global-inequality-economic-growth) that in recent decades, the world’s poor saw their incomes grow significantly, as did the world’s very rich, with those in between — the global upper middle class, made up of the working and middle classes of places like the United States and Europe — stagnating.

There are shortcomings to the elephant chart: In documenting only percentage improvement in annual incomes, it equates much smaller absolute gains among the world’s poor with much larger absolute gains by the world’s rich. But Milanovic believes that in focusing so obsessively on growing divides within countries, we are missing what he calls a great convergence, in which income inequality is in fact declining, and quite rapidly. The global 1 percent is still going strong, he says, but at lower rungs on the income ladder, economic status is undergoing a great rearrangement, with profound implications for the way almost everyone on the planet will live — and feel — in the decades to come.

“Poor Westerners for decades have ranked among the highest-earning people in the world,” Milanovic [*wrote*](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/world/great-convergence-equality-branko-milanovic?check_logged_in=1&amp;utm_medium=promo_email&amp;utm_source=lo_flows&amp;utm_campaign=registered_user_welcome&amp;utm_term=email_1&amp;utm_content=20231201) this summer in Foreign Affairs. “That will no longer be the case as non-Westerners with rising incomes will displace poor and middle-class Westerners from their lofty perches.” As a result, a whole suite of privileges once enjoyed by working people in the richer parts of the world may soon pass out of their reach: international travel, for instance, both to exotic vacation destinations and to things like the World Cup, or the newest and most advanced electronics, like smartphones. Already, status markers like spots in prestigious Western universities are increasingly the subject of fierce international competition. Housing markets in many global capitals have been squeezed by foreign buyers as well. “Drill down to the level of a single person,” he writes, “and what becomes apparent is probably the greatest reshuffling of individual positions on the global income ladder since the Industrial Revolution.”

To this point, it has been China doing most of the reshuffling. Between 1988 and 2018, a ***working-class*** Italian, for instance, has seen his income fall by 17 percentiles in global terms. Over the same period, a Chinese urbanite earning a median local income would have seen his rise by roughly 20 percentiles — to the 70th from the 50th.

At the very top of the global pecking order, the makeup of the world’s wealthiest has remained relatively secure, in part because few wealthy Chinese have penetrated the top 5 percent of incomes, 80 percent of which are still earned by Westerners. “And it’s useful to think of the top 5 percent as essentially American,” Milanovic says, “because 40 percent of the people in the top 5 percent globally are us — the global rich are actually us.”

Soon enough, that will change radically: Even though Chinese growth rates have slowed, if they nevertheless remain several percentage points above America’s, the Chinese share of the world’s richest is likely to pass America’s by 2050 or perhaps even 2040 — meaning that, within 70 years of Mao’s death, a once-impoverished country would boast more of the planet’s wealthy than the “world’s richest country.” Probably, we’re going to have to retire that phrase and stop pretending it means the world is our playground — at least, ours alone.

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Illustration by Ibrahim Rayintakath FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** December 21, 2023

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[***Just How Rich Were the McCallisters in ‘Home Alone’?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69X9-1SG1-JBG3-6012-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 20, 2023 Wednesday 23:20 EST

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**Section:** MOVIES

**Length:** 1397 words

**Highlight:** Fans have been debating the McCallister family’s wealth for years. We asked the Federal Reserve for answers.

**Body**

Fans have been debating the McCallister family’s wealth for years. We asked the Federal Reserve for answers.

The battle in “Home Alone” between 8-year-old Kevin McCallister (Macaulay Culkin) and two burglars known as the Wet Bandits has unfolded on screens around the world every Christmas since the film premiered in 1990.

And each year, for some viewers, the McCallisters’ grand home and lifestyle inspires its own tradition: wondering just how rich this family was.

The New York Times turned to economists and people involved with the film to find the answer.

The McCallisters are the 1 Percent.

Early in the film, one of the burglars, Harry ([*Joe Pesci*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/06/movies/joe-pesci-the-irishman.html)), tells his fellow Wet Bandit, Marv (Daniel Stern), that the McCallister home is their top target in a wealthy neighborhood.

“That’s the one, Marv, that’s the silver tuna,” Harry says, before speculating that the house contains a lot of “top-flight goods,” including [*VCRs*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/20/style/vhs-tapes.html), stereos, very fine jewelry and “odd marketable securities.”

The home is the best clue as to how much money the McCallisters have.

The silver tuna, or its exterior anyway, is a real-world house at 671 Lincoln Avenue in the Chicago suburb of Winnetka, one of the most expensive neighborhoods in the United States, [*according to Realtor.com*](https://www.realtor.com/news/trends/the-most-expensive-neighborhoods-in-every-state-in-america/). It appears to have enough space for Kevin and his four siblings to each have their own rooms, but also can accommodate an army of visitors.

In 1990, the house was affordable only for the top 1 percent of Chicago household incomes, and that would still be the case today, according to economists at the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago.

The economists — Max Gillet, a senior research analyst; Cindy Hull, an assistant vice president and interim head of the financial markets group; and Thomas Walstrum, a senior business economist — made this determination after looking at data including household incomes in the Chicago metropolitan statistical area for 1990 and 2022, the house’s property value, prevailing mortgage rates at the time, and typical taxes and insurance.

Working with the assumption that the McCallisters did not spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing, the economists also determined the home would have been affordable to a household with an income of $305,000 in 1990 (about $665,000 in 2022).

In the middle of 2022, a similar house would cost about $2.4 million, based on the [*Zillow estimate for the “Home Alone” house*](https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/671-Lincoln-Ave-Winnetka-IL-60093/3360197_zpid/). A home of that value would be affordable to a household with income of $730,000, which would be in the top 1 percent of Chicago-area households, the economists said.

How are they so rich?

“Home Alone” never explains what the parents do for work.

On the internet, where this question regularly pops up, some people have suggested Kate McCallister is a fashion designer, because the house has several mannequins inside, which later feature in one of Kevin’s attempts to trick the burglars into thinking he is not, in fact, home alone.

Todd Strasser, who wrote the official novelizations of “Home Alone” and two of its sequels, said in an interview that he was not closely supervised by the filmmakers. The guidance, he said, was essentially: “Here’s the script, do whatever you want.”

So in the book, he made Kevin’s mom a fashion designer, because of the mannequins, and Kevin’s dad a businessman, because it was “a safe bet,” he said.

He said it never occurred to him to explain in detail how the McCallisters had come by their money; he thought they were “upper middle class” but not “super rich.”

The family has other trappings of significant-but-not-stratospheric wealth: They wear nice clothes and hire multiple vans to take them to the airport, yes, but when Kate is trying to bribe an elderly couple to give up their tickets from Paris so she can get home, she offers jewelry and cash, but hints that her Rolex might be fake.

“I don’t know how much the McCallisters made, but it sure did a lot for my bank account,” Strasser said.

[*One fan theory*](https://geekydaddy.com/2020/12/11/fan-theory-friday-home-alones-peter-mccallister-was-a-mob-boss/) posits that Peter McCallister is involved with organized crime. Under this theory, the McCallister home was specifically targeted as some sort of vendetta, and Kevin’s brutal [*violence*](https://www.nytimes.com/1991/01/20/movies/film-view-home-alone-are-its-kicks-painful-for-kids.html?searchResultPosition=3) against the burglars is the product of an upbringing exposed to criminal activity.

The Times could not rule out this theory.

Uncle Rob paid for the flights.

A commonly cited data point on the family’s wealth is their Christmas trip to Paris.

Flying 15 people to Paris is expensive, especially with the four adults flying first class, but Kevin’s parents don’t pay for the airplane tickets. [*Early in the film*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jOx-vmqfo3g), Kate McCallister tells a police officer — who is actually Harry in disguise — that her husband’s brother paid for the flights.

That brother is Uncle Rob. He is a minor figure in the first film, but the few mentions he does get suggest that he is loaded. He pays for the tickets, and he has an apartment in Paris that has a clear view of the Eiffel Tower and can somehow house 15 of his family members. (The film’s sequel, “Home Alone 2: Lost in New York,” further suggests that Uncle Rob is wealthy, but this analysis is based only on the first film.)

A third brother, Uncle Frank (the mean one), lives in Ohio and travels with the family from Illinois to Paris. We do not learn anything about his income, but we do know he is cheap. At his brother’s house in Illinois, he avoids paying the $122.50 pizza bill. On the plane, dining in first class, he tells his wife to slip the crystal salt and pepper shakers in her purse.

This behavior could suggest that he is wealthy. Shoplifting was “significantly more common” among people with family incomes over $70,000, according to a 2008 article published in [*The American Journal of Psychiatry*](https://ajp.psychiatryonline.org/doi/10.1176/appi.ajp.2008.07101660?url_ver=Z39.88-2003&amp;rfr_id=ori:rid:crossref.org&amp;rfr_dat=cr_pub%20%200pubmed).

Uncle Frank is also a typical adult character in the world of John Hughes, who wrote and produced “Home Alone,” said [*Robert Bulman*](https://www.stmarys-ca.edu/faculty-directory/bulman-robert-c), a sociology professor at Saint Mary’s College of California who studies the representation of teens and high schools in film.

He said that a common mark of a Hughes film is dramatic tension fueled by conflict between young people and adults, which almost always resolves in favor of the younger person.

He noted that in Hughes’s teen films — including “The Breakfast Club,” and “Pretty in Pink” — class tensions are also often prominent and drive the story forward.

“His stories usually favor the perspective of the ***working class*** kid or the poor kid who is trying to gain access to a wealthier peer group, for instance,” Professor Bulman said. “But in ‘Home Alone,’ it’s unmistakably a victory for Kevin as a child, but also Kevin as a rich kid defending his impressive fortress.”

The movie is not about the money.

Eve Cauley, the set decorator for “Home Alone,” was responsible for decor such as the furniture and wallpaper inside of the McCallister home, which was filmed on built sets in a local high school.

She said in an email that the home was not expensively furnished but had a deliberately “stately, upscale look.”

When the film was made, navy blue and dusty pink were popular interior design colors, Cauley said. But she was inspired by Norman Rockwell paintings and antique Christmas cards to use saturated reds, greens and golds in the family home.

Hughes told her that he wanted the house to have a “timeless look,” she said. “He told me he likes his films to look a bit nicer and cleaner than reality, since his purpose in making movies is to entertain the audience and uplift them,” she said.

Cauley also had some advice for people looking for an answer about the family’s income.

“To me, with respect, fans who argue about the parents’ income, or house cost, should, instead, simply enjoy the movie,” she said.

Hughes and the director Chris Columbus “created this heartwarming and comic film as entertainment for the audience, to uplift spirits for the holidays,” she said. “It did, and still does, lift spirits.”

PHOTOS: The “Home Alone” movies never explain what Kevin’s parents do for work, so people have filled in the gaps. The McCallister family home is a real house in Winnetka, Ill., a wealthy suburb of Chicago. In 1990, a family would have needed a household income of $305,000 (or $665,000 in 2022) to live there. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY 20TH CENTURY FOX; ERIN HOOLEY/CHICAGO TRIBUNE VA GETTY IMAGES) (B1); The family has other trappings of significant-but-not-stratospheric wealth. (PHOTOGRAPH BY 20TH CENTURY FOX) (B5) This article appeared in print on page B1, B5.

**Load-Date:** December 24, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Double Trouble***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6997-67D1-DXY4-X03K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 1, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 11; NONFICTION

**Length:** 955 words

**Byline:** By Katie Roiphe

**Body**

DOPPELGANGER: A Trip Into the Mirror World, by Naomi Klein

Reading the leftist writer and activist Naomi Klein's new book, ''Doppelganger,'' feels like falling down a rabbit hole, albeit a dazzling and erudite one. It begins with Klein's account of being confused on social media for Naomi Wolf, the feminist intellectual turned rabid anti-vaxxer, whom Klein calls ''my big-haired doppelganger.'' During the pandemic, Wolf began arguing, online and in a book, that vaccines and other public health measures were a plot by a ''transnational group of bad actors'' to sterilize people, turn children into drones and undermine the Constitution, among many other unhinged assertions.

It got to the point that when Wolf would say something outlandish, people would tweet ''Thoughts and prayers to Naomi Klein.'' Needless to say, it was disturbing for Klein, the serious author of books such as ''No Logo'' and ''The Shock Doctrine,'' to be confused with ''a person who can't seem to tell the difference between temporary public health measures and a coup d'état.''

At first, Klein tries to ignore ''Other Naomi,'' to see the comic side of the conflation; she files it into the category of '''things that happened on the internet that were not quite real' (back when we were silly enough to do that about all kinds of things).'' And then she begins obsessively to follow Wolf's rise in what she calls the ''Mirror World'' of wild conspiracies and right-wing paranoia. Klein hides from her family during the pandemic to listen to Wolf on Steve Bannon's podcast, spinning an analysis of her ''doppelganger'' into a deft and intricate investigation of online culture and political doubling.

By obsessively chasing ''Other Naomi,'' Klein attempts to face and understand what most liberals simply try to avoid or shut out. She doesn't give in to the temptation to dismiss Wolf and other denizens of the Mirror World as irrelevant crackpots and crazies; instead, she dives into a probing investigation of their preoccupations and appeal.

On her highbrow romp through this disturbing underworld, Klein's writing is clear, dynamic, ruthlessly honest, imbued with a rare integrity. She brings unusual rigor to her examinations of herself, including her flaws. She is that nearly extinct breed of activist: one who never stops questioning orthodoxies and interrogating her own beliefs. ''Doppelganger'' showcases her superb ability to cut through clichés and received ideas, as well as intellectual conventions.

By mapping the evolution of her doppelganger, along with other pockets of online paranoia that flourished during the pandemic, Klein traces how well-intentioned liberals begin to mirror the anti-vaxxers: ''We defined ourselves against each other and yet were somehow becoming ever more alike, willing to declare each other non-people.'' She carefully untangles on the right a ''mimicking of beliefs and concerns that feeds off progressive failures and silences.''

In Klein's view, ''When entire categories of people are reduced to their race and gender and labeled 'privileged,' there is little room to confront the myriad ways that ***working-class*** white men and women are abused under our predatory capitalist order, with left-wing movements losing many opportunities for alliances.'' She points out that such reductive labeling is ''highly unstrategic,'' since the Mirror World is waiting for people alienated or exiled by the left, offering them forums and sympathy.

''Doppelganger'''s rabbit-hole form allows it to flow from wellness influencers turned anti-vaxxers during the pandemic to parents of autistic children, to Nazis, to Israel, to Klein's husband's potential political constituents. (In 2021, Klein's husband, Avi Lewis ran unsuccessfully, for a seat in the Canadian Parliament.) Her references jump from Iris Murdoch to Charlie Chaplin, Philip Roth, Marx and Freud, and one of the great pleasures of the book is watching her mind synthesize this confounding and volatile political moment with such originality and verve.

If Klein's jargon can sound like it's lifted from a slick new Netflix series -- with her ''Shadow Lands,'' ''Mirror World'' and ''doppelgangers'' -- there is a drama and stylishness to her inquiry that is hard to resist. By deploying the idiom of psychological thrillers, she infuses energy into her often dense or theoretical material.

She emerges from her long wrangle with her own doppelganger with a new sense of distance from the person she is online. Because Wolf has injected ''a hefty dose of ridiculousness into the seriousness with which I once took my public persona,'' Klein writes, she feels freed from her public self. She refers to the process as an ''unconventional Buddhist exercise in annihilating the ego,'' and quotes John Berger's observation to her that ''calm is a form of resistance.''

If some of Klein's larger-scale solutions toward the end of the book seem pat or elusive (teach people the true meaning of words like ''patriarchy'' and ''imperialism''; recognize our interconnectedness), I nonetheless admired her impulse to write her way out of despair. There is something hopeful in this project, in its sheer intellectual ambition and range, its effort to pick apart and decipher the absurdities and ironies of our political derangement, which almost no other writer could pull off. If I had to name a single book that makes sense of these last few dark years, it would be this one.

DOPPELGANGER: A Trip Into the Mirror World | By Naomi Klein | 399 pp. | Farrar, Straus & Giroux | $27Katie Roiphe is TK. tkt tkt kt tkt kt kt tkt kt tkt kt tkt kt ktk t tktk tktktk tk tkt kt kt tk tk tkt kt kt tkt tk tk tkt kt kt t tk ktkt tkt kt tk tkkt tk tk tkt kt kt ktkt

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/07/books/review/doppelganger-naomi-klein.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/07/books/review/doppelganger-naomi-klein.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page BR11.

**Load-Date:** October 1, 2023

**End of Document**



[***An Author's Family Inspired Her Stories***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69CY-XJN1-JBG3-60TB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 14, 2023 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. 3

**Length:** 836 words

**Byline:** By Elizabeth A. Harris

**Body**

''Temple Folk,'' Aaliyah Bilal's collection of stories featuring Black American Muslims, was inspired by her family's experiences with the Nation of Islam.

Aaliyah Bilal didn't have an agent or any publishing connections to speak of when she sent six stories to Simon & Schuster in 2021, after an open call for submissions. The publisher, impressed, offered her a book deal, and those stories became part of ''Temple Folk,'' her debut collection, which follows Black American Muslims who were members of the Nation of Islam around the 1970s.

Published in July, ''Temple Folk'' was named a finalist last week for a National Book Award.

Bilal, 41, grew up in a ***working-class*** Sunni family just outside Washington, D.C., and her grandparents had belonged to the Nation of Islam, a Black nationalist group. Her grandfather once told her that he hadn't learned Arabic as a member, so couldn't read the Quran at the time. So why, she asked, had he bothered to join?

''His face got really hard, and he said, 'Don't you know that white people were killing us and lynching us and calling us the N-word in those days?''' she recalled. '''What would you have done?' And it silenced me, because I didn't know what I would have done.''

''Temple Folk,'' which grapples with that era of the Nation of Islam, is her answer. Its 10 stories touch on modesty and sexuality, abuse and family, responsibility and faith.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

How did you find your way to writing?

My mother lives in Cairo and she has amazing taste in books, so she has this ample library. I spent a couple of months there in 2007 reading incessantly, and that was where my writing education began. I spent three years really teaching myself to read like a writer. Then around 2010 I felt confident enough to start trying to write.

Did any works in particular make an impression on you at the time?

Some of the books that I read multiple times that were very important to me were ''The Bluest Eye,'' by Toni Morrison, ''Maud Martha,'' by Gwendolyn Brooks, and ''Lost in the City,'' by Edward P. Jones. But especially Edward P. Jones, because every page in his work, to my sensibility, was perfect. I really felt like I'd met my teacher when I read that book.

I feel like this is good advice for any writer: If you spend enough time with a story, it will reveal all of the secrets of its construction.

Why were you drawn to explore the Nation of Islam in your first book?

This is part of my family history. I think the thing that disturbs some people is the idea that I can be of such a mixed mind about it, because I don't like racialized thinking, and at the same time I understand, in its historical context, how inevitable it was that a movement like this would emerge. I have some pride, frankly, associated with the fact that my grandparents were brave enough to assert, in an environment where they were taught to hate themselves for being Black, that they should take pride in being Black. So I have pride attached to this personal history and I also have a lot of critique around the things the nation said and did.

How did you channel your ''mixed mind'' into the tone of the stories?

However unpopular it is to say, the Nation of Islam has a lot of cachet in Black America. Even among people who are not members, the organization is perceived as powerful and strong and righteous. So if you put somebody in the position of having to talk about it in Black spaces, there's a lot of pressure to say glowing things. I feel like my family members clam up. Nobody felt like they had the freedom to actually talk about the abuses they endured without being made fun of or yelled at or put down in the Black community. I was like: No. I'm a writer -- there's some deep indignation that I have about any kind of self-imposed silencing.

What did you hope to accomplish with these stories?

Everything of note that has ever been written about African American Muslims has been academic or some kind of journalistic nonfiction. So the whole conceptualization of the world needed to be epic in a way, but it also needed to be comprehensive. I felt that if I were to divide this world into various stories, it would be like visiting different rooms in the same house -- you'd get a survey of the world.

The book is very rigorous in engaging with the good and the bad. The book pulls no punches when it comes to pointing out the questionable things that have happened, that continue to happen in these spaces. But it's also lovely and loving, and these are people -- they're just human beings.''

How are you responding to the positive critical reception?

I don't really have a sense of how this world works because I have no contact with the literary world outside my editor and my agent. I don't have writer friends. It's me and my page, my editor and my agent. That's it. I don't know what this reception means because I'm very new to this world. I'm very, very grateful, but I'm waiting to see what it means.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/12/books/aaliyah-bilal-temple-folk.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/12/books/aaliyah-bilal-temple-folk.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Aaliyah Bilal in Cincinnati recently. Her debut, a story collection centered on members of the Nation of Islam, was published in July. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MADELEINE HORDINSKI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page C3.

**Load-Date:** October 14, 2023

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[***Is It Time to Give Candy Corn the Respect It Deserves?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69GJ-S3V1-JBG3-61WP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 26, 2023 Thursday 00:05 EST

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**Section:** STYLE

**Length:** 1029 words

**Byline:** Derrick Bryson Taylor

**Highlight:** One woman in Mississippi has amassed a sizable collection. Another in Maine has built a wardrobe around it. Candy corn, one of the most divisive treats on the market, has proved it has staying power.

**Body**

Sitting in her Wiggins, Miss., home one fall afternoon, Wanda King began counting all of the candy corn flavors she has collected over the years.

She quickly ran out of fingers.

There is sea salt chocolate, caramel, peppermint, cookies, Starburst, Sour Patch Kids, apple pie, pumpkin pie, s’mores and three separate coffee flavors. Others are slightly more imaginative, like blackberry cobbler. Some are holiday themed, like eggnog and witch’s teeth, which are off white with green tips. Others in her collection try to mimic meals — like a brunch-flavored bag with kernels that taste like French toast, waffles and pancakes.

Catching her breath, Ms. King, 62, said she had amassed nearly 40 varieties, which she stores neatly in Mason jars in a guest bedroom.

“It is the ultimate survival sugar rush,” she said, noting that she’d recently checked the freshness of a batch from 2017. “Candy corn don’t go bad. It’ll last forever.”

Ms. King and her husband, Danny King, [*run a YouTube channel*](https://www.youtube.com/@DeepSouthHomestead) dedicated to their 10-acre homestead about 30 miles north of Gulfport. Her connection to candy corn started as a running joke about six years ago and took off with the help of their viewers, some of whom have sent bags for her to try.

Although Ms. King is referred to as a “candy corn queen” by some of her friends, there is a line she will not cross.

“I couldn’t see a turkey-tasting candy corn,” she said. “And people sent me a [*meme*](https://www.teenvogue.com/story/candy-corn-pizza-goes-viral-internet-response) of a pizza with candy corn, and I can’t see eating a candy corn pizza. I just can’t.”

Chicken feed, as candy corn was originally called because of its appearance, was invented by the Wunderle Candy Company in the late 1880s during a candy boom in the United States, said Susan Benjamin, a food historian and president of True Treats, a research-based candy store in West Virginia.

Chicken feed and other treats like it were marketed toward ***working-class*** children. “It was the first time they could see themselves as part of the middle class because they could go out and purchase something,” Ms. Benjamin said. “That something was made for them and geared to their taste and that was candy.”

Chicken feed was initially popular year-round. It&#39;s unclear when it became a near-exclusive Halloween sensation, but research suggests it was most likely around the middle of the 20th century.

By the 1940s, trick-or-treating was taking off in the United States in part because candy manufacturers became adept at packaging smaller snacks. “That would explain why candy corn became the natural fit for trick-or-treating, because it had everything,” Ms. Benjamin said, adding that it reminded people of harvest rituals, it was festive in appearance, and it was inexpensive.

“The triumph of candy corn is the triumph of getting past all of these thousands of candies that were made in the 1800s to be one of the few that survived today,” she said. Ever heard of Sen-Sen, spruce resin gum or banana split taffy? Probably not. But candy corn, she said, is “still around and we still use it.” She added, “You still find it in decorations and food all over the place.”

Candy corn today is widely sold across the United States. Jelly Belly Candy Company, which has manufactured candy corn since 1898, when it was called the Goelitz Confectionery Company, produced about 65 million kernels of candy corn the last fiscal year, a spokesman said. Brach’s, a competitor, produces about 30 million pounds of candy corn each year, a spokeswoman said. Brach’s claims to be the No. 1 producer of candy corn, making up 88 percent of the candy corn sold in the United States.

With so much candy corn on the market, who’s eating it? And how? Fifty-one percent of Americans eat the whole piece at once, and 31 percent start nibbling the tiny pieces at the narrow white end, according to a recent survey [*by the National Confectioners Association*](https://alwaysatreat.com/candy-moments/halloween-central/everything-candy-corn/). The remaining 18 percent start with the yellow end.

No matter how it’s eaten, candy corn regularly tops the list of most divisive treats alongside black licorice and circus peanuts, Ms. Benjamin said. Each fall, when pumpkins take center stage and candy is sold by the bucket, discord breaks out between the lovers and haters of candy corn.

Key Lee, 29, a content creator in New York City, is among the haters. “This didn’t need to be made,” she said, calling the intensely sweet flavor, which she described as like maple syrup, off putting.

The comedian Lewis Black dislikes what he calls its mealy texture. “I don’t even know how to describe its flavor because it’s one of the few things on the planet that tastes like poop,” he said.

And it’s been about 30 years since Ray Garton, 60, a horror novelist in Northern California, last had candy corn. “It’s the consistency, how it feels between my teeth and the taste,” he said. “It’s just too sweet. It makes me shudder just thinking about it.”

On the opposite end of the spectrum is Melissa Cady, 38, an Etsy shop owner in Hollis, Maine. While she likes eating candy corn, she prefers dressing up like it. “If I see candy corn stuff, I kind of automatically gravitate toward it,” she said. “I’ve been collecting candy corn things for a while.”

Ms. Cady has candy-corn-colored buttons, earrings, headbands, sweaters, dresses and other knickknacks, including a ceramic candy corn tree. “It feels like big box retailers have caught on to the whole, like, candy corn craze and that there’s money to be made in it, outside of the actual candy itself,” she said.

Each year, she shares one bag with her husband, and they have no plans to give it up. “I totally get all the people who are like: ‘It’s disgusting. It has like a weird, waxy texture,’” she said. “I totally know where they’re coming from, but I’ll still eat it. Is that weird?”

PHOTOS: PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDRIA LO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (B1); Wanda King has collected nearly 40 varieties of candy corn that she keeps in Mason jars, with flavors including pumpkin pie, eggnog and French toast.; Ms. King and her husband, Danny, run a YouTube channel devoted to their 10-acre property and home, Deep South Homestead, near Wiggins, Miss. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ELIJAH BAYLIS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (B5) This article appeared in print on page B1, B5.

**Load-Date:** October 31, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Defeat Trump, Now More Than Ever; David Brooks***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64VV-78P1-DXY4-X11F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 24, 2022 Thursday 21:46 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 966 words

**Byline:** David Brooks

**Highlight:** The struggle against authoritarianism, at home and abroad.

**Body**

The democratic nations of the world are in a global struggle against authoritarianism. That struggle has international fronts — starting with the need to confront, repel and weaken Vladimir Putin.

But that struggle also has domestic fronts — the need to defeat the mini-Putins now found across the Western democracies. These are the demagogues who lie with Putinesque brazenness, who shred democratic institutions with Putinesque bravado, who strut the world’s stage with Putin’s amoral schoolboy machismo while pretending to represent all that is traditional and holy.

In the United States that, of course, is Donald Trump. This moment of heightened danger and crisis makes it even clearer that the No. 1 domestic priority for all Americans who care about democracy is to make sure Trump never sees the inside of the Oval Office ever again. As democracy is threatened from abroad, it can’t also be cannibalized from within.

Thinking has to be crystal clear. What are the crucial battlegrounds in the struggle against Trump? He won the White House by winning Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin with strong support from white voters without a college degree. Joe Biden ousted Trump by winning back those states and carrying the new swing states, Arizona and Georgia.

So for the next three years Democrats need to wake up with one overriding political thought: What are we doing to appeal to all ***working-class*** voters in those five states? Are we doing anything today that might alienate these voters?

Are the Democrats winning the contest for these voters right now? No.

At the start of 2021 Democrats had a [*nine-point advantage*](https://news.gallup.com/poll/388781/political-party-preferences-shifted-greatly-during-2021.aspx) when you asked voters to name their party preference. By the end of 2021 Republicans had a five-point advantage. Among swing voters, things are particularly grim. A February 2022 Economist/YouGov survey found that a pathetic 30 percent of independents approve of Biden’s job performance. ***Working-class*** voters are turning against Biden. According to a January [*Pew survey*](https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2022/01/25/views-of-joe-biden/), 54 percent of Americans with graduate degrees approved of Biden’s performance, but only 37 percent of those without any college experience did.

Are Democrats thinking clearly about how to win those voters? No.

This week two veteran Democratic strategists, William A. Galston and Elaine Kamarck, issued a [*report*](https://www.progressivepolicy.org/publication/the-new-politics-of-evasion%20%5Bprogressivepolicy-org%5D/) for the Progressive Policy Institute arguing that Democrats need to get over at least three delusions.

The first Democratic myth is, “People of color think and act alike.” In fact, there have been differences between Hispanics and Black Americans on issues like the economy, foreign policy and policing. Meanwhile ***working-class*** people have been moving toward the G.O.P. across racial lines.

“Today, the Democrats’ ***working-class*** problem isn’t limited to white workers,” the veteran Democratic pollster Stanley Greenberg wrote in The American Prospect. “The party is also losing support from ***working-class*** Blacks and Hispanics.”

The second Democratic myth is, “Economics trumps culture.” This is the idea that if Democrats can shower working- and middle-class voters with material benefits, then that will overwhelm any differences they may have with them on religious, social and cultural issues — on guns, crime and immigration, etc. This crude economic determinism has been rebutted by history time and time again.

The third myth is, “A progressive ascendancy is emerging.” The fact is that only 7 percent of the electorate considers itself “very liberal.” I would have thought the Biden economic agenda, which basically consists of handing money to the people who need it most, would be astoundingly popular. It’s [*popular, but not that popular*](https://noahpinion.substack.com/p/the-rejection-of-bidenomics?r=elvx&amp;amp%3Butm_campaign=post&amp;amp%3Butm_medium=email&amp;amp%3Butm_source=url&amp;utm_source=url). I would have thought Americans would scream bloody murder when the expansion of the existing child tax credit expired. They haven’t. Distrust in government is still astoundingly high, undercutting the progressive project at every turn.

What do Democrats need to do now? Well, one thing they are really good at. Over the past few years a wide range of thinkers — across the political spectrum — have congregated around a neo-Hamiltonian agenda that stands for the idea that we need to [*build more things*](https://noahpinion.substack.com/p/a-new-industrialist-roundup?utm_source=url) — roads, houses, colleges, green technologies and ports. Democrats need to hammer home this Builders agenda, which would provide good-paying jobs and renew American dynamism.

But Democrats also have to do something they’re really bad at: Craft a cultural narrative around the theme of social order. The Democrats have been blamed for fringe ideas like “defund the police” and a zeal for “critical race theory” because the party doesn’t have its own mainstream social and cultural narrative.

With war in Europe, crime rising on our streets, disarray at the border, social unraveling in many of our broken communities, perceived ideological unmooring in our schools, moral decay everywhere, Democrats need to tell us which cultural and moral values they stand for that will hold this country together.

The authoritarians tell a simple story about how to restore order — it comes from cultural homogeneity and the iron fist of the strongman. Democrats have a harder challenge — to show how order can be woven amid diversity, openness and the full flowering of individuals. But Democrats need to name the moral values and practices that will restore social order.

It doesn’t matter how many nice programs you have; people won’t support you if they think your path is the path to chaos.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/31/opinion/letters/letters-to-editor-new-york-times-women.html) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://help.nytimes.com/hc/en-us/articles/115014925288-How-to-submit-a-letter-to-the-editor). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](mailto:letters@nytimes.com).

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

**Load-Date:** February 25, 2022

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[***What if We’re the Bad Guys Here?; David Brooks***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68VG-MG91-DXY4-X03N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 2, 2023 Wednesday 23:30 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1527 words

**Byline:** David Brooks

**Highlight:** How the modern meritocracy made Trump inevitable.

**Body**

Donald Trump seems to get indicted on a weekly basis. Yet he is [*utterly dominating*](https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2024/president/us/2024_republican_presidential_nomination-7548.html) his Republican rivals in the polls, and he is [*tied*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/01/us/politics/biden-trump-poll.html) with Joe Biden in the general election surveys. Trump’s poll numbers are stronger against Biden now than at any time in 2020.

What’s going on here? Why is this guy still politically viable, after all he’s done?

We anti-Trumpers often tell a story to explain that. It was encapsulated in a [*quote*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/19/opinion/polarization-nationalism-patriotism-history.html) the University of North Carolina political scientist Marc Hetherington gave to my colleague Thomas B. Edsall recently: “Republicans see a world changing around them uncomfortably fast, and they want it to slow down, maybe even take a step backward. But if you are a person of color, a woman who values gender equality or an L.G.B.T. person, would you want to go back to 1963? I doubt it.”

In this story, we anti-Trumpers are the good guys, the forces of progress and enlightenment. The Trumpers are reactionary bigots and authoritarians. Many Republicans support Trump no matter what, according to this story, because at the end of the day, he’s still the bigot in chief, the embodiment of their resentments and that’s what matters to them most.

I partly agree with this story, but it’s also a monument to elite self-satisfaction.

So let me try another story on you. I ask you to try on a vantage point in which we anti-Trumpers are not the eternal good guys. In fact, we’re the bad guys.

This story begins in the 1960s, when high school grads had to go off to fight in Vietnam but the children of the educated class got college deferments. It continues in the 1970s, when the authorities imposed busing on ***working-class*** areas in Boston but not on the upscale communities [*like Wellesley*](https://www.nytimes.com/1999/09/18/us/judge-w-arthur-garrity-jr-is-dead-at-79.html) where they themselves lived.

The ideal that we’re all in this together was replaced with the reality that the educated class lives in a world up here and everybody else is forced into a world down there. Members of our class are always publicly speaking out for the marginalized, but somehow we always end up building systems that serve ourselves.

The most important of those systems is the modern meritocracy. We built an entire social order that sorts and excludes people on the basis of the quality that we possess most: academic achievement. Highly educated parents go to elite schools, marry each other, work at high-paying professional jobs and pour enormous resources into our children, who get into the same elite schools, marry each other and pass their exclusive class privileges down from generation to generation.

Daniel Markovits summarized years of research in his book “The Meritocracy Trap”: “Today, middle-class children lose out to the rich children at school, and middle-class adults lose out to elite graduates at work. Meritocracy blocks the middle class from opportunity. Then it blames those who lose a competition for income and status that, even when everyone plays by the rules, only the rich can win.”

The meritocracy isn’t only a system of exclusion; it’s an ethos. During his presidency, Barack Obama used the word “smart” in the context of his policies over 900 times. The implication was that anybody who disagreed with his policies (and perhaps didn’t go to Harvard Law) must be stupid.

Over the last decades, we’ve taken over whole professions and locked everybody else out. When I began my journalism career in Chicago in the 1980s, there were still some old crusty ***working-class*** guys around the newsroom. Now we’re not only a college-dominated profession; we’re an elite-college-dominated profession. Only 0.8 percent of college students graduate from the super-elite 12 schools (the Ivy League colleges, plus Stanford, M.I.T., Duke and the University of Chicago). A 2018 [*study*](https://www.journalofexpertise.org/articles/volume1_issue1/JoE_2018_1_1_Wai_Perina.pdf) found that more than 50 percent of the staff writers at the beloved New York Times and The Wall Street Journal attended one of the 29 most elite universities in the nation.

Writing in [*Compact magazine*](https://compactmag.com/article/break-up-america-s-elite), Michael Lind observes that the upper-middle-class job market looks like a candelabrum: “Those who manage to squeeze through the stem of a few prestigious colleges and universities in their youth can then branch out to fill leadership positions in almost every vocation.”

Or, as Markovits puts it, “elite graduates monopolize the best jobs and at the same time invent new technologies that privilege superskilled workers, making the best jobs better and all other jobs worse.”

Members of our class also segregate ourselves into a few booming metro areas: San Francisco, D.C., Austin and so on. In 2020, Biden won only 500 or so counties, but together they are responsible for [*71 percent of the American economy*](https://www.brookings.edu/articles/biden-voting-counties-equal-70-of-americas-economy-what-does-this-mean-for-the-nations-political-economic-divide/). Trump won over 2,500 counties, responsible for only 29 percent. Once we find our cliques, we don’t get out much. In the book “Social Class in the 21st Century,” the sociologist Mike Savage and his co-researchers found that the members of the highly educated class tend to be the most insular, measured by how often we have contact with those who have jobs unlike our own.

Armed with all kinds of economic, cultural and political power, we support policies that help ourselves. Free trade makes the products we buy cheaper, and our jobs are unlikely to be moved to China. Open immigration makes our service staff cheaper, but new, less-educated immigrants aren’t likely to put downward pressure on our wages.

Like all elites, we use language and mores as tools to recognize one another and exclude others. Using words like “problematic,” “cisgender,” “Latinx” and “intersectional” is a sure sign that you’ve got cultural capital coming out of your ears. Meanwhile, members of the less-educated classes have to walk on eggshells because they never know when we’ve changed the usage rules so that something that was sayable five years ago now gets you fired.

We also change the moral norms in ways that suit ourselves, never mind the cost to others. For example, there used to be a norm that discouraged people from having children outside marriage, but that got washed away during our period of cultural dominance, as we eroded norms that seemed judgmental or that might inhibit individual freedom.

After this social norm was eroded, a funny thing happened. Members of our class still overwhelmingly married and had children within wedlock. People without our resources, unsupported by social norms, were less able to do that. As Adrian Wooldridge points out in his magisterial 2021 book, “The Aristocracy of Talent,” “Sixty percent of births to women with only a high school certificate occur out of wedlock, compared with only 10 percent to women with a university degree.” That matters, he continues, because “the rate of single parenting is the most significant predictor of social immobility in the country.”

Does this mean that I think the people in my class are vicious and evil? No. Most of us are earnest, kind and public-spirited. But we take for granted and benefit from systems that have become oppressive. Elite institutions have become so politically progressive in part because the people in them want to feel good about themselves as they take part in systems that exclude and reject.

It’s easy to understand why people in less-educated classes would conclude that they are under economic, political, cultural and moral assault — and why they’ve rallied around Trump as their best warrior against the educated class. He understood that it’s not the entrepreneurs who seem most threatening to workers; it’s the professional class. Trump understood that there was great demand for a leader who would stick his thumb in our eyes on a daily basis and reject the whole epistemic regime that we rode in on.

If distrustful populism is your basic worldview, the Trump indictments seem like just another skirmish in the class war between the professionals and the workers, another assault by a bunch of coastal lawyers who want to take down the man who most aggressively stands up to them. Of course, the indictments don’t cause Trump supporters to abandon him. They cause them to become more fiercely loyal. That’s the polling story of the last six months.

Are Trump supporters right that the indictments are just a political witch hunt? Of course not. As a card-carrying member of my class, I still basically trust the legal system and the neutral arbiters of justice. Trump is a monster in the way we’ve all been saying for years and deserves to go to prison.

But there’s a larger context here. As the sociologist E. Digby Baltzell wrote decades ago, “History is a graveyard of classes which have preferred caste privileges to leadership.” That is the destiny our class is now flirting with. We can condemn the Trumpian populists until the cows come home, but the real question is: When will we stop behaving in ways that make Trumpism inevitable?

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PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY EVAN VUCCI/ASSOCIATED PRESS) This article appeared in print on page A18.

**Load-Date:** August 4, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Martians, Dolls and a Cellist’s Dog: The Many Worlds of Jennifer Walshe***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69MV-FXD1-JBG3-61GP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 15, 2023 Wednesday 12:40 EST

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**Section:** ARTS; music

**Length:** 1181 words

**Byline:** Andrew Dickson

**Highlight:** The Irish composer blends everyday items with Dada-like theatricals. But there’s a serious purpose to her explorations.

**Body**

The Irish composer blends everyday items with Dada-like theatricals. But there’s a serious purpose to her explorations.

A few weeks ago, Jennifer Walshe was backstage at a concert hall in Essen, Germany, searching for the exit when she paused near the green room. A double bass bow was laid out, ready for the evening’s performance; attached to it, wobbling in the air, were several black-and-white balloons. Walshe grinned and pulled out her phone to snap a picture.

This esoteric musical apparatus had been prepared for a new piece, composed by Walshe, that would be premiering in a few hours’ time. Called [*“Some Notes on Martian Sonic Aesthetics, 2034-51,”*](https://twitter.com/JenniferWalshe/status/1718588321444589875) it invites a chamber ensemble to impersonate a musically trained crew who have set up a colony on Mars and are beaming performances back to Earth.

While researching the piece, Walshe, 49, said that she had asked NASA how sound waves travel in carbon-dioxide rich atmospheres (“you don’t hear high-end frequencies”). She had also requested that packets of [*freeze-dried food*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/22/science/astronauts-food-space-station.html) be placed on the percussionists’ tables, so that the audience could hear the sound of astronauts chowing down, along with cans of compressed air to imitate the hiss of airlocks opening and closing.

And the helium-filled balloons? Here to make the double bassist’s bow feel 60 percent lighter, as though he were playing in Martian gravity. “I’m a hardcore science fiction fan,” Walshe said as she strode onto the street. “I want things to be as accurate as possible.”

Otherworldly though the Mars piece may be, by the standards of Walshe’s oeuvre, it isn’t that outlandish. In 2003, she produced a 35-minute opera, [*“XXX Live Nude Girls,”*](https://www.theguardian.com/music/2003/nov/17/classicalmusicandopera) whose protagonists were Barbie dolls manipulated by puppeteers, their voices supplied by female vocalists. In 2017 came [*“My Dog &amp; I,”*](https://milker.org/jenniferwalsheworklist) a piece for cello, dancer, film, electronics — and the cellist’s pet, who curled up onstage.

A few years later, Walshe began work on a knowing tribute to her homeland called [*“Ireland: A Dataset,”*](https://journalofmusic.com/news/when-we-think-about-ireland-what-do-we-want-included-dataset-jennifer-walshe-world-premiere-her) in part created by feeding gobbets of “[*Riverdance*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/04/arts/dance/riverdance-25th-anniversary.html),” [*Enya*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/07/magazine/enya-recommendation.html), James Joyce and Irish [*sean nos*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/25/arts/music/irish-music-lankum-lisa-oneill.html) folk song into an artificial-intelligence-generated composition engine. In the piece, which Walshe described as “a slightly bizarre radio play,” the results play out alongside video mash-ups and an instrumentalist and vocalists performing skits, one of which pokes fun at Irish American tourists visiting the country in search of their roots.

It would be wrong to think of these pieces as jokes, but not entirely wrong: a vein of anarchic humor does run through much of what Walshe does, as well as a taste for hectic, Dada-like theatricals. She often appears as a vocalist in her own pieces, makes accompanying films and writes scripts and essays, in addition to her day job as a professor of composition at the University of Oxford.

“It’s hard to keep up with her,” said Kate Molleson, a critic and broadcaster. “Her mind is so restless and inquisitive. I can’t think of a composer more interested in the way the contemporary world functions.”

Walshe said she sees what she does as a way of paying attention: “I want to be present, and curious and engaged,” she said over dinner one night. “The work is how I do that.”

Born in Dublin to a ***working-class***, artistically inclined family (her father worked for IBM, her mother was a writer), Walshe began as a trumpeter — initially in local youth orchestras, before studying the instrument at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Glasgow.

At college, she said, she felt like the odd one out: She would practice and attend concerts, and work on her own compositions, but she was also fascinated by visual art, literature, film and a million other things. These obsessions were “regarded as my weird hobby,” she said with a laugh.

She felt more at home when she did graduate work at Northwestern in Chicago, discovering not just avant-garde composer-performers like [*La Monte Young*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/22/t-magazine/la-monte-young.html) and [*Laurie Anderson*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/06/magazine/laurie-anderson.html), but also the city’s rambunctious comedy and free jazz scenes. Despite never having taken vocal training, she began to sing and improvise, and the boundaries of her creativity exploded.

It is Walshe’s creed that practically everything can be material: text messages, memes, irritating conversations overheard on the train, [*old TV shows and movies unearthed from YouTube*](https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/10/26/jennifer-walshes-sublime-chaos), online message boards, Samuel Beckett and the band [*One Direction*](https://ivorsacademy.com/info_advice/new-horizons-meet-jennifer-walshe/) have all appeared in her work.

The other week, she said, she had been asked to record her dentist as he performed a procedure: “The second you say, ‘Let’s pay attention to this and see what’s going on,’ maybe that’s something interesting.”

But it would be wrong to interpret her work, extraordinary as it often is, as irreverent for the sake of it, Molleson said. “There’s a real compassion and tenderness there. And she’s fascinated by big issues. Take A.I., which she was exploring a decade ago: She was way ahead of most of us.” For all of its high jinks, in performance “Some Notes on Martian Sonic Aesthetics” was a disconcertingly moving meditation on the loneliness of space exploration.

Later this month, Walshe will travel to the northern English town of Huddersfield, where she will be the [*resident composer*](https://hcmf.co.uk/voice-is-an-archive-an-introduction-to-jennifer-walshe-hcmf-2023-composer-in-residence/) at its annual contemporary music festival. “Ireland: A Dataset,” premiered online during the coronavirus pandemic, will have its first in-person performance on Nov. 24. And a gallery will host an exhibition of Walshe’s work, titled “13 Ways of Looking at A.I.: Art and Music,” which will develop the composer’s recent thinking on a subject that has preoccupied and fascinated her for the last decade, and which increasingly seems to infiltrate her output.

The festival will open on Friday with another recent work, “Personhood,” created with the accordionist Andreas Borregaard. It explores what selfhood looks like in an era of unremitting technological surveillance — with many of our movements tracked, and much of our data scraped and mined.

According to Walshe, Borregaard and the ensemble are instructed to perform choreography as if being controlled by a “mind cult.” The conductor will be equipped with the kind of clicker used by dog trainers, and there will be references to characters resembling Elon Musk and Jeff Bezos.

A rumination on how it feels to cling to individuality when tech corporations seem intent on trying to turn people into biological fodder for algorithms, “Personhood” is both funny and deeply serious, like so much of Walshe’s work.

“Perhaps it sounds earnest, but the way I think of my role as an artist is to try and look at the world around me, and process that,” Walshe said. “It’s how I understand what’s going on.”

Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival

Through Nov. 26; [*hcmf.co.uk*](https://hcmf.co.uk/)

PHOTOS: The composer Jennifer Walshe at the University of Oxford. “I want to be present, and curious and engaged,” she said. “The work is how I do that.” (PHOTOGRAPH BY TOM JAMIESON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (C1); Jennifer Walshe during a performance of “Some Notes on Martian Sonic Aesthetics 2034-51” in Germany. (PHOTOGRAPH BY TOBIAS RASOKAT) (C4) This article appeared in print on page C1, C4.

**Load-Date:** November 21, 2023

**End of Document**



[***She Didn’t Even Have an Agent. Her Debut Is a National Book Award Finalist.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69CK-PJ31-DXY4-X06F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 12, 2023 Thursday 17:37 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS

**Length:** 867 words

**Byline:** Elizabeth A. Harris

**Highlight:** “Temple Folk,” Aaliyah Bilal’s collection of stories featuring Black American Muslims, was inspired by her family’s experiences with the Nation of Islam.

**Body**

“Temple Folk,” Aaliyah Bilal’s collection of stories featuring Black American Muslims, was inspired by her family’s experiences with the Nation of Islam.

Aaliyah Bilal didn’t have an agent or any publishing connections to speak of when she sent six stories to Simon &amp; Schuster in 2021, after an open call for submissions. The publisher, impressed, offered her a book deal, and those stories became part of “Temple Folk,” her debut collection, which follows Black American Muslims who were members of the Nation of Islam around the 1970s.

Published in July, “Temple Folk” was [*named a finalist*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/03/books/national-book-award-finalists-2023.html) last week for a National Book Award.

Bilal, 41, grew up in a ***working-class*** Sunni family just outside Washington, D.C., and her grandparents had belonged to the Nation of Islam, a Black nationalist group. Her grandfather once told her that he hadn’t learned Arabic as a member, so couldn’t read the Quran at the time. So why, she asked, had he bothered to join?

“His face got really hard, and he said, ‘Don’t you know that white people were killing us and lynching us and calling us the N-word in those days?’” she recalled. “‘What would you have done?’ And it silenced me, because I didn’t know what I would have done.”

“Temple Folk,” which grapples with that era of the Nation of Islam, is her answer. Its 10 stories touch on modesty and sexuality, abuse and family, responsibility and faith.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

How did you find your way to writing?

My mother lives in Cairo and she has amazing taste in books, so she has this ample library. I spent a couple of months there in 2007 reading incessantly, and that was where my writing education began. I spent three years really teaching myself to read like a writer. Then around 2010 I felt confident enough to start trying to write.

Did any works in particular make an impression on you at the time?

Some of the books that I read multiple times that were very important to me were “The Bluest Eye,” by Toni Morrison, “Maud Martha,” by Gwendolyn Brooks, and “Lost in the City,” by Edward P. Jones. But especially Edward P. Jones, because every page in his work, to my sensibility, was perfect. I really felt like I’d met my teacher when I read that book.

I feel like this is good advice for any writer: If you spend enough time with a story, it will reveal all of the secrets of its construction.

Why were you drawn to explore the Nation of Islam in your first book?

This is part of my family history. I think the thing that disturbs some people is the idea that I can be of such a mixed mind about it, because I don’t like racialized thinking, and at the same time I understand, in its historical context, how inevitable it was that a movement like this would emerge. I have some pride, frankly, associated with the fact that my grandparents were brave enough to assert, in an environment where they were taught to hate themselves for being Black, that they should take pride in being Black. So I have pride attached to this personal history and I also have a lot of critique around the things the nation said and did.

How did you channel your “mixed mind” into the tone of the stories?

However unpopular it is to say, the Nation of Islam has a lot of cachet in Black America. Even among people who are not members, the organization is perceived as powerful and strong and righteous. So if you put somebody in the position of having to talk about it in Black spaces, there’s a lot of pressure to say glowing things. I feel like my family members clam up. Nobody felt like they had the freedom to actually talk about the abuses they endured without being made fun of or yelled at or put down in the Black community. I was like: No. I’m a writer — there’s some deep indignation that I have about any kind of self-imposed silencing.

What did you hope to accomplish with these stories?

Everything of note that has ever been written about African American Muslims has been academic or some kind of journalistic nonfiction. So the whole conceptualization of the world needed to be epic in a way, but it also needed to be comprehensive. I felt that if I were to divide this world into various stories, it would be like visiting different rooms in the same house — you’d get a survey of the world.

The book is very rigorous in engaging with the good and the bad. The book pulls no punches when it comes to pointing out the questionable things that have happened, that continue to happen in these spaces. But it’s also lovely and loving, and these are people — they’re just human beings.”

How are you responding to the positive critical reception?

I don’t really have a sense of how this world works because I have no contact with the literary world outside my editor and my agent. I don’t have writer friends. It’s me and my page, my editor and my agent. That’s it. I don’t know what this reception means because I’m very new to this world. I’m very, very grateful, but I’m waiting to see what it means.

PHOTO: Aaliyah Bilal in Cincinnati recently. Her debut, a story collection centered on members of the Nation of Islam, was published in July. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MADELEINE HORDINSKI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page C3.

**Load-Date:** October 13, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Wealth Gap Has Some on the Right Looking Left***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:693W-1NB1-DXY4-X048-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 6, 2023 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1830 words

**Byline:** By Talmon Joseph Smith

**Body**

A growing number of Republican politicians and theorists are challenging party orthodoxy on pocketbook issues, corporate power and government's role.

More Republicans are coming to the view that economic inequality, or a lack of social mobility, is a problem in the United States -- and that more can be done to enable families to attain or regain a middle-class life.

Though discussions about inequality tend to be most visible among liberals, about four in 10 Republican or Republican-leaning adults think there is too much economic inequality in the country, according to a Pew Research survey. And among Republicans making less than about $40,000 a year who see too much economic inequality, 63 percent agree that the economic system ''requires major changes'' to address it.

But a growing debate among conservative thinkers, politicians and the party base -- online, in books and in public forums -- reveals a group divided about how, in practice, to address pocketbook issues and the extent to which the government should be involved.

''I don't think just having a bigger government is a solution to a lot of these problems,'' said Inez Stepman, a senior policy analyst at the Independent Women's Forum and a fellow with the Claremont Institute, a conservative think tank widely credited with giving Trumpism an intellectual framework. ''But I do think that we could stand to think a little bit more on the right about how to make that 1950s middle-class life possible for people.''

These yearnings and ideological stirrings have picked up as both whites without college degrees and the broader ***working class*** have grown as a share of Republican voters. (Hillary Clinton won college-educated white voters by 17 percentage points in her 2016 race against Donald J. Trump; four years earlier, Mitt Romney, the Republican nominee, carried that group.)

A notable swipe against longtime Republican economic thinking has come from Sohrab Ahmari, a conservative who served as an editorial page writer for The Wall Street Journal and the opinion editor of The New York Post. The metamorphosis of his worldview is laid out in a recently published book, ''Tyranny, Inc.: How Private Power Crushed American Liberty -- and What to Do About It.''

''I was writing editorials preaching the gospel of low taxes, free trade, et cetera,'' Mr. Ahmari said in an interview. But Mr. Trump's election inspired him to research how ''American life in general for the lower rungs of the labor market is unbelievably precarious,'' he said, and his politics changed.

Mr. Ahmari recently endorsed a second term for Mr. Trump, but he has written that ''while ferociously conservative on cultural issues,'' he is also ''increasingly drawn to the economic policies of the left -- figures like Senators Elizabeth Warren or Bernie Sanders.''

In their own ways, Republican presidential primary candidates are jostling for ways to validate the populist energy and financial unease that Mr. Trump tapped into with a mix of pronouncements and policy promises. Some have set out economic goals that, according to many experts, are hard to square with their promises to reduce public debt and taxes and make deep cuts to government programs -- especially now that many Republicans have backed away from calls to cut entitlement benefits.

In a campaign speech in New Hampshire this summer called ''A Declaration of Economic Independence,'' Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida, a Republican presidential contender, sharply critiqued China, diversity programming, ''excessive regulation and excessive taxes'' -- a familiar set of modern conservative concerns. Yet he also echoed complaints and economic goals often heard from the left.

''We want to be a country where you can raise a family on one sole income,'' he told the crowd.

''We cannot have policy that kowtows to the largest corporations and Wall Street at the expense of small businesses and average Americans,'' he added. ''There's a difference between a free-market economy, which we want, and corporatism.''

Critics on the left and the right argue that Mr. DeSantis has failed to clearly define how he would achieve those goals. The DeSantis campaign declined to comment for this article, but he has cited pathways to broader prosperity that include bringing industrial jobs back from abroad, increasing work force education and technical training, removing ''red tape'' faced by small businesses and aiming for annual U.S. economic growth of at least 3 percent.

Though the fissures on the right over economic issues were evident when Mr. Trump upended the political scene eight years ago, the realignments are maturing and deepening, causing fresh tensions as factions disagree on the extent to which inequality, globalization and growing corporate power should be seen as problems.

Some conservatives remain more concerned with the trajectory of federal spending and unlocking greater overall prosperity, rather than its distribution.

Last year, Phil Gramm, a Republican who steered the passage of major tax cuts and deregulation during his time representing Texas in Congress from the 1970s to the early 2000s, published a book with his fellow economists Robert Ekelund and John Early called ''The Myth of American Inequality.'' The book -- filled with alternative tabulations of impoverishment and living standards -- argues that inequality is not high and rising as ''the mainstream'' suggests.

It argues that when including welfare transfers, income inequality has been more stable than government figures suggest, and that the share of Americans living in poverty fell from 15 percent in 1967 to only 1.1 percent in 2017.

''The point of the book is to get the facts straight,'' Mr. Gramm said in an interview, adding that ''we're having these debates'' with numbers that are ''verifiably false.'' (Some scholars have vehemently disagreed with the authors' analysis.)

Scott Lincicome, a vice president at the libertarian Cato Institute, said that he largely agreed with Mr. Gramm's thesis and that Americans were mostly wrestling with ''keeping up with the Joneses,'' not a loss of economic traction.

''In general, folks at the bottom, up to the median, are doing better,'' Mr. Lincicome concluded. ''They're not winning the game, but they're doing better than the same group was 30-plus years ago.''

He added: ''You know, economists can debate all day long whether we're better off, worse off overall or whatever. But when you factor in all the factors, I personally think things are fine.''

To the extent that these debates have popular reach, the most public face of the revisionist camp may be Oren Cass, an adviser to Mr. Romney's 2012 campaign, who has become immersed in a collective project among some right-leaning thinkers to ''rebuild capitalism.''

Mr. Cass and his allies want to use government spending and power to promote economic mobility with traditionalist goals in mind -- like reducing the cost of living for the heads of married, two-parent households.

Mr. Cass praised Mr. Ahmari's book as one that ''bravely goes where few conservatives dare tread, to the ideologically fraught realm in which the market appears inherently coercive and capitalism appears in tension with economic freedom.'' (Senator Marco Rubio, Republican of Florida, is talking at a book event with Mr. Ahmari this month at the National Press Club in Washington.)

Many economists and political scientists contend that the ideological realignment on the right is overblown, confused with a broader, hard-to-quantify loyalty to Mr. Trump rather than an explicit ideology giving life to Trumpism.

''In a way,'' Mr. Ahmari said, his critics -- ''the people who say, 'Yeah, sure, you're just a couple of guys: you, Oren, and a few others at magazines and think tanks''' -- are ''not wrong institutionally,'' as there is little donor support for their efforts.

''But they are wrong in terms of voters,'' he added.

Ms. Stepman of the Claremont Institute says she is personally ''more traditional right'' than thinkers like Mr. Ahmari but agrees they are tapping into something real.

''There is a very underserved part of the political spectrum that is genuinely left of center on economic issues, right of center on cultural issues,'' she said, pointing to issues including immigration, gun laws, education, gender norms and more.

Gabe Guidarini is one of them.

Growing up in Lake Bluff, Ill., in a ***working-class*** household where MSNBC often played in the background at night, Mr. Guidarini felt his view that ''the status quo in this country is corrupt'' was validated by the ''anti-establishment'' voices of both Mr. Sanders and Mr. Trump. But he came to the view that ''you can't get away with'' social views that stray from progressive orthodoxy and still be accepted by Democrats. Now, at 19, he is the president of the University of Dayton College Republicans.

In 2022, he worked as a campaign intern for J.D. Vance -- the author of ''Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis,'' who aligned himself with Trumpism after his 2016 book was credited for providing a ''reference guide'' for Mr. Trump's electoral success. Mr. Vance, an Ohio Republican, was elected to the U.S. Senate.

In line with Tucker Carlson and some other conservatives, Mr. Guidarini thinks the party ''should be taking policy samples from Viktor Orban in Hungary, and what he's doing with family policies that aim to increase family creation, increase childbirth and make it easier to live a decent life as a working or middle-class taxpayer,'' he said. ''That's what's going to return the American dream for so many people, because to young people -- and I feel like a lot of other people in America today -- the American dream feels dead.''

Mr. Guidarini, like many on the right, is wary of achieving those goals by increasing taxes on the wealthy. But according to Pew Research, more Republican or Republican-leaning adults support raising tax rates for those with incomes over $400,000 (46 percent) than say those rates should go unchanged (29 percent) or be lowered (24 percent). And more than half of low-income Republicans support higher taxes on the highest earners.

For now, though, all economic debates are ''tangential,'' said Saagar Enjeti, a conservative millennial who is a co-host of two podcasts that often feature competing voices across the right.

'''What are we going to do when the Trump tax cuts expire?' These are not the fights that are happening,'' Mr. Enjeti said. ''I wish they were, but they're not. They're just not.''

With consensus on policy solutions elusive and ''the culture wars'' in the campaign forefront, Mr. Enjeti said, Republicans will mostly rally around what he believes will be Mr. Trump's simple economic message: ''Make America 2019 Again'' -- a time when unemployment, inflation and mortgage rates were low and, for all of life's challenges, at least cultural conservatives were in the White House.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/05/business/economy/economy-republicans-inequality.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/05/business/economy/economy-republicans-inequality.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A1, A17.

**Load-Date:** September 6, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Wrestling With Inequality, Some Conservatives Redraw Economic Blueprint***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:693P-RK91-DXY4-X043-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 5, 2023 Tuesday 10:13 EST

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**Section:** BUSINESS; economy

**Length:** 1809 words

**Byline:** Talmon Joseph Smith Talmon Joseph Smith is a Times economics reporter, based in New York.

**Highlight:** A growing number of Republican politicians and theorists are challenging party orthodoxy on pocketbook issues, corporate power and government’s role.

**Body**

A growing number of Republican politicians and theorists are challenging party orthodoxy on pocketbook issues, corporate power and government’s role.

More Republicans are [*coming to the view*](https://twitter.com/RonDeSantis/status/1694518196752068872#:~:text=%40RonDeSantis-,Our%20country%20is%20in%20decline.,that%20we%20must%20reverse%20Bidenomics.https://twitter.com/thehill/status/1690742227557851136?s=20) that economic inequality, or a lack of social mobility, is [*a problem*](https://twitter.com/RonDeSantis/status/1694518196752068872#:~:text=%40RonDeSantis-,Our%20country%20is%20in%20decline.,that%20we%20must%20reverse%20Bidenomics.https://twitter.com/thehill/status/1690742227557851136?s=20) in the United States — and that [*more can be done*](https://twitter.com/RonDeSantis/status/1694518196752068872#:~:text=%40RonDeSantis-,Our%20country%20is%20in%20decline.,that%20we%20must%20reverse%20Bidenomics.https://twitter.com/thehill/status/1690742227557851136?s=20) to enable families to attain or regain [*a middle-class life*](https://twitter.com/RonDeSantis/status/1694518196752068872#:~:text=%40RonDeSantis-,Our%20country%20is%20in%20decline.,that%20we%20must%20reverse%20Bidenomics.https://twitter.com/thehill/status/1690742227557851136?s=20).

Though discussions about inequality tend to be most visible among liberals, about four in 10 Republican or Republican-leaning adults think there is too much economic inequality in the country, [*according to a Pew Research survey*](https://twitter.com/RonDeSantis/status/1694518196752068872#:~:text=%40RonDeSantis-,Our%20country%20is%20in%20decline.,that%20we%20must%20reverse%20Bidenomics.https://twitter.com/thehill/status/1690742227557851136?s=20). And among Republicans making less than about $40,000 a year who see too much economic inequality, 63 percent agree that the economic system “requires major changes” to address it.

But a growing [*debate*](https://twitter.com/RonDeSantis/status/1694518196752068872#:~:text=%40RonDeSantis-,Our%20country%20is%20in%20decline.,that%20we%20must%20reverse%20Bidenomics.https://twitter.com/thehill/status/1690742227557851136?s=20) among conservative thinkers, politicians and the party base — online, in books and in public forums — reveals a group divided about how, in practice, to address pocketbook issues and the extent to which the government should be involved.

“I don’t think just having a bigger government is a solution to a lot of these problems,” said Inez Stepman, a senior policy analyst at the Independent Women’s Forum and a fellow with the Claremont Institute, a conservative think tank [*widely credited with giving Trumpism an intellectual framework*](https://twitter.com/RonDeSantis/status/1694518196752068872#:~:text=%40RonDeSantis-,Our%20country%20is%20in%20decline.,that%20we%20must%20reverse%20Bidenomics.https://twitter.com/thehill/status/1690742227557851136?s=20). “But I do think that we could stand to think a little bit more on the right about how to make that 1950s middle-class life possible for people.”

These yearnings and ideological stirrings have picked up as both whites without college degrees and [*the broader* ***working class***](https://twitter.com/RonDeSantis/status/1694518196752068872#:~:text=%40RonDeSantis-,Our%20country%20is%20in%20decline.,that%20we%20must%20reverse%20Bidenomics.https://twitter.com/thehill/status/1690742227557851136?s=20) have [*grown as a share of Republican voters*](https://twitter.com/RonDeSantis/status/1694518196752068872#:~:text=%40RonDeSantis-,Our%20country%20is%20in%20decline.,that%20we%20must%20reverse%20Bidenomics.https://twitter.com/thehill/status/1690742227557851136?s=20). (Hillary Clinton won college-educated white voters by 17 percentage points in her 2016 race against Donald J. Trump; four years earlier, Mitt Romney, the Republican nominee, carried that group.)

A notable swipe against longtime Republican economic thinking has come from Sohrab Ahmari, a [*conservative*](https://twitter.com/RonDeSantis/status/1694518196752068872#:~:text=%40RonDeSantis-,Our%20country%20is%20in%20decline.,that%20we%20must%20reverse%20Bidenomics.https://twitter.com/thehill/status/1690742227557851136?s=20) who served as an editorial page writer for The Wall Street Journal and the opinion editor of The New York Post. The metamorphosis of his worldview is laid out in a [*recently published*](https://twitter.com/RonDeSantis/status/1694518196752068872#:~:text=%40RonDeSantis-,Our%20country%20is%20in%20decline.,that%20we%20must%20reverse%20Bidenomics.https://twitter.com/thehill/status/1690742227557851136?s=20) book, “Tyranny, Inc.: How Private Power Crushed American Liberty — and What to Do About It.”

“I was writing editorials preaching the gospel of low taxes, free trade, et cetera,” Mr. Ahmari said in an interview. But Mr. Trump’s election inspired him to research how “American life in general for the lower rungs of the labor market is unbelievably precarious,” he said, and [*his politics*](https://twitter.com/RonDeSantis/status/1694518196752068872#:~:text=%40RonDeSantis-,Our%20country%20is%20in%20decline.,that%20we%20must%20reverse%20Bidenomics.https://twitter.com/thehill/status/1690742227557851136?s=20) changed.

Mr. Ahmari [*recently endorsed*](https://twitter.com/RonDeSantis/status/1694518196752068872#:~:text=%40RonDeSantis-,Our%20country%20is%20in%20decline.,that%20we%20must%20reverse%20Bidenomics.https://twitter.com/thehill/status/1690742227557851136?s=20) a second term for Mr. Trump, but he has written that “while ferociously conservative on cultural issues,” he is also “increasingly drawn to the economic policies of the left — figures like Senators Elizabeth Warren or Bernie Sanders.”

In their own ways, Republican presidential primary candidates are jostling for ways to validate the populist energy and financial unease that Mr. Trump tapped into with a mix of pronouncements and policy promises. Some have set out economic goals that, [*according to many experts*](https://twitter.com/RonDeSantis/status/1694518196752068872#:~:text=%40RonDeSantis-,Our%20country%20is%20in%20decline.,that%20we%20must%20reverse%20Bidenomics.https://twitter.com/thehill/status/1690742227557851136?s=20), are [*hard to square*](https://twitter.com/RonDeSantis/status/1694518196752068872#:~:text=%40RonDeSantis-,Our%20country%20is%20in%20decline.,that%20we%20must%20reverse%20Bidenomics.https://twitter.com/thehill/status/1690742227557851136?s=20) with their promises to reduce public debt and taxes and make deep cuts to government programs — especially now that many Republicans have backed away from calls to cut entitlement benefits.

In a campaign speech in New Hampshire this summer called “[*A Declaration of Economic Independence*](https://twitter.com/RonDeSantis/status/1694518196752068872#:~:text=%40RonDeSantis-,Our%20country%20is%20in%20decline.,that%20we%20must%20reverse%20Bidenomics.https://twitter.com/thehill/status/1690742227557851136?s=20),” Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida, a Republican presidential contender, sharply critiqued China, diversity programming, “excessive regulation and excessive taxes” — a familiar set of modern conservative concerns. Yet he also echoed complaints and economic goals often heard from the left.

“We want to be a country where you can raise a family on one sole income,” he told the crowd.

“We cannot have policy that kowtows to the largest corporations and Wall Street at the expense of small businesses and average Americans,” he added. “There’s a difference between a free-market economy, which we want, and corporatism.”

Critics on the left and the right argue that Mr. DeSantis has failed to clearly define how he would achieve those goals. The DeSantis campaign declined to comment for this article, but he has cited pathways to broader prosperity that include bringing [*industrial jobs back from abroad*](https://twitter.com/RonDeSantis/status/1694518196752068872#:~:text=%40RonDeSantis-,Our%20country%20is%20in%20decline.,that%20we%20must%20reverse%20Bidenomics.https://twitter.com/thehill/status/1690742227557851136?s=20), increasing work force education and technical training, removing “red tape” faced by small businesses and aiming for annual U.S. economic growth of at least 3 percent.

Though the fissures on the right over economic issues were evident when Mr. Trump upended the political scene eight years ago, the realignments are maturing and deepening, causing fresh tensions as factions disagree on the extent to which inequality, globalization and growing corporate power should be seen as problems.

Some conservatives remain more concerned with the trajectory of federal spending and unlocking greater overall prosperity, rather than its distribution.

Last year, Phil Gramm, a Republican who steered the passage of major tax cuts and deregulation during his time representing Texas in Congress from the 1970s to the early 2000s, published a book with his fellow economists Robert Ekelund and John Early called “[*The Myth of American Inequality*](https://twitter.com/RonDeSantis/status/1694518196752068872#:~:text=%40RonDeSantis-,Our%20country%20is%20in%20decline.,that%20we%20must%20reverse%20Bidenomics.https://twitter.com/thehill/status/1690742227557851136?s=20).” The book — filled with alternative tabulations of impoverishment and living standards — argues that inequality is not high and rising as “the mainstream” suggests.

It argues that when including welfare transfers, income inequality has been more stable than government figures suggest, and that the share of Americans living in poverty fell from 15 percent in 1967 to only 1.1 percent in 2017.

“The point of the book is to get the facts straight,” Mr. Gramm said in an interview, adding that “we’re having these debates” with numbers that are “verifiably false.” ([*Some scholars*](https://twitter.com/RonDeSantis/status/1694518196752068872#:~:text=%40RonDeSantis-,Our%20country%20is%20in%20decline.,that%20we%20must%20reverse%20Bidenomics.https://twitter.com/thehill/status/1690742227557851136?s=20) have vehemently disagreed with the authors’ analysis.)

Scott Lincicome, a vice president at the libertarian Cato Institute, said that he largely agreed with Mr. Gramm’s thesis and that Americans were mostly wrestling with “keeping up with the Joneses,” not a loss of economic traction.

“In general, folks at the bottom, up to the median, are doing better,” Mr. Lincicome concluded. “They’re not winning the game, but they’re doing better than the same group was 30-plus years ago.”

He added: “You know, economists can debate all day long whether we’re better off, worse off overall or whatever. But when you factor in all the factors, I personally think things are fine.”

To the extent that these debates have popular reach, the most public face of the revisionist camp may be Oren Cass, an adviser to Mr. Romney’s 2012 campaign, who has become immersed in a collective project among some right-leaning thinkers to “rebuild capitalism.”

Mr. Cass and his allies want to use government spending and power to promote economic mobility with traditionalist goals in mind — like reducing the cost of living for the heads of married, two-parent households.

Mr. Cass praised Mr. Ahmari’s book as one that “bravely goes where few conservatives dare tread, to the ideologically fraught realm in which the market appears inherently coercive and capitalism appears in tension with economic freedom.” (Senator Marco Rubio, Republican of Florida, is talking at a book event with Mr. Ahmari this month at the National Press Club in Washington.)

Many economists and political scientists contend that the ideological realignment on the right is overblown, confused with a broader, hard-to-quantify loyalty to Mr. Trump rather than an explicit ideology giving life to Trumpism.

“In a way,” Mr. Ahmari said, his critics — “the people who say, ‘Yeah, sure, you’re just a couple of guys: you, Oren, and a few others at magazines and think tanks’” — are “not wrong institutionally,” as there is little donor support for their efforts.

“But they are wrong in terms of voters,” he added.

Ms. Stepman of the Claremont Institute says she is personally “more traditional right” than thinkers like Mr. Ahmari but agrees they are tapping into something real.

“There is a very underserved part of the political spectrum that is genuinely left of center on economic issues, right of center on cultural issues,” she said, pointing to issues including immigration, gun laws, education, gender norms and more.

Gabe Guidarini is one of them.

Growing up in Lake Bluff, Ill., in a ***working-class*** household where MSNBC often played in the background at night, Mr. Guidarini felt his view that “the status quo in this country is corrupt” was validated by the “anti-establishment” voices of both Mr. Sanders and Mr. Trump. But he came to the view that “you can’t get away with” social views that stray from progressive orthodoxy and still be accepted by Democrats. Now, at 19, he is the president of the University of Dayton College Republicans.

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In line [*with Tucker Carlson*](https://twitter.com/RonDeSantis/status/1694518196752068872#:~:text=%40RonDeSantis-,Our%20country%20is%20in%20decline.,that%20we%20must%20reverse%20Bidenomics.https://twitter.com/thehill/status/1690742227557851136?s=20) and some [*other conservatives*](https://twitter.com/RonDeSantis/status/1694518196752068872#:~:text=%40RonDeSantis-,Our%20country%20is%20in%20decline.,that%20we%20must%20reverse%20Bidenomics.https://twitter.com/thehill/status/1690742227557851136?s=20), Mr. Guidarini thinks the party “should be taking policy samples from Viktor Orban in Hungary, and what he’s doing with family policies that aim to increase family creation, increase childbirth and make it easier to live a decent life as a working or middle-class taxpayer,” he said. “That’s what’s going to return the American dream for so many people, because to young people — and I feel like a lot of other people in America today — the American dream feels dead.”

Mr. Guidarini, like many on the right, is wary of achieving those goals by increasing taxes on the wealthy. But according to Pew Research, more Republican or Republican-leaning adults [*support raising tax rates for those with incomes over $400,000*](https://twitter.com/RonDeSantis/status/1694518196752068872#:~:text=%40RonDeSantis-,Our%20country%20is%20in%20decline.,that%20we%20must%20reverse%20Bidenomics.https://twitter.com/thehill/status/1690742227557851136?s=20) (46 percent) than say those rates should go unchanged (29 percent) or be lowered (24 percent). And more than half of low-income Republicans support higher taxes on the highest earners.

For now, though, all economic debates are “tangential,” said Saagar Enjeti, a conservative millennial who is a co-host of two podcasts that often feature competing voices across the right.

“‘What are we going to do when the Trump tax cuts expire?’ These are not the fights that are happening,” Mr. Enjeti said. “I wish they were, but they’re not. They’re just not.”

With consensus on policy solutions elusive and “the culture wars” in the campaign forefront, Mr. Enjeti said, Republicans will mostly rally around what he believes will be Mr. Trump’s simple economic message: “Make America 2019 Again” — a time when unemployment, inflation and mortgage rates were low and, for all of life’s challenges, at least cultural conservatives were in the White House.

This article appeared in print on page A1, A17.

**Load-Date:** February 16, 2024

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[***How's Mayor Adams Doing? Don't Ask, Many New Yorkers Say.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B0C-VBK1-DXY4-X4HT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 30, 2023 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1514 words

**Byline:** By Jeffery C. Mays and Emma G. Fitzsimmons

**Body**

Halfway through his term, Mr. Adams is fighting to overcome low poll numbers and questions about his management as he faces a federal corruption investigation.

Four days before Christmas, Mayor Eric Adams of New York gathered his top aides on the stairs of City Hall's rotunda for an end-of-year message.

As his walk-in music blared from the speakers, Mr. Adams gave a thumbs-up to his staff, positioning himself between two video screens. One showed the year, 2023; the other displayed the message, ''Jobs Are Up. Crime Is Down.''

The news conference resembled a campaign event, full of applause and cheerleader-like encouragement for the mayor at the halfway mark of his first term. And by keeping a laserlike focus on trumpeting two key statistical achievements, Mr. Adams seemed intent on pushing a counternarrative to the growing perception that he is not up to the job.

The mayor faces the lowest approval rating since Quinnipiac University began polling the popularity of New York City mayors in 1996. New Yorkers disapprove of almost every aspect of how Mr. Adams is handling his job and don't believe he is trustworthy, the poll found.

He has made unpopular cuts to schools and libraries to close looming budget gaps, and recently returned from a trip to Washington with the news that the city should not expect help with an influx of migrants. He was accused in a legal claim filed last month of committing sexual assault in 1993, a charge he has strongly denied.

On top of it all, the home of the mayor's chief fund-raiser was raided by the F.B.I. and Mr. Adams's phones and tablet were seized as part of a federal investigation into his campaign's fund-raising.

And when he tries to give voice to his side of the story, his choice of words often gets in the way.

When asked recently to describe this past year in one word, the mayor replied, ''Uh, New York. This is a place where everyday you wake up, you could experience everything from a plane crashing into our Trade Center to a person who is celebrating a new business that's opened.''

He offered another head-scratcher at the City Hall news conference on jobs and crime, when he was asked what he would say to New Yorkers angry about the painful budget cuts that he had implemented.

''I wake up in the morning,'' Mr. Adams said, ''and sometimes I look at myself, and I give myself the finger.''

Hours after he made those remarks, a video of his comments was posted on social media by the Republican National Committee's rapid response account.

Some of the mayor's policies have received broad praise: his plan to put trash in large containers instead of in bags on the street and to expand curbside composting; the city's push to regain most of the jobs lost during the pandemic; efforts to stabilize public housing, address climate change, expand youth programs and boost the life sciences industry; and a proposal to build 100,000 homes.

But critics cite what they say are troubling trends: a rise in stop-and-frisk policing; a slow trickle of new affordable housing with major projects many years from opening; a failure to create enough preschool seats for children with disabilities; a delay in providing basic benefits to the most vulnerable New Yorkers and a pattern of stymying major bus and bike lane projects in response to opposition from political allies.

''Beyond the issues that are weighing on New York City voters, it appears there's a lack of confidence in Mayor Adams,'' said Mary Snow, an assistant director of the Quinnipiac University poll.

Mr. Adams has even alienated key allies like Henry Garrido, the leader of District Council 37, the city's largest municipal employees' union. The union is suing the Adams administration over the budget cuts.

Mr. Garrido praised the mayor for settling 90 percent of outstanding union contracts but said it's been a ''mixed bag'' because budget cuts are eliminating revenue-producing jobs such as environmental inspectors and are hurting struggling New Yorkers.

''Thirty thousand people waiting for food stamps is outrageous,'' Mr. Garrido said.

It is far too soon to gauge where the federal investigation into the mayor's fund-raising will lead; Mr. Adams has not been accused of any wrongdoing. But even if the mayor emerges unscathed, his bid for a second term in 2025 may be undermined by pocketbook issues, especially for middle- and ***working-class*** New Yorkers.

''His budget cuts will be just as politically harmful as any investigation,'' said Monica Klein, a strategist who often advises progressive Democrats.

The United Federation of Teachers has filed suit against the Adams administration to block education funding cuts. And parents in particular have been upset about the painful budget cuts to schools, prekindergarten and libraries. Robert Desir, a lawyer who lives in Ditmas Park in Brooklyn, said that he is worried that his 2-year-old daughter won't receive a free 3-K spot, which former Mayor Bill de Blasio pledged would be universal by now. If his family has to pay for preschool instead, they might consider leaving the city.

''The city is becoming increasingly expensive, and it's difficult for people to thrive and plan for the future,'' said Mr. Desir, who joined a group called New Yorkers United for Child Care that is circulating a petition to stop the cuts.

Mr. Adams has blamed the budget cuts on the cost of caring for asylum seekers, saying that he, like many New Yorkers, is ''angry'' that the federal government is not doing more.

At the same time, Mr. Adams's cuts have come under increasing scrutiny, with fiscal experts suggesting that his administration has overstated the cost of the migrant crisis.

A report from the city comptroller, Brad Lander, found that the migrant crisis's cost will be $465 million less than budgeted this year and $1.61 billion less in fiscal year 2025. Mr. Lander urged ''stronger management'' to address the city's ''fiscal challenges,'' such as real-time data to determine the cost of migrant spending and whether the budget cuts are achieving the expected savings.

It is also unclear whether Mr. Adams can take full credit for improvements on jobs and crime. Overall crime is down slightly compared with last year, according to Police Department statistics, but crime is also dropping nationally.

And while there was job growth in New York City, it has slowed this year. The city still has not regained all the nearly 1 million jobs it lost at the outset of the pandemic in 2020, according to the state Labor Department. New York City is ending the year with an official unemployment rate of 5.3 percent, slightly higher than a year ago.

Bertha Lewis, a longtime organizer and president of the Black Institute, said she was disappointed that she had not seen one ''big idea'' from the mayor such as universal prekindergarten from Mr. de Blasio. And she questioned his management skills.

''He has to get a hold of the management of the city,'' said Ms. Lewis. ''You must manage how the machine is actually working. That's what being mayor is all about.''

As Mr. Adams's standing has deteriorated, so has his relationship with the City Council, which has already overridden a veto from the mayor on housing vouchers and just passed bills banning solitary confinement in the city's jails and requiring reporting of police stops despite the mayor's objections.

The mayor's office is making ''harmful and hysterical budget cuts that are intended to generate outrage,'' said Lincoln Restler, a councilman who is a leader of the Progressive Caucus and has questioned Mr. Adams's management for over a year.

''This is not a mayor who had a lot of juice in the City Council last year, and the combination of investigations, sagging poll numbers and deeply harmful budget cuts are not strengthening his hand,'' Mr. Restler added.

The mayor has often criticized the news media for failing to focus on the successes of his administration and for paying too much attention to things flagged by the ''sentence police,'' even though he insisted he speaks ''the way New Yorkers talk.'' He has also suggested that he was being treated differently because of his race.

''Over the last month, there have been negative headlines about me that are so sensational that they are hard to believe,'' Mr. Adams said on a call-in radio show on WBLS. ''There's a reason for that: They are not based on facts, they're based on rumor; and yes, on many occasions, even lies.''

After a difficult Year 2, the mayor can turn things around by focusing on the important steps his administration is taking on rezonings and economic development, said Mitchell Moss, an urban policy professor at New York University and an Adams ally.

Mr. Adams should quit picking fights with the media and President Biden, he said, and stop allowing his rhetoric to overshadow his agenda.

''The mayor should be bringing good news to the attention of New Yorkers,'' he said, ''not bad news.''

Patrick McGeehan and Dana Rubinstein contributed reporting.Patrick McGeehan and Dana Rubinstein contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/29/nyregion/eric-adams-record.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/29/nyregion/eric-adams-record.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Bill de Blasio, top left, the former mayor of New York, won plaudits for bringing universal prekindergarten to the city, a signature achievement of his administration. Mayor Eric Adams, right, halfway through his term, has the lowest approval rating since Quinnipiac University began polling the popularity of mayors in 1996. Left, Mr. Adams has linked budget cuts to the cost of housing migrants. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY SETH WENIG

KIRSTEN LUCE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

TODD HEISLER/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A14.

**Load-Date:** December 30, 2023

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[***Sam Heughan’s Glasgow; 5 Favorite Places***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6955-7251-DXY4-X0V9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 12, 2023 Tuesday 10:07 EST

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**Section:** TRAVEL

**Length:** 836 words

**Byline:** Amy Tara Koch

**Highlight:** The star of ‘Outlander,’ which is halfway through its seventh season, recommends five spots in the Scottish city that he has called home for a decade.

**Body**

“The part of ‘Outlander’ that I love the most is the history: the clan culture, the folklore and back stories (and consequences) of the Jacobite Rising,” said Sam Heughan, 42, who has played the heartthrob Highland warrior Jamie Fraser in the time-travel series since 2014.

This love of history feeds his passion for the ancient city of Glasgow. A typical day for Mr. Heughan involves meandering past medieval cathedrals, Victorian cobbled lanes, Georgian architecture constructed when the city was a major tobacco and sugar hub, and 19th-century tenements built during the Industrial Revolution, when steel and ships were mass-produced here. “Glasgow has got beautiful parts and grit. The combination, plus incredibly good-natured people, are the city’s charm,” he said.

Beyond the long-running series, Mr. Heughan, who was interviewed before the current actors’ strike, just completed shooting a television show called “The Couple Next Door” for Starz and Britain’s Channel 4, and is launching a “wild Scottish” gin under [*the Sassenach*](https://sassenachspirits.com/) label, a whisky-focused spirits brand that he founded in 2020. (The name means “a foreigner” in Gaelic, and is also Jamie Fraser’s term of endearment for Claire, his wife, played by Caitríona Mary Balfe.)

When he does have free time, Mr. Heughan is out and about. “I love walking and running along the River Clyde to Glasgow Green with a possible stop at the microbrewery [*Drygate*](https://www.drygate.com/) for a beer,” he said. Hiking is another pastime (Mr. Heughan’s recent memoir, “[*Waypoints: My Scottish Journey*](https://www.amazon.com/Waypoints-Scottish-Journey-Sam-Heughan/dp/0316495530),” chronicles his experience tackling the 96-mile [*West Highland Way*](https://www.westhighlandway.org/) hike). “A wee walk, or stravaigin in old Scots speak, is good for mental health,” he said.

He is also a fan of [*Citizens Theatre*](https://www.citz.co.uk/) in the ***working-class*** Gorbals area, which puts on avant-garde productions and is involved in community engagement. “I came here as a child, performed here as a student and did my first professional show here called ‘Outlying Islands.’ It holds a lot of memories,” he said. (The theater is currently closed for refurbishment. )

On the topic of the kilt, yes, Mr. Heughan does sport one in real life. “Kilts are about a feeling. They make you stand taller, and walk stronger. Scots wear them for any excuse. If you go to a pub in one, you’ll be getting a free drink at some point in the evening.”

Here are five of his favorite places in Glasgow.

1. [*The Ben Nevis Bar*](https://www.thebennevisbar.com/)

A tiny whisky bar tucked into the Finnieston area, a hipster pocket of the West End, is deemed “a Glasgow institution” by Mr. Heughan. “I went there as a student” — he studied drama at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland — “and I go there now. People speak Gaelic, and there is live traditional Scottish music, sometimes planned, sometimes impromptu. It’s a special place.”

2. [*Kelvingrove Park*](https://www.visitscotland.com/info/see-do/kelvingrove-park-p2569411)

In the West End, bisected by the River Kelvin, this 85-acre park dappled with Victorian fountains, grand stairwells and an arched stone bridge with carved balustrades is where locals come to hang out during the warmer months.

“You can have a picnic, walk under the bridges and visit both Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, as well as the University of Glasgow, which is just up the hill,” Mr. Heughan said. For a craft ale pick-me-up nearby, he recommends a “secret” bar called [*Inn Deep*](https://www.inndeep.com/) just under the Kelvingrove Bridge.

3. [*The Dakota Hotel*](https://dakotahotels.co.uk/glasgow/)

He may not stay overnight, but Mr. Heughan dines at the restaurant inside this modernist, Scottish-founded hotel in the city center close to the West End. The Dakota Grill specializes in grass-fed Scotch beef simply grilled over coals, and is also known for ethically sourced seafood and contemporary takes on venison and lamb. “The interior is dark and sexy, and I like their cocktail menu (whisky sour, naturally) and simply grilled Scottish steak.”

4. [*I.J. Mellis*](https://mellischeese.net/stores/)

This old-world style shop on Great Western Road is Mr. Heughan’s go-to for locally sourced cheeses and accompaniments (quince paste, cornichons, olives, chutneys, oatcakes). “I’m not a dessert guy, but at the end of a meal, I can damage a cheese board, especially one with Orkney and Isle of Mull Cheddars,” he said. The shop also offers tastings led by cheese mongers on Thursday evenings.

5. [*Crabshakk Finnieston*](https://www.crabshakk.co.uk/finnieston-crabshakk-1)

Since 2009, this hot spot in Finnieston been serving up stellar seafood in a buzzy atmosphere. Mr. Heughan sits at the counter facing the open kitchen and orders the seafood platter with langoustines and scallops and some champagne. “The food tastes like a celebration of Scotland, which has the best seafood in the world,” he said.

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PHOTO: Kelvingrove Museum seen from Kelvingrove Park on a sunny day in Glasgow. The park is one of Sam Heughan’s favorite places in the Scottish city. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Robert Ormerod for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** September 12, 2023

**End of Document**



[***In the G.O.P., Anti-Trumpers See a Last Shot***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B54-38N1-JBG3-604J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 21, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1720 words

**Byline:** By Lisa Lerer, Michael C. Bender and Jazmine Ulloa

**Body**

The old guard of the Republican Party has rallied around Nikki Haley ahead of New Hampshire's primary, in a long-shot bid to stop the former president's march to the nomination.

The first-in-the-nation primary could be the last stand for the anti-Trump Republican.

Since 2016, a shrinking band of Republican strategists, retired lawmakers and donors has tried to oust Donald J. Trump from his commanding position in the party. And again and again, through one Capitol riot, two impeachments, three presidential elections and four criminal indictments, they have failed to gain traction with its voters.

Now, after years of legal, cultural and political crises that upended American norms and expectations, what could be the final battle of the anti-Trump Republicans won't be waged in Congress or the courts, but in the packed ski lodges and snowy town halls of a state of 1.4 million residents.

Ahead of New Hampshire's primary on Tuesday, the old guard of the G.O.P. has rallied around Nikki Haley, viewing her bid as its last, best chance to finally pry the former president from atop its party. Anything but a very close finish for her in the state, where moderate, independent voters make up 40 percent of the electorate, would send Mr. Trump on an all-but-unstoppable march to the nomination.

The Trump opposition is outnumbered and underemployed. The former president's polarizing style and hard-nosed tactics have pushed many Republicans who oppose him into early retirement and humiliating defeats, or out of the party completely. Yet, their long-running war against him has helped to frame the nominating contest around a central, and deeply tribal, litmus test: loyalty to Mr. Trump.

Gordon J. Humphrey, a former New Hampshire senator, was a conservative power broker during the Reagan era but left the party after Mr. Trump won the presidential nomination in 2016. This year, he has produced anti-Trump Facebook videos aimed at encouraging college students and independent voters who, polls show, are more likely to support Ms. Haley over Mr. Trump.

''It's very big stakes,'' Mr. Humphrey, 83, said. ''If he wins here, Trump will be unstoppable.''

Campaigning across the state this week for Ms. Haley, Gov. Chris Sununu of New Hampshire, a moderate Republican, argued that the man who remade the party in his image is not its best standard-bearer.

''Trump does not represent the Republican Party,'' said Mr. Sununu as he campaigned with Ms. Haley at a rustic event space in Hollis, N.H. ''He does not represent the conservative movement. Trump is about Trump.''

Large numbers of Republicans disagree. Mr. Trump, who was trailing in some primary polls only a year ago, now has support from nearly two-thirds of the party, according to an average of national polls by the data-driven news site FiveThirtyEight. In the Iowa caucuses on Monday, Mr. Trump demolished his rivals by nearly 30 percentage points, winning almost every demographic, geographic region and other slice of the electorate.

Elected Republicans have rallied around the former president. On Friday, Senator Tim Scott of South Carolina endorsed Mr. Trump at a rally in Concord, N.H. Even Mr. Sununu -- Ms. Haley's most potent political backer in New Hampshire -- has acknowledged that he would support Mr. Trump if he wins the party's nomination for a third time.

Some of Mr. Trump's strongest opponents doubt that after so many defeats, they will be successful. Barbara Comstock, a longtime Republican official who was swept out of her suburban Virginia congressional seat in the 2018 midterm backlash to Mr. Trump, said she believed the former president would win the nomination. The only way the party will finally be rid of Mr. Trump, she said, is if he loses in 2024, an outcome she thinks could cost Republicans scores of congressional seats.

''He has to lose and drag down even more people with him on the ballot and that's the only thing that changes it,'' said Ms. Comstock, who opposes Mr. Trump. ''You lose, and it's bad, and you lost for a second time to a really weak guy.''

Recent polling that shows Ms. Haley trailing Mr. Trump by double digits in New Hampshire underscores her uphill battle on Tuesday. Yet even if Ms. Haley can overcome the odds in New Hampshire, she faces the question of what's next.

A loss next month in a crucial matchup in her home state of South Carolina, where she also trails by double digits, could depress her momentum heading into March, when two-thirds of all Republican primary delegates are up for grabs.

But a victory would give her momentum heading into the Super Tuesday contests on March 5. Twelve of the 16 primaries on Super Tuesday allow independents or other voters to participate, a dynamic that has helped keep Ms. Haley competitive in New Hampshire.

The extraordinary nature of this primary race could alter those calculations. Some strategists say that if Ms. Haley does not win outright, she should hold on until the Supreme Court decides whether Mr. Trump's name will appear on the ballot in Colorado, Maine and other states. Democrats and some election officials have argued that his role in trying to overthrow the 2020 election should disqualify him for running again.

Still, the strong loyalty Mr. Trump continues to command within his own party has caused Ms. Haley and her backers to make a careful, and somewhat tortured, case for her nomination. Ms. Haley has continued to temper her attacks on Mr. Trump, casting her candidacy less as an existential choice about the future of democracy and more as a moment of generational change.

Speaking to reporters at a diner in Amherst, Ms. Haley cautiously drew a contrast between herself and Mr. Trump. ''This is about, do you want more of the same? Or do you want something different?'' she said.

Ron DeSantis, Ms. Haley's other rival, is largely skipping the state to campaign in South Carolina, the next primary in the calendar and one where the Florida governor believes he has a better chance of making a strong showing.

New Hampshire primary voters have a history of propelling underdog candidates, including in 2000, when John McCain appealed to independents and defeated George W. Bush, who, like Mr. Trump, was the heavy favorite. A record 322,000 voters are expected to turnout for the Tuesday primary, according to the New Hampshire secretary of state. The surge could portend a spike in participation from independents, who can participate in the primary. So-called ''undeclared voters'' can take part by choosing a ballot from either party at the polling place.

Part of the problem faced by the anti-Trump wing is one of simple mathematics. A majority of the Republican Party remains staunchly supportive of the former president. But many of the moderate and independent voters who oppose Mr. Trump have voted for Democratic candidates in several election cycles, decreasing the likelihood that they would back another Republican candidate.

These changes have occurred along class lines, with college-educated and higher-income voters largely flocking to the Democratic Party. Mr. Trump's populist appeals boosted white ***working-class*** support for Republicans.

''Many of the college-educated moderates who used to buttress strategies like this for people like McCain in New Hampshire have self-deported from the Republican Party,'' said Representative Matt Gaetz, a stalwart Trump backer from Florida. ''Like, Nikki Haley Republicans aren't actually even Republicans anymore.''

In a campaign memo earlier this month, top Trump strategists accused Ms. Haley of creating a campaign ''designed to co-opt and take over a G.O.P. nominating contest with non-Republicans and Democrats.''

Mr. Trump has echoed that message as he campaigned across New Hampshire in recent days.

''Nikki Haley is counting on Democrats and liberals to infiltrate your Republican primary,'' he said on Wednesday night in Portsmouth. Ms. Haley, he said, is endorsed by ''all of the RINOs, globalists, Never Trumpers and Crooked Joe Biden's biggest donors.''

Ms. Haley has countered that is a lie, noting that Democrats have not been able to change their votes for months and cannot vote in a Republican primary. Any registered Democrat wishing to vote in the Republican primary had to change their party affiliation by Oct. 6. Nearly 4,000 voters did so before the deadline, according to the state's secretary of state.

But Ms. Haley has also defended her appeal to a broad spectrum of voters.

''What I am doing is telling people what I'm for,'' she said during her CNN town hall on Thursday night. ''If independents and conservative and moderate Republicans like that, I love that. If conservative Democrats are saying, 'I want to come back home to the Republican Party,' because they left it, I want them back.''

At an American Legion hall in Rochester, N.H., several formerly Republican voters who opposed Mr. Trump said they were no longer sure how to describe their political affiliation.

''I am not particularly happy with the way the Republican Party is headed,'' said Kristi Carroll, 51, who described herself as a stay-at-home mother and who came to hear Ms. Haley. ''I am not sure I am even Republican anymore. I am trying to figure it out.''

Ms. Carroll backed Mr. Trump in 2016 but not in 2020. And she doesn't plan on supporting him in 2024 -- even if the former president wins the party's nomination.

''After Iowa, I am pretty nervous about the direction of the country, and I am nervous that if Haley doesn't get the nomination, then I will be voting for a Democrat, which is fine, as long as it is not Trump,'' Ms. Carroll said. ''Isn't that awful? I hate to be like that, but that's the truth.''

A few rows behind her in the crowded room, Chuck Collins, 62, a retired Navy captain and engineer from Alton Bay, N.H., said he used to consider himself a Republican. After voting for Democrats in the last two presidential elections, he now calls himself an independent. Still, he believed a moderate Republican wing would eventually re-emerge.

''We have to have two healthy parties, whether you're Republican or Democrat,'' Mr. Collins said. ''You have to have two teams to have a game.''

Michael Gold contributed reporting from Portsmouth, N.H.Michael Gold contributed reporting from Portsmouth, N.H.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/20/us/politics/trump-new-hampshire-haley.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/20/us/politics/trump-new-hampshire-haley.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Recent polling that shows Donald J. Trump leading Nikki Haley by double digits in New Hampshire underscores her uphill battle on Tuesday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A18) This article appeared in print on page A1, A18.

**Load-Date:** January 21, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Life Bends Their Way***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69FP-K381-JBG3-61ST-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 22, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section ST; Column 0; Style Desk; Pg. 9

**Length:** 949 words

**Byline:** By The Styles Desk

**Body**

The new Netflix series is about a famous athlete and his famous family. But it's also a love story told through fashion.

Netflix has a new most popular show. ''Beckham,'' which was released Oct. 4, is a splashy four-part documentary series about one of the most famous footballers of all time.

In the series, David Beckham now 48, charts his journey from ***working-class*** obscurity in south London to a young star at Manchester United, captain of the England squad and half of one of the biggest celebrity couples in contemporary pop culture. His wife of 24 years, Victoria Beckham -- once known as Posh Spice -- supports him from the sidelines. Viewers are treated to interviews with his tight-knit family and a constellation of teammates, celebrity friends and even some of the paparazzi who built careers on chasing the Beckhams' every move.

The doc takes us from the 1990s and the duo's matching leather catsuits through their flamboyant purple wedding outfits, his varied hairstyles as he moves to clubs like Real Madrid and LA Galaxy and her hair extensions and the microshorts that defined her WAG era through to complimentary cashmere and denim looks of the present day.

Vanessa Friedman There are many reasons to watch the Netflix Beckham documentary, but the sheer joy of going down that turn-of-the-millennium fashion hole has got to be one. It was like a mini history lesson in style (and style faux pas).

Guy Trebay It was a millennium fashion hole for sure -- their purple wedding suits, for example. But I found it way more enjoyable as a snapshot of class. The period mostly covered in the first two episodes was an open time of flouting the class divide.

Elizabeth Paton Their engagement in 1998 could have been a royal one, there was so much delirium about it. It is hard to overestimate how obsessed the world -- but particularly the British public -- were with their his-and-hers fashion efforts. The double denim looks. Matching black leather catsuits from Gucci (at a Versace party). The fact her hair was shorter than his.

G.T. Bullingdon boys didn't wear Mohawks.

Stella Bugbee His hair was an important subplot in this series -- the many bleach jobs and half-ponytails dovetail with the changes in his career. The filmmakers seem to implicate his shaved his head as the catalyst for the rift that would send him packing from Manchester United. His buzz cut spawned a craze for young fans who shaved their heads to look like him. He appears to have enjoyed that relationship with his fans and used his hair as a tool for hype.

V.F. Sometimes his hair was apparently styled by Victoria! Even just after she gave birth, when he had to face the press, he asked her to fix his hair first. I was struck by how much she seemed to be shaping his image behind the scenes, but I appreciate a man who is willing to admit to his vanity. To pick up the wedding thread: Royal is the right word, Lizzie. Down to the matching purple outfits -- which they laugh about now.

E.P. Soccer is a macho arena. And here is David Beckham, wearing a purple suit, or being photographed wearing a sarong. That was genuinely groundbreaking for a celebrity like him in 1998.

G.T. The sarong was important -- and I return to class here -- because lads and lager louts were not wearing skirts.

V.F. The sarong speaks to his -- and her -- ambition for careers beyond the original game of football and pop music. Victoria always understood image creation. It's also telling that the first public sign of their relationship was he gave her a Cartier watch to match his own. In some ways, this is a love story told in clothes.

G.T. They are low key in the doc -- his wool pullover, her jeans and tee.

E.P. It's interesting to note the evolution from them wearing identical outfits to their gently complementary looks now. Their tendency to twin hasn't gone away. Just matured.

V.F. The designer list from her WAG years was very flashy: Dolce & Gabbana, Roberto Cavalli, Antonio Berardi.

S.B. What she wore wasn't a big part of this series, which seems like a deliberate choice -- Vanessa pointed out that they don't even mention her career as a serious designer. Obviously it's a show that forefronts him, but it's still a miss.

V.F. Victoria seems to be positioning herself in the background, as the less showy person. We don't see her closet, but we get a glimpse of David's, which is extraordinary.

S.B. His meticulous closet! The documentary doesn't care about what's in it as much as the way it shows his O.C.D. tendencies -- which they hint at in other parts of the filming, too -- the compulsive neatness in the kitchen, for example.

G.T. The most human part of him, the least managed -- or manageable -- is the O.C.D. There's a moment where he adjusts a clothes hanger by a millimeter.

V.F. I was struck by his attention to detail for the Miami club -- picking the pink, having a pink net, picking the team's suits. He is still very attuned to image. In the documentary, you realize how much he changed the game when it comes to footballers and brands. Messi (the Messi store), Neymar and L.V. -- Beckham really opened up those possibilities. Now he seems to be actively managing his own transition to owner.

E.P. I don't know how it's been received in the U.S., but in the U.K., people are feeling very nostalgic and fuzzy toward the couple, if probably slightly guilty about the hideous way in which celebrities in the 1990s and 2010s were treated. It's a master class in keeping your personal brand positive.

Elizabeth Paton, Vanessa Friedman, Guy Trebay and Stella Bugbee contributed reporting.Elizabeth Paton, Vanessa Friedman, Guy Trebay and Stella Bugbee contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/15/fashion/beckham-netflix-documentary-style.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/15/fashion/beckham-netflix-documentary-style.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Victoria and David Beckham: a love story told through clothes. (PHOTOGRAPH VIA REUTERS) This article appeared in print on page ST9.

**Load-Date:** October 22, 2023

**End of Document**



[***The Shortlist / Debut Novels***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69M6-4J21-DXY4-X047-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 12, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 30

**Length:** 1193 words

**Byline:** By Tracy O'Neill

**Body**

I'M A FAN By Sheena Patel Graywolf. 203 pp. Paperback, $17.

Patel's ''I'm a Fan'' is an impolite novel about romantic obsession, set in a liberalized but inequitable sexual economy that rewards the white and rich. The unnamed narrator, a young brown woman living in London, spends much of the book online, fixating on the white, married and much older ''man I want to be with'' and the other women in his life. Imagining herself meeting one paramour in particular, she wonders, ''Would I tell her I know who all her friends are and I watch their stories too, would I tell her I screenshot the photos she takes of herself and study her face so intently sometimes I fear I've picked up some facial expressions or tonal inflections from her?''

For all the detail she reveals about these strangers' lives, the narrator tells us comparatively little about herself. We are offered few, if suggestive, details about her nice enough boyfriend and her upbringing by ***working-class*** immigrant parents who ''deliberately did not speak their languages to me so I would not be put at a disadvantage.'' The narrator is not even the other woman, she is only an other woman.

Though she ruminates on the sociocultural machinations that shape her desires, she is not exempt from their power -- treating love like a gameable system that she has yet to crack. She rails and seethes and then regrets the railing and seething, bringing her no closer to the object of her obsession. She kisses a girl and likes it, though not enough to override her interest in acquiring male approval. Meanwhile she derides the ways in which her lover's other lovers perform antiracism in corny, confused ways: ''privileged white women talking about care of the Earth and the land as if they are distinct from the white people who are racist and those who have pillaged this burning, now volatile planet of ours.''

The novel is claustrophobic in theme but its style is loose, allowing the narrator's ferocious id to spin out thrillingly and unapologetically. Her vague aspirations to become a writer register as somewhat cursory next to the attention suck of the narrator's romantic abjection; Patel's clever novel suggests just how easily such ambitions can be lost in the power imbalance of heterosexual libidinal attachment.

CANDELARIA By Melissa Lozada-Oliva Astra House. 305 pp. $28.

At the beginning of Lozada-Oliva's ''Candelaria,'' a soapy, apocalyptic picaresque, the titular 86-year-old murders her doting boyfriend in their kitchen in Boston. From there the novel follows three generations of women in Candelaria's Guatemalan American family as they make their way together on a hellish Christmas Eve, as people around them are shot, stabbed, eaten or more symbolically consumed during an earthquake.

Candelaria is not the only character in crisis. Her daughter Lucia is desperate to find her youngest daughter, Candy, a recovering heroin addict who ''was always being bailed out of jail by her poor mother'' and now finds herself pregnant. Lucia's middle daughter, Bianca, is an archaeologist who's been kicked off her work site in Guatemala by the adviser with whom she's been having an affair. After faking her own death, the eldest sister, Paola, has re-emerged after 10 years as Zoe, a spinning instructor beholden to a wellness cult leader.

Lozada-Oliva's imagination draws upon an inventive mix of narrative traditions -- from melodrama to zombie horror to slacker comedy -- but the pleasures of the stylistic mash-up do not compensate for semantically incoherent prose at crucial narrative junctures. Late in the book, a mysterious first-person narrator -- the rock that is seemingly also the ''alien parasite thing'' that, while assuming the flesh suit of Bianca's dead ex-lover, impregnated Candy -- makes a baffling confession regarding its role in Candelaria's son's death years earlier:

''Yes, that was me, all those years ago. Not really. A seed of me. / You see, I cannot help myself. / I have a duty. It is in my biology. / I cannot make you understand. / I was always the key they turned. / The earth is dying, that is true. I have felt it for so long. Since I arrived, / it has been a place of death.''

Is this homicidal ''seed'' meant to be a metaphor for intergenerational trauma? Could the alien stone signify an attitude toward humanity's endless and destructive impulse for consumption? Might the rowdy plot signal the ubiquity of everyday violence? Perhaps, but the author's meaning too frequently gets lost in the mystifications of word salad.

AND THEN SHE FELL By Alicia Elliott Dutton. 349 pp. $28.

Alice is 13 and watching ''Pocahontas'' with her kid cousin when the cartoon woman starts speaking to her through the TV screen, telling her the real story of her kidnapping by the English after she met John Smith at 10. This early scene is just the first of many mental breaks sustained by Alice, the Indigenous Mohawk protagonist of Elliott's ''And Then She Fell.''

By adulthood, Alice's life has become a plodding tour of misery. She's reeling from the recent death of her mother; often aggrieved by and suspicious of her husband, Steve, a white anthropologist who's writing a book on Indigenous planting; and struggling to bond with her newborn daughter. Living off the rez for the first time, Alice experiences middle-class America as a series of microaggressions by cheerful white women who self-deprecate about their wine consumption. When a neighbor disposes of Disney DVDs that no longer ''spark joy,'' Alice takes the discards, noticing that they're ''all movies featuring leads who aren't white'' -- including ''Pocahontas.'' Feeling increasingly alienated, she slips further into mental illness.

Frights abound, including an apparition called ''the Shape,'' a nod to the hallucinatory ''shape'' in Miranda July's ''Making Love in 2003'' (which also features a love object named Steve). Alice's Shape is ''a presence, something whole,'' and it makes her promise to ''keep writing,'' to tell the story of Sky Woman, the ''mother of our nations'' who is also known as Mature Flowers. Chapters from Alice's ensuing book appear throughout the novel, and they mark a distinct departure from her previous writing about smarmy white men. The text-within-a-text also becomes a mirror through which Alice sees herself anew: ''I've been thinking about how destroyed Mature Flowers was over her father. I feel bad for her, and I relate to her literally twice over.''

Despite intrusions of the uncanny, little is left to mystery in this novel. In earnest, pedestrian exposition, Elliott sacrifices momentum to draw a picture of intergenerational trauma that includes dislocation, alcoholism, police harassment and violence. Alice's hamstrung agony mushrooms until one particular delusion encourages her to seize upon the redemptive power of narrative. ''Your writing will plant seeds, too,'' her grandmother's ghost tells her. ''That's why it matters. You have no idea what decision of yours, what seed, is going to grow into a sturdy, powerful tree generations down the line.''Tracy O'Neill is the author, most recently, of the novel ''Quotients.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/26/books/review/05shortlist-oneill.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/26/books/review/05shortlist-oneill.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS This article appeared in print on page BR30.

**Load-Date:** November 12, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Military-Industrial Wives***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69M6-4J21-DXY4-X04T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 12, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2023 The New York Times Company

**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 13; FICTION

**Length:** 1218 words

**Byline:** By Jennifer Egan

**Body**

ABSOLUTION, by Alice McDermott

Alice McDermott is rightly celebrated for her granular, nuanced portraits of mid-20th-century life, with a particular focus on Irish Americans. Her fans may be startled, then, to find themselves plunged into 1963 Saigon at the start of her enveloping new novel, ''Absolution,'' whose lofty title belies its sensory, gritty humanity.

McDermott's contextual leap is not as great as it might seem. The primary narrator of ''Absolution,'' Patricia Kelly, and her husband, Peter, a Navy intelligence officer, are Irish American New Yorkers who might easily be part of the same family tree as Billy Lynch from McDermott's 1998 National Book Award winner, ''Charming Billy''; Marie from ''Someone''; the Daileys from ''At Weddings and Wakes''; or the Keanes from ''After This,'' my personal favorite. Indeed, Peter Kelly's sense of mission in Vietnam is bound up with his Catholicism; President Kennedy, a Catholic, initially supported the Catholic president of South Vietnam, Ngo Dinh Diem, in part through the efforts of a Central Intelligence Agency that was jokingly referred to as the ''Catholic Intelligence Agency.''

Although she opens with an epigraph from ''The Quiet American,'' Graham Greene's 1955 indictment of catastrophic American blundering in post-colonial Vietnam, McDermott asserts her revisionist focus in the novel's third sentence: ''You have no idea what it was like. For us. The women, I mean. The wives.'' She then delves into the lives and activities of the blunderers' wives during the last era in American life in which being a husband's ''helpmeet'' was widely seen as a worthy fulfillment of feminine ambition.

Shortly after their arrival in Saigon, shy, 23-year-old Patricia, newly wed and in awe of Peter, meets Charlene, a WASP who is rich, potty-mouthed, pill-popping and lawbreaking -- all things Patricia decidedly is not. A bossy insider and mother of three, Charlene masterminds a ''cabal'' of charitable military-industrial wives bent on helping poor and ailing Vietnamese. Their work consists of channeling black-market profits into buying trinkets and candy to distribute to hospitalized children (some of whom may be recovering from war wounds) and their impoverished families.

In passive Patricia (whom she immediately nicknames Tricia), the aggressive, polarizing Charlene finds a perfect foil for her escalating charitable schemes. Their alliance -- more than a partnership and less than a friendship -- results, first, in the marketing of ''Saigon Barbies'' outfitted in Vietnamese attire, and later, in orchestrating the tailoring of exquisite outfits for residents of a leper colony.

Patricia immediately recognizes Charlene as a type -- rich and entitled -- yet acknowledges, ''It was another inborn talent of these privileged girls; they were irresistible, much as you hated them.'' Charlene's magnetism pulls in the reader thanks to McDermott's eye for the contradictions and complexities that elevate anyone, living or literary, from a generic type (always a measure of our distance from them) into a specific individual. Though brimming with self-regard, Charlene also bites her nails to nubs and is plagued by night terrors. When Patricia, who is desperate for a child, miscarries, Charlene baptizes the embryo and ritualizes the loss in a way that honors its magnitude. Her wish to ''do good,'' dismissed by the men around her as the irrelevant scurrying of a ''dynamo,'' is genuine, even spiritual. Of her night terrors, Charlene says: ''They're telling me something. About myself, I suppose. ... I mean to see what I was meant to see.''

The story is told in retrospect, from a distance of decades, in the form of letters between an older, widowed Patricia and Charlene's daughter, Rainey, long after Charlene's early death. Retrospect amplifies McDermott's narrative approach; her work lives in its shimmering details (she's especially good with smells and descriptions of light), and nostalgia imbues even simple observations with suggestiveness. When Patricia arrives at Charlene's home for lunch, ''the ladies were drinking manhattans. I'd never had one ... would have preferred something cool and bubbly -- maybe a tall Coke. Although the amber liquid in the small triangular glass looked elegant. The shadowy cherry.''

The shift in time allows Patricia to comment upon her young self, and the events of 1963, from a salty perspective informed by disillusioning history. At the luncheon, after detailing her husband's meteoric rise, Patricia reflects: ''I told Peter's story, which was my own, and felt, what else to call it but patriotic pride. Saw that the three women felt it, too. Bright young men and their pretty little wives rising, rising, immigrant roots and ***working-class*** backgrounds be damned. Spine-straightening, tear-inducing, vaguely orgasmic -- the manhattan had its effect (I hope you're laughing) -- patriotic pride in an American romance. God, what a country.''

The debacle of America's involvement in Vietnam might easily have overdetermined McDermott's story, and it is a measure of her skill that ''Absolution'' maintains an oblique relationship to the war. McDermott's subject is not intervention per se but the altruistic impulse -- particularly as practiced by those whose privilege lets them anoint themselves to heal what Charlene calls Vietnam's ''wretchedness.'' She's one of many characters who are trying to ''do good,'' and they range from the greedy and presumptuous to the genuinely selfless.

One of the latter, a young Catholic medic named Dominic who visits the leper colony with Charlene and Patricia, winds up living next door to Charlene's middle-aged daughter, Rainey, without either of them realizing that they're linked through Charlene -- a coincidence likely to strain some readers' credulity. The brief section of ''Absolution'' where Rainey details for Patricia the tragic events of her friendship with Dominic and his adopted son is less compelling; sinners make more engrossing reading than saints, and Charlene's absence from the narrative leaves a vacuum. Rainey's voice is hard to distinguish from Patricia's (both use the word ''sunstruck''); and because Rainey and Dominic play minor parts in the Saigon story, refocusing on them three-quarters of the way through the novel is a challenge.

It is satisfying, then, to return to Saigon for a final dispatch from Patricia to Rainey in which the callous wrongheadedness of Charlene's interventions is decisively exposed. The chasm between Charlene and Patricia reasserts itself, and the reader is left with a sense of how unlikely, even otherworldly, their collaboration was. Yet as American wives overseas in 1963, they had a great deal in common: a near-total lack of agency or power; a choice between parroting their husbands' opinions or operating independently in the margins, to limited and uncertain effect. What difference might it have made, for everyone, if those wives had been given a choice in the decision-making? Without posing this question directly, ''Absolution'' leaves the reader in its provocative shadow.

Jennifer Egan's most recent novel is ''The Candy House.''

ABSOLUTION | By Alice McDermott | Farrar, Straus & Giroux | 336 pp. | $28Jennifer Egan's most recent novel is ''The Candy House.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/27/books/review/absolution-alice-mcdermott.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/27/books/review/absolution-alice-mcdermott.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page BR13.

**Load-Date:** November 12, 2023

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[***SATs and Measuring Merit***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:687C-8HC1-DXY4-X4FP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 14, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section SR; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 11; LETTERS

**Length:** 1190 words

**Body**

Readers discuss a column by Ross Douthat about colleges no longer requiring SAT scores.

To the Editor:

Re ''Can College Meritocracy Survive?,'' by Ross Douthat (column, April 30):

Good riddance to the SAT. It is a simplistic yardstick of performance -- and tests a certain type of intelligence, whereas there are many. Further, it exacerbates the unfairness of higher education in the United States.

Those with means avail themselves of small armies of tutors and expensive prep courses, while those born into modest circumstances are on their own -- a microcosm of American society.

Though even as the SAT fades in importance, we must recognize that its diminishment alone does not render the college admissions process fair -- in fact, it is obscene in its bias. If we want a truly meritocratic system, we would do away with preferential admission for legacy applicants and those with parents who are generous donors.

I went to a private school in Manhattan. By and large, those whose parents had legacy status, connections and/or gave large donations received acceptance letters from Ivy League schools. Those who lacked these resources -- acquired by birth and not merit -- were left to pick up the scraps thrown from the table. Meritocracy is merely a myth.

Daniel DolgicerNew York

To the Editor:

Ross Douthat's concept of meritocracy misses the forest for the trees. The number of spots at Ivy League-type schools is artificially limited; there will always be meritorious students outside the elite bubble. Merit is determined by putting your education to good use after finishing college, not by the arbitrary number your school was assigned by some rankings conglomerate.

I attended a respectable but not ''elite'' school in Ohio for my bachelor's degree. I still got an amazing education and was surrounded by incredible classmates. My experience in industry and graduate school is that people from nonelite schools frequently compete with or outperform peers from pedigreed schools. Rankings simply cannot accurately describe the quality and applicability of the instruction students receive in college.

So let's agree as a society to drop the obsession with college rankings and admission to brand-name schools. Instead, we should focus our collective attention on increasing funding for universities across the board. Invest in everyone's education. This is the path to a true meritocracy.

Quinn WintersMunichThe writer is a graduate student at Technical University of Munich.

To the Editor:

While fretting over the demise of standardized tests in college admissions, Ross Douthat overlooks the real reason that admissions professionals have soured on their use: Standardized tests are poor predictors of actual performance in college.

Admissions work is more nuanced in the 21st century because professionals have read the data showing that unquantifiable factors like ''grit'' and ''resilience'' are better predictors of success in college than an ACT score. They know not to discount a student from an underfunded high school with poor test scores but lots of ''A'' grades. That student has shown the desire and discipline for academic work.

If you want a meritocracy, then the tests no longer fit the admissions task (and probably never did). Let 'em go the way of blue books.

Jim BrownVictoria BrownHavertown, Pa.The writers are retired college professors.

To the Editor:

I could not agree more with Ross Douthat's analysis.

I came from an immigrant ***working-class*** Italian family, so no exposure to the kinds of books, discussions, etc. of my upper-class competitors. I was class valedictorian at a public high school in a suburban Boston town that was very ***working class***.

Had I not done well on the SATs, I doubt that I would have gotten accepted to Barnard, Jackson (Tufts), Wellesley or Brandeis.

I think Mr. Douthat is exactly right that it's not the SATs that work against applicants who come from the middle or lower classes but the extracurriculars, the essays, the ''right demeanor'' in the interview. (I was wholly surprised by being asked in two of my interviews about whether I would be traveling in Europe during my summer before freshman year. How about a job?)

In the end, I became a highly successful partner for almost 20 years in a large Washington, D.C., law firm.

Marilyn DoriaMadison, Conn.

To the Editor:

Michael Sandel's book ''The Tyranny of Merit: What's Become of the Common Good'' explains that meritocracy is not as worth preserving as Ross Douthat claims.

As a secondary school English teacher and school administrator for over 25 years, I ''get'' why standardized testing often misrepresents a student's true ability and potential.

Many talented students, both from affluent and poor backgrounds, do poorly on time-stressed standardized tests -- though those from affluent families have the financial means to hire tutors to help them practice and improve.

Many American teens can't or don't go on to higher education, and feel unprepared to pursue college or a career (as high as 75 percent according to one survey). And of the roughly 60 percent who do go to college, only about 60 percent graduate in six years.

The focus shouldn't be on elite universities and the merit of college admissions, but on why so many American teens don't or can't go on to higher education, or can't complete a degree. Part of this problem is our culture's focus on a college degree as necessary for a middle-class life.

Meritocracy and SATs aren't the issue. Why our high schools so poorly prepare teens for productive lives is what we should be worrying about as a nation.

James BerkmanPlymouth, Vt.

To the Editor:

College admissions exemplifies how meritocracy has become gamified. This is why I stopped working for a company that prepares middle and high school students for admission to a top college.

Such businesses hire consultants -- often college students like me -- to construct an extracurricular plan for students or patch up their academic weaknesses. The result is a system in which privileged people help privileged people, where schools admit applications that are better than their applicants.

Admissions committees must more seriously consider whether the applicant and application are indeed of the same quality. They should begin to require students to declare whether they received outside help with their application, and how much. Then admissions officers can adjust the standards for these students accordingly.

Aman MajmudarChicagoThe writer is a junior at the University of Chicago.

To the Editor:

A question that's left out of Ross Douthat's column on meritocracy is whether or not we should value Ivy League degrees more than others. Are Ivy grads valued because they have more skills, or because when they were 18 they were able to get into a fancy school?

The lazy old-boys network that continues to recruit from a narrow pool for important jobs in a variety of fields is more to blame than the college admissions process.

Dave CaseHood River, Ore.The writer is a high school teacher who writes many letters of recommendations for his students.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/13/opinion/letters/sat-merit-college-admissions.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/13/opinion/letters/sat-merit-college-admissions.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page SR11.

**Load-Date:** May 14, 2023

**End of Document**



[***For the Anti-Trump Wing of the G.O.P., It All Comes Down to Tuesday***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B4W-MN51-DXY4-X00J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 20, 2024 Saturday 08:35 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1741 words

**Highlight:** The old guard of the Republican Party has rallied around Nikki Haley ahead of New Hampshire’s primary, in a long-shot bid to stop the former president’s march to the nomination.

**Body**

The old guard of the Republican Party has rallied around Nikki Haley ahead of New Hampshire’s primary, in a long-shot bid to stop the former president’s march to the nomination.

The first-in-the-nation primary could be the last stand for the anti-Trump Republican.

Since 2016, a shrinking band of Republican strategists, retired lawmakers and donors has tried to oust Donald J. Trump from his commanding position in the party. And again and again, through one Capitol riot, two impeachments, three presidential elections and four criminal indictments, they have failed to gain traction with its voters.

Now, after years of legal, cultural and political crises that upended American norms and expectations, what could be the final battle of the anti-Trump Republicans won’t be waged in Congress or the courts, but in the packed ski lodges and snowy town halls of a state of 1.4 million residents.

Ahead of New Hampshire’s primary on Tuesday, the old guard of the G.O.P. has rallied around Nikki Haley, viewing her bid as its last, best chance to finally pry the former president from atop its party. Anything but a very close finish for her in the state, where moderate, independent voters make up 40 percent of the electorate, would send Mr. Trump on an all-but-unstoppable march to the nomination.

The Trump opposition is outnumbered and underemployed. The former president’s polarizing style and hard-nosed tactics have pushed many Republicans who oppose him into early retirement and humiliating defeats, or out of the party completely. Yet, their long-running war against him has helped to frame the nominating contest around a central, and deeply tribal, litmus test: loyalty to Mr. Trump.

Gordon J. Humphrey, a former New Hampshire senator, was [*a conservative power broker during the Reagan era*](https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1978/12/02/110977139.pdf?pdf_redirect=true&amp;ip=0) but left the party after Mr. Trump won the presidential nomination in 2016. This year, he has produced anti-Trump Facebook videos aimed at encouraging college students and independent voters who, polls show, are more likely to support Ms. Haley over Mr. Trump.

“It’s very big stakes,” Mr. Humphrey, 83, said. “If he wins here, Trump will be unstoppable.”

Campaigning across the state this week for Ms. Haley, Gov. Chris Sununu of New Hampshire, a moderate Republican, argued that the man who remade the party in his image is not its best standard-bearer.

“Trump does not represent the Republican Party,” said Mr. Sununu as he campaigned with Ms. Haley at a rustic event space in Hollis, N.H. “He does not represent the conservative movement. Trump is about Trump.”

Large numbers of Republicans disagree. Mr. Trump, who was trailing in some primary polls only a year ago, now has support from nearly two-thirds of the party, according to an average of national polls by the data-driven news site FiveThirtyEight. In the Iowa caucuses on Monday, Mr. Trump [*demolished his rivals*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/us/politics/trump-iowa-win-voters.html) by nearly 30 percentage points, winning almost every demographic, geographic region and other slice of the electorate.

Elected Republicans have rallied around the former president. On Friday, Senator Tim Scott of South Carolina endorsed Mr. Trump at a rally in Concord, N.H. Even Mr. Sununu — Ms. Haley’s most potent political backer in New Hampshire — has acknowledged that he would support Mr. Trump if he wins the party’s nomination for a third time.

Some of Mr. Trump’s strongest opponents doubt that after so many defeats, they will be successful. Barbara Comstock, a longtime Republican official who was swept out of her suburban Virginia congressional seat in the 2018 midterm backlash to Mr. Trump, said she believed the former president would win the nomination. The only way the party will finally be rid of Mr. Trump, she said, is if he loses in 2024, an outcome she thinks could cost Republicans scores of congressional seats.

“He has to lose and drag down even more people with him on the ballot and that’s the only thing that changes it,” said Ms. Comstock, who opposes Mr. Trump. “You lose, and it’s bad, and you lost for a second time to a really weak guy.”

Recent polling that shows Ms. Haley trailing Mr. Trump by double digits in New Hampshire underscores her uphill battle on Tuesday. Yet even if Ms. Haley can overcome the odds in New Hampshire, she faces the question of what’s next.

A loss next month in a crucial matchup in her home state of South Carolina, where she also trails by double digits, could depress her momentum heading into March, when two-thirds of all Republican primary delegates are up for grabs.

But a victory would give her momentum heading into the Super Tuesday contests on March 5. Twelve of the 16 primaries on Super Tuesday allow independents or other voters to participate, a dynamic that has helped keep Ms. Haley competitive in New Hampshire.

The extraordinary nature of this primary race could alter those calculations. Some strategists say that if Ms. Haley does not win outright, she should hold on until the Supreme Court decides whether Mr. Trump’s name will appear on the ballot in Colorado, Maine and other states. Democrats and some election officials have argued that his role in trying to overthrow the 2020 election should disqualify him for running again.

Still, the strong loyalty Mr. Trump continues to command within his own party has caused Ms. Haley and her backers to make a careful, and somewhat tortured, case for her nomination. Ms. Haley has continued to temper her attacks on Mr. Trump, casting her candidacy less as an existential choice about the future of democracy and more as a moment of generational change.

Speaking to reporters at a diner in Amherst, Ms. Haley cautiously drew a contrast between herself and Mr. Trump. “This is about, do you want more of the same? Or do you want something different?” she said.

Ron DeSantis, Ms. Haley’s other rival, is largely skipping the state to campaign in South Carolina, the next primary in the calendar and one where the Florida governor believes he has a better chance of making a strong showing.

New Hampshire primary voters have a history of propelling underdog candidates, including in 2000, when John McCain appealed to independents and defeated George W. Bush, who, like Mr. Trump, was the heavy favorite. A record 322,000 voters are expected to turnout for the Tuesday primary, according to the New Hampshire secretary of state. The surge could portend a spike in participation from independents, who can participate in the primary. So-called “undeclared voters” can take part by choosing a ballot from either party at the polling place.

Part of the problem faced by the anti-Trump wing is one of simple mathematics. A majority of the Republican Party remains staunchly supportive of the former president. But many of the moderate and independent voters who oppose Mr. Trump have voted for Democratic candidates in several election cycles, decreasing the likelihood that they would back another Republican candidate.

These changes have occurred along class lines, with college-educated and higher-income voters largely flocking to the Democratic Party. Mr. Trump’s populist appeals boosted white ***working-class*** support for Republicans.

“Many of the college-educated moderates who used to buttress strategies like this for people like McCain in New Hampshire have self-deported from the Republican Party,” said Representative Matt Gaetz, a stalwart Trump backer from Florida. “Like, Nikki Haley Republicans aren’t actually even Republicans anymore.”

In a campaign memo earlier this month, top Trump strategists accused Ms. Haley of creating a campaign “designed to co-opt and take over a G.O.P. nominating contest with non-Republicans and Democrats.”

Mr. Trump has echoed that message as he campaigned across New Hampshire in recent days.

“Nikki Haley is counting on Democrats and liberals to infiltrate your Republican primary,” he said on Wednesday night in Portsmouth. Ms. Haley, he said, is endorsed by “all of the RINOs, globalists, Never Trumpers and Crooked Joe Biden’s biggest donors.”

Ms. Haley has countered that is a lie, noting that Democrats have not been able to change their votes for months and cannot vote in a Republican primary. Any registered Democrat wishing to vote in the Republican primary had to change their party affiliation by Oct. 6. Nearly 4,000 voters did so before the deadline, according to the state’s secretary of state.

But Ms. Haley has also defended her appeal to a broad spectrum of voters.

“What I am doing is telling people what I’m for,” she said during her CNN town hall on Thursday night. “If independents and conservative and moderate Republicans like that, I love that. If conservative Democrats are saying, ‘I want to come back home to the Republican Party,’ because they left it, I want them back.”

At an American Legion hall in Rochester, N.H., several formerly Republican voters who opposed Mr. Trump said they were no longer sure how to describe their political affiliation.

“I am not particularly happy with the way the Republican Party is headed,” said Kristi Carroll, 51, who described herself as a stay-at-home mother and who came to hear Ms. Haley. “I am not sure I am even Republican anymore. I am trying to figure it out.”

Ms. Carroll backed Mr. Trump in 2016 but not in 2020. And she doesn’t plan on supporting him in 2024 — even if the former president wins the party’s nomination.

“After Iowa, I am pretty nervous about the direction of the country, and I am nervous that if Haley doesn’t get the nomination, then I will be voting for a Democrat, which is fine, as long as it is not Trump,” Ms. Carroll said. “Isn’t that awful? I hate to be like that, but that’s the truth.”

A few rows behind her in the crowded room, Chuck Collins, 62, a retired Navy captain and engineer from Alton Bay, N.H., said he used to consider himself a Republican. After voting for Democrats in the last two presidential elections, he now calls himself an independent. Still, he believed a moderate Republican wing would eventually re-emerge.

“We have to have two healthy parties, whether you’re Republican or Democrat,” Mr. Collins said. “You have to have two teams to have a game.”

Michael Gold contributed reporting from Portsmouth, N.H.

Michael Gold contributed reporting from Portsmouth, N.H.

PHOTO: Recent polling that shows Donald J. Trump leading Nikki Haley by double digits in New Hampshire underscores her uphill battle on Tuesday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A18) This article appeared in print on page A1, A18.

**Load-Date:** January 21, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Singer of ‘Rich Men North of Richmond’ Says It’s Not a Republican Anthem***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:691D-20P1-DXY4-X3TS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 25, 2023 Friday 23:14 EST

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**Section:** ARTS; music

**Length:** 741 words

**Byline:** Livia Albeck-Ripka

**Highlight:** “I wrote this song about those people,” Oliver Anthony said of his No. 1 hit, after presidential candidates answered a question about his Billboard hit at their first debate.

**Body**

“I wrote this song about those people,” Oliver Anthony said of his No. 1 hit, after presidential candidates answered a question about his Billboard hit at their first debate.

The singer Oliver Anthony, whose song [*“Rich Men North of Richmond”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/21/arts/music/rich-men-north-of-richmond-oliver-anthony.html) has soared to the top of the Billboard singles chart, [*released a YouTube video on Friday*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cv9uMXiY29s) denouncing Republicans and conservative outlets for co-opting his song.

“It was funny seeing that presidential debate,” Anthony said. “I wrote that song about those people.”

A clip of Anthony performing was played by Fox News moderators at the start of the [*Republican presidential debate*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/08/23/us/republican-debate-trump-news) on Wednesday night in Milwaukee, after a series of videos of Americans lamenting conditions under President Biden, including inflation and homelessness.

The clip showed Anthony — with guitar in hand and two dogs at his feet — singing: “These rich men north of Richmond / Lord knows they all just wanna have total control.”

The song, [*which Anthony uploaded to YouTube earlier this month*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sqSA-SY5Hro), had caught fire with conservative figures like Matt Walsh and Laura Ingraham, who described it as an authentic expression of ***working-class*** American life. Widely perceived as a conservative anthem, it also drew critiques from some on the left, who [*called the lyrics racist*](https://www.dailykos.com/stories/2023/8/22/2188943/--Rich-Men-North-of-Richmond-is-racist-trash-and-should-not-be-used-to-prove-any-points).

At the debate, Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida was the first to respond to a question asking why the song had struck a chord with so many Americans.

“Our country is in decline,” Mr. DeSantis said. “This decline is not inevitable. It’s a choice.” He added, “Those rich men north of Richmond have put us in this situation.”

Anthony said Friday it “cracks me up” that the candidates had been forced to listen to his song onstage, because he was singing about powerful people like them.

The new video showed him behind the wheel of his truck, as heavy rain pelted the windows. “That song has nothing to do with Joe Biden,” he said. “You know, it’s a lot bigger than Joe Biden.”

Anthony, who is from Farmville, Va., also said that he was fed up by what he perceived to be the weaponization of his music by both the right and left.

“It’s aggravating seeing people on conservative news try to identify with me like I’m one of them,” he said. “I see the right, trying to characterize me as one of their own. And I see the left trying to discredit me.”

The left, he added, had misinterpreted his lyrics as being attacks on the poor when, he said, he was trying to defend them. “I’ve got to be clear that my message like with any of my songs, it references the inefficiencies of the government.”

Reason, a libertarian magazine, had [*lauded what it perceived as Anthony’s anti-tax message*](https://reason.com/2023/08/14/fun-silly-anti-tax-ballad-rich-men-north-of-richmond-goes-viral-for-some-online-reasons/). But liberal commentators [*were troubled*](https://www.dailykos.com/stories/2023/8/22/2188943/--Rich-Men-North-of-Richmond-is-racist-trash-and-should-not-be-used-to-prove-any-points) by a lyric about the “obese milkin’ welfare.” The folk singer Billy Bragg even [*wrote his own version*](https://slate.com/culture/2023/08/oliver-anthony-rich-men-north-of-richmond-billy-bragg.html) of the song and cautioned Anthony about punching down.

At first, Anthony appeared to welcome the attention from conservatives. He granted Fox News the right to use it in the debate, [*Politico reported*](https://www.politico.com/newsletters/playbook/2023/08/25/what-fox-news-moderators-wish-they-asked-at-the-gop-debate-00112972?nname=playbook&amp;nid=0000014f-1646-d88f-a1cf-5f46b7bd0000&amp;nrid=89acb842-2611-4342-b17f-2a88c1da99b3&amp;nlid=630318). And he [*gave an interview*](https://www.foxnews.com/media/oliver-anthony-reason-rich-men-touched-people-globally-blue-collar) to the network, saying that he had been motivated to write the song because of his own struggles, which he assumed were shared by others.

“It resonates the suffering in our world right now, like even in our own country,” he said then. “We’ve had years of people feeling depressed and hopeless and every time you look at the T.V. or get online everything’s negative.” He added that “corporate media and education” had helped to sow division.

Anthony returned to that theme in his video on Friday, saying that despite how it may appear, his music had actually united people.

“It’s driving people crazy to see the unity that’s come from this from all walks,” Anthony said. “This isn’t a Republican and Democrat thing. This isn’t even a United States thing. Like, this has been a global response.”

Anthony, who could not immediately be reached for an interview on Friday evening, described himself as a “nobody” who through some divine intervention had been tasked with sending a message that things needed to change. Before his meteoric rise to fame, he was an unknown songwriter. Although he performs as Oliver Anthony, his full name is Christopher Anthony Lunsford.

“I don’t know what this country is going to look like in 10 or 20 years if things don’t change,” he said. “I don’t know what this world is going to look like. And like, something has to be done about it. You know?”

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Brian Snyder/Reuters FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** August 25, 2023

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[***This Conservative Wants to Change the Way Republicans Think About Economics***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69SV-XVG1-DXY4-X00R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 4, 2023 Monday 12:41 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 2783 words

**Highlight:** Americans are more pro-union than they’ve been in a long time. Jane Coaston interviews Oren Cass about his version of pro-worker conservatism.

**Body**

Nearly half a million U.S. workers have gone on strike in 2023, demanding better workplace conditions and higher pay in some of the country’s most critical industries. Those workers — and the unions many of them belong to — have not received a great deal of support from most elected Republicans. The former South Carolina governor and presidential candidate Nikki Haley has [*proudly described herself*](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2023/sep/28/us-republican-candidates-2024-unions-uaw#:~:text=In%20the%20decades%20since%20Ronald,for%20workers%20to%20form%20unions.) as a “union buster,” saying in 2012 that unions “are not needed, not wanted and not welcome in the state of South Carolina.” Senator Tim Scott said at a September campaign event that [*striking workers should be fired*](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/23988920-tim-scott-nlrb-complaint), following the model of Ronald Reagan.

But Oren Cass, the executive director of the conservative think tank American Compass, is trying to reposition conservatives toward a more populist vision of economic policy, one with sectoral bargaining and an emphasis on quality of life. “The fusionist coalition that has characterized the Republican Party is one that was built to beat the Soviet Union,” he told me. “It is not one that has anything useful and coherent to say about the rise of China, about deindustrialization, about big tech, about worker power generally.” But what does that actually mean in real life, especially given the negative view even these populists hold of big labor in America today? And how would he actually persuade other Republicans to take up his viewpoint?

This interview has been edited for length and clarity and is part of an Opinion Q. and A. series exploring modern conservatism today, its influence in society and politics and how and why it differs (and doesn’t) from the conservative movement that most Americans thought they knew.

Jane Coaston: You’ve made the conservative case for supporting labor unions. Do you think conservatives are listening?

Oren Cass: Some of them certainly are. It’s certainly become a live issue in a lot of debates in conservative magazines and think tanks and conferences and so forth. We see it in at least our polling — about a 20-point shift in favorability toward unions by Republican voters.

[*Gallup*](https://news.gallup.com/poll/510281/unions-strengthening.aspx) found that in 2011, 26 percent of Republican voters approved of unions. In 2023, 47 percent of Republican voters approved of unions.

Coaston: Last year Sohrab Ahmari [*argued*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/10/opinion/republicans-midterms-workers-populists.html) in The New York Times that, essentially, the people who are the face of unions are the wrong kind of workers to conservatives. They aren’t steelworkers; they’re Starbucks baristas or Amazon employees. So first, who do you see as the median worker in America? And second, how do you get that viewpoint to change, given that the unionization is coming from this wrong kind of workers?

Cass: I think if you’re talking about an Amazon warehouse worker or a service sector worker, whether that’s at Starbucks or in fast food or in the health care industry, those are our quintessential median workers for whom power in the labor market and representation in the workplace are incredibly important, in ways that I think plenty of conservatives can readily recognize.

I might carve out an exception for grad students organizing or software programmers organizing. I think that that gets into maybe further from the median in various ways. But I think especially if we understand the ***working class***, generally speaking, to mean those who don’t have four-year college degrees and particularly to the extent that they’re in production or nonsupervisory jobs in which, as individuals, they don’t have a lot of power in the workplace.

Coaston: What has been most persuasive for conservatives, in your view, when it comes to embracing populist economic issues? Was there a turning point — or a person or a leader or some other development — that made populist economics more appealing?

Cass: A real shift in the underlying understanding of America’s economic condition occurred between the Romney era of 2012 and the Trump era of 2016, with publication of both the “[*China Shock*](https://news.mit.edu/2021/david-autor-china-shock-persists-1206)” and “[*Deaths of Despair*](https://press.princeton.edu/books/hardcover/9780691190785/deaths-of-despair-and-the-future-of-capitalism)” research. Prior to that, complaints that something had gone wrong in the ***working class***, that communities hollowed out by trade were collapsing, that men without college degrees were leaving the work force in droves, that economic prospects were declining, all were met with a combination of denial (according to the economic data, things have never been better) and dogma (trade doesn’t cause those things, the problem must be our too-generous welfare state or something cultural, we just need to focus more on opportunity). But the accumulation of data finally established that, no, something really was wrong.

The political shift obviously came with Donald Trump. There were policy wonks on the right working on these issues pre-Trump. But his success both validated the substantive diagnosis and rejected many of the assumptions about who composed the conservative coalition and what they cared about.

The turning point on principles has come as changing conditions have produced new challenges that ossified 1980s market fundamentalism does not speak to. China is the most obvious one: The philosophy that free trade is always good and more free trade is always better obviously does not apply, but the old playbook has nothing to say about that. The emergence of the Big Tech monopolies makes a mockery of the Chicago School obsession with consumer welfare.

(The Chicago School refers to a line of economic thinking embodied by figures like Milton Friedman.)

Coaston: Can you break down for me how you get more conservatives to embrace labor-backed populist economic policies when they don’t like the “labor” piece of it?

Cass: When we talk about a conservative embrace of labor, what we mean is an embrace of workers’ interests and an emphasis on enhancing worker power. The “labor” piece that conservatives don’t like is, generally speaking, the dysfunctional labor unions that characterize the American system of organized labor today and have become appendages of the Democratic Party rather than genuine representatives of workers’ economic interests. An obvious and concrete example of the distinction here is on the question of immigration policy. Strong immigration enforcement, reduction of immigration into low-wage segments of the labor market and the elimination of guest worker programs are pro-labor policies by any useful definition of the term and ones that conservatives should endorse and increasingly are endorsing. They are also policies that labor, as defined by progressive labor unions, tends to oppose.

(The economic impact of low-wage immigrants on low-skill wages is [*debated*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/03/us/politics/legal-immigration-jobs-economy.html); some economists argue there is an effect, while others contend there is close to zero effect in part because, as The Times wrote, the immigrants in question “often work in jobs that exist only because of the availability of cheap labor.”)

Coaston: There were major strikes or near strikes in the last year. In a lot of your writing, you suggest that you want to avoid politics and adversarial negotiations between unions and management. How?

Cass: Well, I think that goes to a fundamental problem with the way that we do labor in America. We take for granted how unions work. It is focused on what’s called enterprise-level bargaining, meaning that organizing is something that happens within a single business, often within a single facility within the business.

That setup is very unhealthy in a few ways. Employers quite rationally are resistant to unionizing in that context, because they worry that if they have a union and their competitors don’t have a union, then they will be at a disadvantage. You end up with an upfront conflict that’s an all-or-nothing fight to the death over whether there will be a union in the first place. And then if a union does come into being, you have set the system up to be an extraordinarily adversarial one. Whereas what you see in a lot of places is two things.

One, you see a lot of the organizing and negotiating at the sectoral level. Basically, the union isn’t company specific. The union represents workers in an industry, and all the employers in the industry have to negotiate with the union.

And then in parallel with that, organizing within the workplace tends to actually be led jointly. And so you get what’s called in a lot of cases, something like a works council, which is an organization set up jointly by employers and workers to address issues within the workplace in a collaborative way.

(A works council, which is a common feature in the German economy, typically involves employees alone, rather than including employers or their representatives, though the employees are then empowered to work with employers’ representatives; in Germany, co-determination, which includes workers more directly in corporate governance, is much more common. Senator Elizabeth Warren has [*argued*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/06/opinion/warren-workers-boards.html) for bringing something similar to the United States.)

Coaston: Marco Rubio, Josh Hawley, Tom Cotton — those are some of the people who have talked about a more common-good capitalism. Senator Hawley even wrote a piece for Compact on [*this very issue*](https://compactmag.com/article/which-side-are-you-on-dc). But when for instance, the CHIPS and Science Act came up for a vote, they all voted no. Was that disappointing to you?

Cass: I was definitely disappointed that there weren’t more of those folks in support of the CHIPS Act. What was really encouraging was that their rationale for opposition wasn’t that we shouldn’t do industrial policy, it was that this actually is not tough enough on China. And I think we’re now seeing a lot of those debates happening on export controls and outbound investment, and the House’s China Select Committee is starting to bring some more focus to it.

So as a prudential matter, I think the CHIPS Act was a very important and positive step. As an ideological question of where conservatives are headed on some of these questions, I at least don’t see — and I think if one asked them, they would say the same thing — a no vote there as any concern about moving in that direction. It was about how best to address the issue of China in particular.

(The broad goal of the CHIPS and Science Act was to bring more chip manufacturing to the domestic United States, a stated long-term goal of economic populists. Mr. Rubio’s opposition in particular concerned China, though other Republicans included other, varying reasons.)

Coaston: It seems like one of the big issues for your agenda is that Republicans really don’t want to be out here agreeing or striking a compromise with Elizabeth Warren, who’s supported, for instance, more European approaches to labor and corporations. You were just saying that politics is often about these competing factions. How do you get people to come together for, for lack of a better term, the common good with Democrats?

Cass: Well, I think you see it starting to happen. I mean, Senator Vance is a good example of someone who has worked with Senator Warren on various things. Senator Hawley just joined Senator Sanders’s resolution on the U.A.W. strike.

We’ve sort of had this trench warfare ongoing for maybe 30-plus years at this point, where each side was exactly dug in on a specific set of issues that everybody was fighting on. When you shift the axis of debate, that all gets scrambled. I think you’re seeing that certainly on an issue like industrial policy, where all of a sudden, you have people in both parties who are really interested and enthusiastic about it. And conversely, you see people in both parties who are less enthusiastic about it.

Coaston: You mentioned a little bit in your writing and in our conversation about wanting less adversarial relationships between management and labor. But hypothetically, let’s say a hospital only offers its nurses two weeks of paid parental leave and the nurses want more, isn’t that just going to be adversarial? I say black, and you say white. That seems to me to inherently be adversarial.

Cass: Well, negotiations always have an adversarial element insofar as to your point, the two sides want different things. But negotiations can also be incredibly collaborative and productive when the two sides are communicating openly about their priorities and the reason for them and when the two sides also both have room to maneuver and things that they’re able to offer each other.

I think a lot of the kind of union negotiating, certainly the picture that people have in their heads and that does go on sometimes is, “OK, we each pass our set of demands across the table, and then we each come toward each other a little bit, and then we stare at each other and shout.” That’s not effective negotiation.

In the example you just gave, what you want to have happen is the nurses to explain, “Well, here’s why two weeks of paid leave isn’t enough and we’re looking for more and what the underlying problems are that we hope that would solve.” And you want the hospital to say, “Well, here’s why that’s not really something we can concede on.” Or conversely, “Well, here’s why that’s especially expensive for us. And so if we were to concede on it, we would need to find a way to make that up somewhere else.” And through that sort of process, you can actually make an awful lot of progress.

Coaston: We’ve seen the Tea Party era, and now we’ve seen the rise of a new right of sorts. How do we know if the interest among conservatives in a conservatism for the common good or a conservatism that would be supportive of labor is an actual phenomenon and not a political trend like the Tea Party? Or as we even see in the last couple of weeks, a switch from isolationism to the very opposite of isolationism. Can we know?

Cass: Well, I don’t think you can know for sure. There are obviously plenty of efforts at reform in a political movement or a party that go nowhere or look promising and then fail. But I think what’s different about what you see going on with these economic issues is two things.

One is that it represents an actual meaningful shift in how to think about the broad set of problems facing the nation, in a way that the Tea Party — or pick your example on either side that’s just sort of more a feature of political activism — does not. And it comes at a time where that actually makes sense.

I mean, a reigning economic orthodoxy can only survive so long because the world changes. An agenda, a coalition and a way of thinking that was constructed going on 45 years ago is simply way past its expiration date. So you can tell me that what I’m working on isn’t the right thing to replace it, but there is a process of change that is almost inevitable.

The second factor is a generational one. You have an entire generation of people working on these kinds of issues, up and to and including elected leaders for whom defeating Soviet Communism is no longer the frame through which they look at the world or the set of the debates they’re accustomed to participating in or the set of problems that they see as needing to be addressed.

And the fusionist coalition that has characterized the Republican Party is one that was built to beat the Soviet Union. It is not one that has anything useful and coherent to say about the rise of China, about deindustrialization, about big tech, about worker power generally.

Coaston: Is this a young versus old issue on the right? Are young conservatives embracing your ideas — will these ideas be dominant in say, 25 years?

Cass: There’s absolutely a generational divide. Partly this is a function of inertia — senior political leaders and established economists and policy analysts who have built their careers on market fundamentalism are unlikely to announce suddenly that they were wrong, so it falls to a new generation to formulate new ideas. It’s also the case that the new generation of conservatives has a different set of reference points and experiences. Roughly speaking, if you’re 40 or younger you have no recollection of Ronald Reagan or the Cold War. Your idea of a Democrat is a neoliberal like Bill Clinton or Barack Obama. The major policy crises of your life have been the foreign policy blunders after 9/11, the financial crisis and Great Recession, China’s entry to the W.T.O., the rise of Big Tech, the failure of college-for-all, etc. Economic growth has slowed, about which repeated tax cuts have done nothing. Of course, and rightly so, conservatives developing their economic thinking in this context will reach different conclusions.

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**Load-Date:** December 5, 2023

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[***SATs and Measuring Merit in College Admissions; letters***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6875-3T91-JBG3-62P6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 13, 2023 Saturday 07:00 EST

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**Section:** OPINION; letters

**Length:** 1180 words

**Highlight:** Readers discuss a column by Ross Douthat about colleges no longer requiring SAT scores.

**Body**

Readers discuss a column by Ross Douthat about colleges no longer requiring SAT scores.

To the Editor:

Re “[*Can College Meritocracy Survive?*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/29/opinion/sat-college.html),” by Ross Douthat (column, April 30):

Good riddance to the SAT. It is a simplistic yardstick of performance — and tests a certain type of intelligence, whereas there are many. Further, it exacerbates the unfairness of higher education in the United States.

Those with means avail themselves of small armies of tutors and expensive prep courses, while those born into modest circumstances are on their own — a microcosm of American society.

Though even as the SAT fades in importance, we must recognize that its diminishment alone does not render the college admissions process fair — in fact, it is obscene in its bias. If we want a truly meritocratic system, we would do away with preferential admission for legacy applicants and those with parents who are generous donors.

I went to a private school in Manhattan. By and large, those whose parents had legacy status, connections and/or gave large donations received acceptance letters from Ivy League schools. Those who lacked these resources — acquired by birth and not merit — were left to pick up the scraps thrown from the table. Meritocracy is merely a myth.

Daniel Dolgicer

New York

To the Editor:

Ross Douthat’s concept of meritocracy misses the forest for the trees. The number of spots at Ivy League-type schools is artificially limited; there will always be meritorious students outside the elite bubble. Merit is determined by putting your education to good use after finishing college, not by the arbitrary number your school was assigned by some rankings conglomerate.

I attended a respectable but not “elite” school in Ohio for my bachelor’s degree. I still got an amazing education and was surrounded by incredible classmates. My experience in industry and graduate school is that people from nonelite schools frequently compete with or outperform peers from pedigreed schools. Rankings simply cannot accurately describe the quality and applicability of the instruction students receive in college.

So let’s agree as a society to drop the obsession with college rankings and admission to brand-name schools. Instead, we should focus our collective attention on increasing funding for universities across the board. Invest in everyone’s education. This is the path to a true meritocracy.

Quinn Winters

Munich

The writer is a graduate student at Technical University of Munich.

To the Editor:

While fretting over the demise of standardized tests in college admissions, Ross Douthat overlooks the real reason that admissions professionals have soured on their use: [*Standardized tests are poor predictors*](https://www.forbes.com/sites/nickmorrison/2020/01/29/its-gpas-not-standardized-tests-that-predict-college-success/?sh=36a7e49e32bd) of actual performance in college.

Admissions work is more nuanced in the 21st century because professionals have read the data showing that unquantifiable factors like “grit” and “resilience” are better predictors of success in college than an ACT score. They know not to discount a student from an underfunded high school with poor test scores but lots of “A” grades. That student has shown the desire and discipline for academic work.

If you want a meritocracy, then the tests no longer fit the admissions task (and probably never did). Let ’em go the way of blue books.

Jim Brown

Victoria Brown

Havertown, Pa.

The writers are retired college professors.

To the Editor:

I could not agree more with Ross Douthat’s analysis.

I came from an immigrant ***working-class*** Italian family, so no exposure to the kinds of books, discussions, etc. of my upper-class competitors. I was class valedictorian at a public high school in a suburban Boston town that was very ***working class***.

Had I not done well on the SATs, I doubt that I would have gotten accepted to Barnard, Jackson (Tufts), Wellesley or Brandeis.

I think Mr. Douthat is exactly right that it’s not the SATs that work against applicants who come from the middle or lower classes but the extracurriculars, the essays, the “right demeanor” in the interview. (I was wholly surprised by being asked in two of my interviews about whether I would be traveling in Europe during my summer before freshman year. How about a job?)

In the end, I became a highly successful partner for almost 20 years in a large Washington, D.C., law firm.

Marilyn Doria

Madison, Conn.

To the Editor:

Michael Sandel’s book “The Tyranny of Merit: What’s Become of the Common Good” explains that meritocracy is not as worth preserving as Ross Douthat claims.

As a secondary school English teacher and school administrator for over 25 years, I “get” why standardized testing often misrepresents a student’s true ability and potential.

Many talented students, both from affluent and poor backgrounds, do poorly on time-stressed standardized tests — though those from affluent families have the financial means to hire tutors to help them practice and improve.

Many American teens can’t or don’t go on to higher education, and feel unprepared to pursue college or a career (as high as [*75 percent according to one survey*](https://thejournal.com/articles/2022/12/05/national-survey-finds-high-school-graduates-not-prepared-for-college-or-career-decisions.aspx)). And of the roughly [*60 percent who do go to college*](https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2022/61-8-percent-of-recent-high-school-graduates-enrolled-in-college-in-october-2021.htm), only about [*60 percent graduate in six years*](https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=40#:~:text=The%20overall%206%2Dyear%20graduation%20rate%20was%2060%20percent%20for,64%20percent)%20institutions.).

The focus shouldn’t be on elite universities and the merit of college admissions, but on why so many American teens don’t or can’t go on to higher education, or can’t complete a degree. Part of this problem is our culture’s focus on a college degree as necessary for a middle-class life.

Meritocracy and SATs aren’t the issue. Why our high schools so poorly prepare teens for productive lives is what we should be worrying about as a nation.

James Berkman

Plymouth, Vt.

To the Editor:

College admissions exemplifies how meritocracy has become gamified. This is why I stopped working for a company that prepares middle and high school students for admission to a top college.

Such businesses hire consultants — often college students like me — to construct an extracurricular plan for students or patch up their academic weaknesses. The result is a system in which privileged people help privileged people, where schools admit applications that are better than their applicants.

Admissions committees must more seriously consider whether the applicant and application are indeed of the same quality. They should begin to require students to declare whether they received outside help with their application, and how much. Then admissions officers can adjust the standards for these students accordingly.

Aman Majmudar

Chicago

The writer is a junior at the University of Chicago.

To the Editor:

A question that’s left out of Ross Douthat’s column on meritocracy is whether or not we should value Ivy League degrees more than others. Are Ivy grads valued because they have more skills, or because when they were 18 they were able to get into a fancy school?

The lazy old-boys network that continues to recruit from a narrow pool for important jobs in a variety of fields is more to blame than the college admissions process.

Dave Case

Hood River, Ore.

The writer is a high school teacher who writes many letters of recommendations for his students.

This article appeared in print on page SR11.

**Load-Date:** May 13, 2023

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[***How Biden Beats Trump; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B6T-B5P1-DXY4-X004-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 29, 2024 Monday 12:24 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1876 words

**Byline:** Chris Whipple

**Highlight:** The president has a strong populist case to make for a future in which ordinary Americans and the ideals embodied in our Constitution can prosper.

**Body**

For months, battered by President Biden’s dismal 2024 re-election polls, Democrats have been undergoing a kind of collective nervous breakdown over his re-election prospects against Donald Trump.

After Mr. Trump’s victory in New Hampshire and with the unofficial start of the general election campaign, there is no reason for the Biden team to panic. Polls at this stage of the race are almost always a referendum on the incumbent instead of a clear choice. Still, the president’s bad polls and stubbornly low approval ratings are, or should be, more than just grist for Mr. Biden’s critics. They’re proof that his campaign needs to overhaul its message.

Mr. Biden has yet to explain clearly why he’s running for a second term. I’ve reached this conclusion after speaking with more than a dozen ex-presidential campaign managers and top political strategists; indeed, I spent two years writing a book about the Biden presidency.

To articulate his vision for America and his case for re-election, the president — whom, I should note, I am rooting for — must campaign in both poetry and prose. The poetry will be in his pledge to preserve the integrity of the Constitution and safeguard democracy, and the prose in his promise to deliver on kitchen table issues where many voters believe he’s fallen short.

As the incumbent, Mr. Biden cannot run as an outsider. But he has a strong populist case to make for a future in which ordinary Americans and the ideals embodied in our Constitution can prosper. This case would offer a stark and optimistic contrast to Mr. Trump, whose only allegiance is to himself and to retribution for his imagined grievances.

A recovery narrative

The top issue for many voters is the economy, and to overcome Americans’ gloomy outlook on this front, Mr. Biden needs a new narrative.

Bidenomics, a wonky recitation of his achievements (jobs created, unemployment lowered, prescription drug costs capped, etc.), has failed to resonate with voters. So has his slogan “Finish the job,” because he has failed to define the nature of the challenges Americans face.

The president should state the obvious — that prices for many things are higher than they used to be — and then he should explain why that’s the case, admitting that his stimulus under the American Rescue Plan, though necessary at the time to rescue the economy, might have been a factor. And he should tell people what he’s going to do about it.

As a former Democratic presidential campaign manager told me, voters can deal with higher prices if they think Mr. Biden has a plan to bring them down.

There is a model for this kind of recovery narrative that fits Mr. Biden’s predicament like a glove. Bill Clinton may be a flawed messenger, but his [*memorable speech*](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/05/us/politics/transcript-of-bill-clintons-speech-to-the-democratic-national-convention.html) at the 2012 Democratic convention hit the marks of a Democratic president cleaning up a mess left by his predecessor. Too many Democrats have lost a skill that Mr. Clinton excelled at: understanding the economic struggles of ordinary Americans and explaining how he’ll get them to a better place.

As Barack Obama’s “secretary of explaining stuff,” at the 2012 convention, Mr. Clinton [*spoke plainly*](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/05/us/politics/transcript-of-bill-clintons-speech-to-the-democratic-national-convention.html) to voters about Mr. Obama’s record in the wake of the Great Recession: “He inherited a deeply damaged economy,” Mr. Clinton said. “He put a floor under the crash. He began the long, hard road to recovery and laid the foundation for a modern, more well-balanced economy that will produce millions of good new jobs, vibrant new businesses and lots of new wealth for innovators.”

“Now, look, here’s the challenge he faces,” Mr. Clinton told his rapt audience. “A lot of Americans are still angry and frustrated about this economy. If you look at the numbers, you know employment is growing, banks are beginning to lend again.”

Here he leaned in: “But too many people do not feel it yet.”

This empathetic note, mastered by Mr. Clinton, is oddly missing so far from Mr. Biden’s campaign repertoire.

“No president — no president, not me, not any of my predecessors — no one could have fully repaired all the damage that he found in just four years,” Mr. Clinton continued. “But he has laid the foundation for a new, modern, successful economy of shared prosperity.” The convention hall erupted in applause. And, not incidentally, Mr. Obama cruised to re-election.

Mr. Biden doesn’t need to recruit Mr. Clinton as a surrogate; while the president may not have his predecessors’ oratorical gifts, few people are better at speaking homespun truths.

Successful presidential campaigns seldom focus on the past. (A rare exception was Mr. Trump’s 2016 race, when he promised to “make America great again.”) “The last thing I said to the president before I left the White House,” said Ron Klain, Mr. Biden’s former White House chief of staff, “is that he had to remember that campaigns are about the future. They’re not rewards for good behavior.”

Let Biden be Biden

The president can’t run effectively if he’s kept under wraps by overprotective advisers. Despite his age and occasional verbal stumbles, he often rises to the occasion in unscripted moments. Think of the 2023 State of the Union address, when he outwitted G.O.P. hecklers. Or more recently, when he appeared in the White House’s Roosevelt Room and blasted Republicans in Congress for failing to pass funds for Ukraine and Israel.

Badgered by a reporter about allegations of corrupt foreign deals with his son Hunter, he called them “a bunch of lies.” Asked if any other Democrat could beat Mr. Trump, the president parried, “Probably 50 of them,” and added, “but I will defeat him.” It was a robust, combative performance.

The campaign will be more successful if it lets Joe be Joe and talk the way he actually talks.

In recent days, Mr. Biden has moved key advisers from the White House to strengthen his re-election team: Jennifer O’Malley Dillon, the hard-charging, battle-tested manager of Mr. Biden’s 2020 race, and Mike Donilon, the president’s chief strategist, have joined the campaign. This move comes not a moment too soon.

Attacking Trump

Their challenge and Mr. Biden’s is to define Mr. Trump as a threat to the economy, the Constitution and much else.

As Jim Messina, who managed Mr. Obama’s campaign against Mitt Romney, pointed out: “Voters think about politics a few minutes a week and hold down multiple jobs. So if you’re a swing voter in Wisconsin, you just don’t have time to focus on this,” adding an expletive.

Voters will need to be reminded that Mr. Trump lost more jobs than any president in history; that he enacted tax cuts that overwhelmingly benefited the ultrawealthy over the ***working class*** and exploded the deficit; that, other than his support for developing a vaccine, he was oblivious or worse (peddling bleach as a quack cure) when a once-in-a-century pandemic killed hundreds of thousands of Americans; that he wrenched children from their parents at the border; that he [*denounced*](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/05/us/politics/transcript-of-bill-clintons-speech-to-the-democratic-national-convention.html) fallen soldiers as suckers; and that he incited a bloody insurrection to overturn an election and still peddles the Big Lie.

Perhaps most important, Mr. Biden needs to drive home the MAGA threat to women’s reproductive rights. There’s plenty of fresh material to work with on the still potent issue of abortion. The Biden-Harris campaign recently put out an [*ad*](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/05/us/politics/transcript-of-bill-clintons-speech-to-the-democratic-national-convention.html) featuring a young woman who was forced to flee Texas to have an abortion. This should be just the first salvo in a relentless barrage, juxtaposing women victimized by draconian abortion laws with [*brags*](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/05/us/politics/transcript-of-bill-clintons-speech-to-the-democratic-national-convention.html) from the former president that he “got rid of Roe v. Wade.”

Even more important is underscoring what Mr. Trump said he’ll do if given a second chance, from prosecuting his political enemies to deporting millions of people to constructing concentration camps to invoking the Insurrection Act to further radicalizing a deeply conservative Supreme Court that threatens to curtail American freedoms.

As for his economic agenda, what Mr. Trump promises is magic dust and the gauzy notion that he can rewind the clock to a golden age when interest rates were near zero and prices were at prepandemic lows. That economy, incidentally, was the one he inherited from Mr. Obama and then ran into a ditch.

Oh, and on another potent issue, health care, Mr. Trump has renewed his vow to repeal Obamacare without a realistic plan to replace it.

The Biden team can’t emphasize strongly or often enough that the MAGA-dominated Republican Party has no answers or realistic plans to deal with the problems of our day. Name the challenge — reducing inflation, cutting the price of housing, providing affordable health care, ending mass shootings, stopping Vladimir Putin, slowing global warming — and the G.O.P. toolbox is empty. Even on the issue of the southern border, the MAGA-controlled House appears willing, on Mr. Trump’s command, to [*scuttle*](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/05/us/politics/transcript-of-bill-clintons-speech-to-the-democratic-national-convention.html) a potential bipartisan deal at least in part because passing it would deny the former president a campaign issue. The party stands for nothing except membership in a cult of personality.

A populist for all Americans

No doubt Mr. Biden has some weak spots. For example, the impact of Israel’s war against Hamas on many progressive Democrats and young voters. Having had Israel’s back on Oct. 7, Mr. Biden should now publicly denounce its near-indiscriminate bombing of Gaza.

But consider this: While the president will get little political benefit for being sure-footed on the international stage, rallying NATO in the face of Mr. Putin’s invasion of Ukraine has been vital to Western democracy.

And he remains the best advocate for many issues young voters care about, like student loan relief, reforming gun laws and mitigating climate change.

Running for re-election while managing world crises is a herculean task. But as one senior White House adviser told me (on condition of anonymity to speak freely about White House conversations): “I keep saying to the president and to the team, yes, Ukraine is really important. Yes, the economy is really important. Yes, Israel is really important. But at the end of the day, when we think about the future of this country and the world, it’s about the president being re-elected. And so we have to put that at the top of the list, right?”

It’s time for Mr. Biden to get out of the Rose Garden, shake off his script doctors and recapture the plain-spoken persona that got him elected three years ago by a margin of seven million votes.

Mr. Biden has an overwhelming populist case for re-election, and he can and should win a second term — but only if the president and his team explain what he intends to do with it and why returning Mr. Trump to power would be a calamity for our democracy and America’s leadership role in the world.

Chris Whipple is the author of “The Gatekeepers: How the White House Chiefs of Staff Define Every Presidency” and “The Fight of His Life: Inside Joe Biden’s White House.” He is writing a book about presidential campaign managers.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/05/us/politics/transcript-of-bill-clintons-speech-to-the-democratic-national-convention.html) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/05/us/politics/transcript-of-bill-clintons-speech-to-the-democratic-national-convention.html). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/05/us/politics/transcript-of-bill-clintons-speech-to-the-democratic-national-convention.html).

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PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Mark Peterson for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** May 24, 2024

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[***Wet and Wild, With Heart***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68HW-7041-DXY4-X1DF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 23, 2023 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; Movies, Performing Arts/Weekend Desk; Pg. 7

**Length:** 544 words

**Byline:** By Glenn Kenny

**Body**

That time when Mom and Dad hired Jennifer Lawrence to introduce you to the pleasures of the opposite sex before you started college.

The premise that motors ''No Hard Feelings,'' a new comedy directed by Gene Stupnitsky, is, if not outright indecent, at least a little crass. Via online advertisement, Laird and Allison, megawealthy Montauk residents, are seeking an attractive woman in her early 20s to deflower their socially awkward Princeton-bound son, Percy. In return for this service they'll bestow a not-quite brand-new car on the kinda-sorta prostitute.

Taking up the offer is Jennifer Lawrence's Maddie, a lifelong Montauker who's increasingly resentful of the rich folk taking over her town. She's 32 and a little too old for the gig, but she's a knockout -- as mentioned, she's played by Lawrence -- and has a canny sales pitch.

Capricious and promiscuous as she is, Maddie isn't a pro escort, but a bartender and ride-hail driver whose car has been repossessed -- and if she can't pick people up, she can't earn enough to pay the tax lien on the house she inherited from her mother. Assigned to ''date date'' the puppy-cute but initially highly recessive 19-year-old Percy, she goes after her prey with an aggressiveness that's initially off-putting to the lad. (He maces her at one point.)

The movie's trailer has elicited howls of outrage in some sex-unfriendly social media circles. But the movie itself handles the hook in a way that aspires to raise eyebrows, not inspire a Congressional hearing. Once Maddie is obliged to actually hang out with Percy, she starts to like him. And just as she acts on her instructions to ''get him out of his shell,'' he persuades her to consider why she'll be dead-ending it in Montauk for the foreseeable future. If you don't see this coming, you don't know Hollywood.

The movie doesn't split the difference between raunchy sex farce and dual personal growth study so much as complacently fall between rom-com subgenres. It amiably alternates commonplace depictions of introspective intimacy with ostensibly bar-raising, outré set pieces. As when, upon being interrupted while skinny-dipping with Percy, Maddie rushes out of the ocean to deliver a buck-naked beat down to some townies trying to steal their clothes.

[Video: Watch on YouTube.]

One might argue that the movie doesn't really need that sort of thing, given the confidence and appeal of its lead performers. But again, Hollywood. In any event, Lawrence is a consistently incandescent screen presence, and her role lets her run through her greatest performative hits, so to speak. She's goofily sexy, poignantly wide-eyed and retains a beaming, you-can-deny-her-nothing smile. As Percy, Andrew Barth Feldman frames the character's awkwardness in a quiet register for the most part, but in more expansive nerd moments recalls a young Martin Short. Matthew Broderick and Laura Benanti are present and correct as the peculiar parents. But Natalie Morales, Scott MacArthur and Zahn McClarnon as Maddie's townie pals, who provide sardonic ***working class*** solidarity for our heroine, have some of the picture's choicest bits.

No Hard FeelingsRated R for language, themes, sexuality, a buck-naked beat down. Running time: 1 hour 43 minutes. In theaters.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/21/movies/no-hard-feelings-review.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/21/movies/no-hard-feelings-review.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Andrew Barth Feldman as Percy and Jennifer Lawrence as Maddie in Gene Stupnitsky's ''No Hard Feelings.'' (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID GIESBRECHT/SONY PICTURES) This article appeared in print on page C7.

**Load-Date:** June 23, 2023

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[***How Democrats Can Win Anywhere and Everywhere; Frank Bruni***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BG3-0S41-JBG3-62K7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 3, 2024 Sunday 17:51 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 2567 words

**Byline:** Frank Bruni Frank Bruni is a professor of journalism and public policy at Duke University, the author of the book &amp;#8220;The Beauty of Dusk&amp;#8221; and a contributing Opinion writer. He writes a weekly email newsletter.&amp;#160;&amp;#160;Instagram&amp;#160;&amp;#8226; Threads &amp;#8226;&amp;#160;

**Highlight:** Enterprising Democratic governors have had success where it’s by no means guaranteed. This is how they did it.

**Body**

When Gov. Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania got an emergency call about I-95 last June, his first thought turned to semantics. “When you say ‘collapse,’ do you really mean collapse?” he recalled wondering. Highways don’t typically do that, but then tractor-trailers don’t typically flip over and catch fire, which had happened on an elevated section of the road in Philadelphia.

Shapiro’s second, third and fourth thoughts were that he and other government officials needed to do the fastest repair imaginable.

“My job was: Every time someone said, ‘Give me a few days, and I’ll get back to you,’ to say, ‘OK, you’ve got 30 minutes,’” he told me recently. He knew how disruptive and costly the road’s closure would be and how frustrated Pennsylvanians would get.

But he knew something else, too: that if you’re trying to impress a broad range of voters, including those who aren’t predisposed to like you, you’re best served not by joining the culture wars or indulging in political gamesmanship but by addressing tangible, measurable problems.

In [*less than two weeks*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/frank-bruni), the road reopened.

Today, Shapiro enjoys approval ratings markedly higher than other Pennsylvania Democrats’ and President Biden’s. He belongs to an intriguing breed of enterprising Democratic governors who’ve had success where it’s by no means guaranteed, assembled a diverse coalition of supporters and are models of a winning approach for Democrats everywhere. Just look at the fact that when Shapiro was elected in 2022, it was with a much higher percentage of votes than Biden received from Pennsylvanians two years earlier. Shapiro won with support among rural voters that significantly exceeded other Democrats’ and with the backing of 14 percent of Donald Trump’s voters, according to a CNN exit poll that November.

Biden’s fate this November, Democratic control of Congress and the party’s future beyond 2024 could turn, in part, on heeding Shapiro’s and like-minded Democratic leaders’ lessons about reclaiming the sorts of voters the party has lost.

Across the country, there are Democrats who have outperformed expectations and had political success in places that aren’t reliably blue. Look at Gov. Andy Beshear of Kentucky, who won a second term last year, even though Trump took that state by 26 points in 2020. Trump took Kansas by almost 15 points, but its Democratic governor, Laura Kelly, secured her second term in 2022. In North Carolina, where I live, the Democratic governor, Roy Cooper, won election and then re-election in years when North Carolinians simultaneously delivered the state to Trump. Obviously, some of Trump’s supporters also voted for Cooper.

Cooper, Kelly, Beshear and Shapiro might have benefited from flawed opponents, propitious circumstances, other lucky breaks. But many Democratic officeholders in red and purple states also have instructive qualities in common, starting with what Shapiro’s attention to I-95 reflected. They focus intently on the practical instead of the philosophical, emphasizing issues of broad relevance and not venturing needlessly onto the most divisive terrain.

“When people wake up in the morning, they don’t think about their party,” Beshear told me. “They think about their jobs. They think about the schools their children are going to. They think about the roads and bridges they’re traveling on and whether they’re safe.” The first of Gretchen Whitmer’s two successful campaigns for governor of Michigan is perhaps remembered best for her pledge to “fix the damn roads,” which was not only a concrete promise but also a kind of branding: She was more invested in results than theatrics. She cared less about preening than about potholes. She was blunt to the point of cursing.

Governors, admittedly, have advantages. They and other politicians operating at the state and local levels often aren’t expected to tackle — and don’t receive blame for — some of the especially big, tough issues by which presidents are judged. Inflation is Biden’s problem, not theirs. Immigration, too. While state-level politicians do adopt (or fail to adopt) plans to combat climate change, federal officials are often in the foreground of those debates.

State and local politicians also have relationships with voters unlike the ones forged by Washington lawmakers, who swim (or, really, splash around noisily) in the media-roiled, shark-infested waters of the nation’s capital. Voters largely regard their governors and mayors as administrators and service providers, so governors and mayors can prioritize administration and service in a manner that makes their efforts more visible and palpable to voters.

But in my recent examination of and conversations with Democratic governors, other Democratic officials and political experts in red and purple states, I was struck by the priorities they articulate and by how they articulate them. They take pains to rebut the accusations of elitism that Republicans direct at Democrats, or they have biographies and backgrounds that make those charges laughable. They also find ways in which to establish some separation from their party, and that’s not simply and solely a matter of necessity, given their states’ political leanings. It’s also an assertion of independence and authenticity in an era of profound political cynicism. Even Democrats in the bluest and safest of states can learn from that.

Shapiro proudly displays his deep Jewish faith, and while that puts him in a religious minority, it also distinguishes him from Democrats who often play down religion. He and his advisers have found that it’s a bridge to voters of all creeds, who relate to, and respect, his devotion.

He also indulges his tendency to speak in sports metaphors. The first words of a video that he released in tandem with the announcement of his campaign for governor: “Each of us has a responsibility in life — to get off the sidelines, get in the game.” He tells Pennsylvanians that his goal as governor is “to put points on the board.”

Whitmer tailgates at football games, visits sports bars and has a pronounced Michigan accent. Gov. Tony Evers, a Democrat in purple Wisconsin, has an uncloaked weakness for McDonald’s Egg McMuffins and speaks in a fashion so folksy that Wisconsinites can buy T-shirts emblazoned with one of his trademark phrases: “Holy mackerel!” Senator Jon Tester, a Democrat who is seeking a fourth term representing the deep red state of Montana, and Senator Mark Kelly, a Democrat elected in purple Arizona in 2020, have careers well outside any Democratic mold. Tester was (and is) a farmer. Kelly, the son of two police officers, was a naval aviator and then an astronaut.

In Shapiro’s first full day in office, he sent a clear message to ***working-class*** voters by [*signing an executive order*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/frank-bruni) that dispensed with the requirement of a four-year college degree for 92 percent of positions in state government, meaning roughly 65,000 jobs. He stresses the dual imperatives of holding college up as a possibility for anyone interested in it and of respecting people without college degrees and supporting careers that don’t call for one.

Cooper frequently visits farming areas and small towns not just because he grew up in rural North Carolina and is comfortable there but also because he wants to be seen in “places where many Democratic leaders don’t go,” he told me. It sets the right tone. “I’ve spent time listening to people in rural areas about their hospital being on the brink, needing more economic development, needing high-speed internet,” he said. And he has been able to explain to them how his agenda recognizes and addresses those very issues.

While Laura Kelly’s 2018 and 2022 victories in Kansas relied heavily on Democratic voters in urban strongholds, she pays careful attention to rural precincts, too. When we spoke recently — she placed the call, without any intermediary telling me to hold for the governor, and introduced herself simply as “Laura Kelly” — she shared a memory: Decades ago, when she was running for the State Senate, one of her chief advisers told her to ignore the rural part of the district because “there weren’t enough votes to make a difference,” she said.

“That didn’t feel right to me,” she continued. “So I spent an inordinate amount of time there.” She ended up winning by fewer than 100 votes. “If I had not knocked on all those doors, I wouldn’t have been in the State Senate, and I wouldn’t be governor.”

She has created an Office of Rural Prosperity within the Kansas Commerce Department. Just before our conversation, I read a transcript of the State of the State remarks that she delivered a few weeks earlier. It focused largely on jobs, and the word “rural” showed up 43 times, including in the characterization of “rural Kansas” as “fundamental to our identity.” The word “abortion” showed up precisely zero times, which I noticed mainly because the issue was front and center in Kansas just a year and a half earlier, when voters there [*rejected a measure*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/frank-bruni) to remove the right to abortion from the state’s Constitution.

I mentioned that omission.

“Not an accident,” she said. “I am and always have been a pro-choice human being,” she continued, but she determined over the years that raising such “a very divisive issue” with constituents when she wasn’t absolutely compelled to didn’t make sense. “It wasn’t a way that they were going to hear me any better, and it wasn’t a way to find common ground,” she said.

Since the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade in 2022, the defense of legal abortion has unquestionably given Democrats an advantage over Republicans, and Democratic lawmakers in red and purple states don’t shrink from it. But “since the Supreme Court overturned” is crucial, because only then did some Americans fully realize that the abortion debate wasn’t an abstract, ideological one: It concerned a fundamental freedom for women. It affected critical medical care.

“The prospect of Republicans banning abortion was not a big winner for Democrats until Republicans actually started banning abortions,” Ben Wikler, the chairman of the Wisconsin Democratic Party, told me. “Voters are used to hearing about how apocalyptic the other side is. You have to have actual evidence.” The Roe reversal — and cases like those of Kate Cox, who was carrying a fetus with a deadly chromosomal abnormality and had to leave Texas to end her pregnancy — enables Democrats to discuss abortion rights in blunt, concrete, visceral terms.

“For too long, we’ve made politics too flashy, too Hollywood,” Austin Davis, Pennsylvania’s Democratic lieutenant governor, told me. He was on the ticket with Shapiro, and he explained that their formula for victory was not to be “wrapped up in what’s going on on MSNBC, on CNN, in some local coffee shop that’s 90 percent Democratic. Most people don’t live in those echo chambers.”

Cooper’s long campaign to garner enough Republican support to pass Medicaid expansion in North Carolina — which was finally accomplished three months ago — didn’t hinge on partisan name-calling. But it did involve extensive meetings with law enforcement officials to persuade them that they’d be helped if the mentally ill people who commit some crimes had the treatment options that Medicaid expansion would provide. Toward the end, he said, “we would have some tough-on-crime Republican officials come into the legislature and say these people need health care, not handcuffs.”

The specificity and detail with which state-level Democrats, working on a smaller canvas, can portray problems, sketch solutions and describe successes make me wonder if Democrats would be wise to pitch more of their policies and concentrate more of their energies outside Washington. They often find better traction and make readier connections that way.

I think of Shapiro’s livestreaming of the fleet work on I-95. I think of many key lines from Beshear’s State of the Commonwealth remarks in January, when he advanced measures regarding climate change, economic development and job creation without dwelling on clinical phrases like “climate change,” “economic development” and “job creation.” He gave shout-outs to several companies “building the two largest electric vehicle battery plants on planet Earth, in Glendale, Ky.” He noted that “approximately 400 Kentuckians” had been hired. This was no fancy policy seminar. It was a straightforward report card.

That’s what Mallory McMorrow is always urging. Too many Democrats sound as though “they’re giving a lecture at a university rather than talking like a normal person,” she told me. She is the Democratic state senator in Michigan who captured national attention with a speech denouncing Republicans’ characterization of Democrats who support gay rights as “groomers,” and she has demonstrated a flair for getting a point across. “No matter what issue you’re talking about or how complicated it is, talk about it like you would talk to your friend in a bar, and if you can’t do that, you need to keep trying,” she said.

McMorrow presides over the Michigan Senate’s Economic and Community Development Committee, and she said that when arguing for crucial investments, she tells stories, like the one about Michigan missing out on a second Amazon headquarters because Maryland had better transit and education options for the company’s workers. Michiganders felt that loss, she said. They don’t feel statistics about where the state ranks in per capita spending on infrastructure.

The framing of issues can be everything, at least if the goal is the building of consensus rather than the stoking of passions. The latter may help with fund-raising, but the former is a better governing strategy. In many and possibly most places, it’s a better campaign strategy, too.

I keep flashing on something that the Iowa state auditor, Rob Sand, told me. He is currently the only Democrat who holds statewide office in Iowa, but he said that his party has an opportunity to change that, provided that it doesn’t talk down to voters, doesn’t hit them with unfamiliar buzzwords and exotic-sounding ideas, doesn’t prejudge them.

He described canvassing for an Iowa Democrat in a local race in which the school bathrooms used by transgender students had become an issue; Republicans were trying to use it against the Democrat. At one house, a man who seemed to be in his 60s answered the door and brought it up, saying: “Are there really people who don’t know what they are?”

“He didn’t say it with scorn,” Sand recalled. “He wasn’t contemptuous. He just asked a question.” So Sand, who’s a hunter and sensed that the man might be familiar with hunting, too, gave him an answer: “You know how every once in a while, a deer hunter shoots what he thinks is a buck because it has antlers, but it’s a doe? If there are deer like that out there, there are probably people, and it may be a tough way to go through life. We ought not to make it any harder for them.”

“Sounds right,” the man answered, to the best of Sand’s memory. The man had his ballot with him, and he voted right then and there. For the Democrat.

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PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Ben Wiseman FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 3, 2024

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[***Debut Novels About Women Longing in Obsessive, Sometimes Uncanny Ways; The Shortlist***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69KR-NH81-JBG3-62HH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 10, 2023 Friday 16:30 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 1161 words

**Byline:** Tracy O’Neill

**Highlight:** A lonely Londoner cyber-stalks her married lover and his other paramours; a dispersed Guatemalan American family comes together in crisis; a Mohawk mother navigates life off the rez.

**Body**

Sheena Patel’s I’M A FAN (Graywolf, 203 pp., paperback, $17) is an impolite novel about romantic obsession, set in a liberalized but inequitable sexual economy that rewards the white and rich. The unnamed narrator, a young brown woman living in London, spends much of the book online, fixating on the white, married and much older “man I want to be with” and the other women in his life. Imagining herself meeting one paramour in particular, she wonders, “Would I tell her I know who all her friends are and I watch their stories too, would I tell her I screenshot the photos she takes of herself and study her face so intently sometimes I fear I’ve picked up some facial expressions or tonal inflections from her?”

For all the detail she reveals about these strangers’ lives, the narrator tells us comparatively little about herself. We are offered few, if suggestive, details about her nice enough boyfriend and her upbringing by ***working-class*** immigrant parents who “deliberately did not speak their languages to me so I would not be put at a disadvantage.” The narrator is not even the other woman, she is only an other woman.

Though she ruminates on the sociocultural machinations that shape her desires, she is not exempt from their power — treating love like a gameable system that she has yet to crack. She rails and seethes and then regrets the railing and seething, bringing her no closer to the object of her obsession. She kisses a girl and likes it, though not enough to override her interest in acquiring male approval. Meanwhile she derides the ways in which her lover’s other lovers perform antiracism in corny, confused ways: “privileged white women talking about care of the Earth and the land as if they are distinct from the white people who are racist and those who have pillaged this burning, now volatile planet of ours.”

The novel is claustrophobic in theme but its style is loose, allowing the narrator’s ferocious id to spin out thrillingly and unapologetically. Her vague aspirations to become a writer register as somewhat cursory next to the attention suck of the narrator’s romantic abjection; Patel’s clever novel suggests just how easily such ambitions can be lost in the power imbalance of heterosexual libidinal attachment.

At the beginning of Melissa Lozada-Oliva’s CANDELARIA (Astra House, 305 pp., $28), a soapy, apocalyptic picaresque, the titular 86-year-old murders her doting boyfriend in their kitchen in Boston. From there the novel follows three generations of women in Candelaria’s Guatemalan American family as they make their way together on a hellish Christmas Eve, as people around them are shot, stabbed, eaten or more symbolically consumed during an earthquake.

Candelaria is not the only character in crisis. Her daughter Lucia is desperate to find her youngest daughter, Candy, a recovering heroin addict who “was always being bailed out of jail by her poor mother” and now finds herself pregnant. Lucia’s middle daughter, Bianca, is an archaeologist who’s been kicked off her work site in Guatemala by the adviser with whom she’s been having an affair. After faking her own death, the eldest sister, Paola, has re-emerged after 10 years as Zoe, a spinning instructor beholden to a wellness cult leader.

Lozada-Oliva’s imagination draws upon an inventive mix of narrative traditions — from melodrama to zombie horror to slacker comedy — but the pleasures of the stylistic mash-up do not compensate for semantically incoherent prose at crucial narrative junctures. Late in the book, a mysterious first-person narrator — the rock that is seemingly also the “alien parasite thing” that, while assuming the flesh suit of Bianca’s dead ex-lover, impregnated Candy — makes a baffling confession regarding its role in Candelaria’s son’s death years earlier:

“Yes, that was me, all those years ago. Not really. A seed of me. / You see, I cannot help myself. / I have a duty. It is in my biology. / I cannot make you understand. / I was always the key they turned. / The earth is dying, that is true. I have felt it for so long. Since I arrived, / it has been a place of death.”

Is this homicidal “seed” meant to be a metaphor for intergenerational trauma? Could the alien stone signify an attitude toward humanity’s endless and destructive impulse for consumption? Might the rowdy plot signal the ubiquity of everyday violence? Perhaps, but the author’s meaning too frequently gets lost in the mystifications of word salad.

Alice is 13 and watching “Pocahontas” with her kid cousin when the cartoon woman starts speaking to her through the TV screen, telling her the real story of her kidnapping by the English after she met John Smith at 10. This early scene is just the first of many mental breaks sustained by Alice, the Indigenous Mohawk protagonist of Alicia Elliott’s AND THEN SHE FELL (Dutton, 349 pp., $28).

By adulthood, Alice’s life has become a plodding tour of misery. She’s reeling from the recent death of her mother; often aggrieved by and suspicious of her husband, Steve, a white anthropologist who’s writing a book on Indigenous planting; and struggling to bond with her newborn daughter. Living off the rez for the first time, Alice experiences middle-class America as a series of microaggressions by cheerful white women who self-deprecate about their wine consumption. When a neighbor disposes of Disney DVDs that no longer “spark joy,” Alice notices that they’re “all movies featuring leads who aren’t white” — including “Pocahontas.” Feeling increasingly alienated, she slips further into mental illness.

Frights abound, including an apparition called “the Shape,” a nod to the hallucinatory “shape” in Miranda July’s “Making Love in 2003” (which also features a love object named Steve). Alice’s Shape is “a presence, something whole,” and it makes her promise to “keep writing,” to tell the story of Sky Woman, the “mother of our nations” who is also known as Mature Flowers. Chapters from Alice’s ensuing book appear throughout the novel, and they mark a distinct departure from her previous writing about smarmy white men. The text-within-a-text also becomes a mirror through which Alice sees herself anew: “I’ve been thinking about how destroyed Mature Flowers was over her father. I feel bad for her, and I relate to her literally twice over.”

Despite intrusions of the uncanny, little is left to mystery in this novel. In earnest, pedestrian exposition, Elliott sacrifices momentum to draw a picture of intergenerational trauma that includes dislocation, alcoholism, police harassment and violence. Alice’s hamstrung agony mushrooms until one particular delusion encourages her to seize upon the redemptive power of narrative. “Your writing will plant seeds, too,” her grandmother’s ghost tells her. “That’s why it matters. You have no idea what decision of yours, what seed, is going to grow into a sturdy, powerful tree generations down the line.”

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY John Gall FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** December 1, 2023

**End of Document**



[***A Continental Competition in Paris***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68SX-8NC1-JBG3-63FG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 26, 2023 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section B; Column 0; Sports Desk; Pg. 7

**Length:** 1467 words

**Byline:** By Catherine Porter and James Hill

**Body**

At the eight-minute mark of the final of the CAN 18 soccer tournament, the players on the Mauritania team score three times in rapid succession.

The balls hitting the goalkeeper's small net sound like the blasts of a cannon. Boom. Boom. Boom. The last two happen so quickly that many in the crowd miss them.

''Did they score?'' the Ivory Coast fan squished next to me asks, looking stunned. ''Yes, twice,'' a Mauritanian fan on my other side responds gleefully.

It doesn't take long to understand that the annual soccer tournament of Paris's 18th arrondissement is different: The stadium is a small, caged turf court in the middle of the Goutte d'Or -- the dense, ***working-class*** landing spot for each new wave of immigrants to the city, a place where African wax stores and tailors for boubous compete with boulangeries and bistros among the crowded streets.

The tournament was one of many around Paris inspired by the 2019 edition of the Africa Cup of Nations, or Coupe d'Afrique des nations in French, the continental competition typically held every two years. The events have become so popular that the finals of one in Créteil, a southeastern suburb of Paris, were broadcast on Amazon Prime last summer.

In the Goutte d'Or, Mamoudou Camara's principal aim wasn't to shine a positive light on immigration and community spirit in his neighborhood, which is tucked behind the Gare du Nord -- Europe's busiest train station -- and is among the city's most impoverished, gritty and diverse areas. He was just thinking a tournament might help his friends survive the hot nights during Ramadan. He raised the idea on Snapchat, and by the end of that evening in summer 2019, six teams had registered. A day later, there were six more.

Instead of holding the event in a far-off stadium, Camara and his friends decided to host it in their childhood nest, the mini court in the center of the urban park where they spent their summer nights and weekends, battling over a ball and rounds of Coca-Cola or Fanta. (The loser paid.)

It offers a very different atmosphere than the marble statues and the manicured flower beds of the Tuileries and Luxembourg gardens. On game nights, the park, Square Léon, is buzzing with older men crowded around checker tables, little kids clambering up playground equipment and older women in West African dresses selling bags of homemade doughnuts and slushy ginger drinks that both tickle and soothe the throat.

Just before the final match starts, a tambour player beats out rhythms.

''In our neighborhood, we have all nationalities,'' said Camara, 26. ''We are proud to say we are multicultural.''

Around 30 percent of the 21,000 residents in this neighborhood were immigrants or foreigners in 2019, according to France's national statistics institute.

Sixteen teams registered this year, the event's fourth edition, to play 31 games over three weeks. On this June night, we are down to the finals. The Ivory Coast, a veteran team that won the inaugural tournament in 2019, is back in its orange and green jerseys, trying to reclaim the title. Challenging them is Mauritania -- a team packed with young players, many of them semiprofessionals, wearing yellow and brown. The jerseys were created by a celebrated local designer who collaborates with Nike, and who has been invited to the presidential palace.

It is just one sign of how the tournament has matured. This year, the neighborhood city hall provides a small grandstand on one side of the court. Everywhere else, spectators stand, claiming their spots a good hour before the game begins.

By the time the referee blows his whistle, we are standing eight rows thick.

The court measures just 25 meters by 16.5 meters -- about 82 feet by 54 feet -- roughly one-seventeenth of FIFA's recommended field size. It is framed by a low concrete wall, topped by a tall chain link fence.

The confined area makes for an intense game of precision, tight tricks, bursts of speed and a blasting ball that echoes against the walls and crashes into the fence every few minutes.

This is soccer by inches, with a team losing and gaining the ball within seconds.

Camara and other organizers devised the rules: five players per team on the court; no offside; corner kicks are thrown in; any foul after the fifth within a half results in a penalty kick; and games last 30 minutes to an hour, depending on their importance.

Two people livestream matches, and another camera is rolling for the referee to review plays.

The first year, all players had to be locals, but the rules have since loosened, allowing players from elsewhere to participate. But those who grew up competing on the court quickly reveal themselves by using the side walls to their advantage, bouncing passes around defenders to their teammates and back to themselves.

Martin Riedler, who three years ago formed the tournament's French team, compared it to a boxing ring.

''You have to be on your toes the whole time, which makes the experience so intense,'' said Riedler, who attended Santa Clara University in California on a soccer scholarship. He has packed his team with elite players who can hit the cross bar from the halfway line of a full field, but who also find the arena overwhelming. ''You know you won't sleep at night after a game.''

Players slam each other to the turf, then pick one another up. They continually battle against the wall, so close that a spectator might graze them through the fence. They offer up-close renditions of spectacular maneuvers, flicking the ball over their opponents' heads and spinning it around their feet. That is one of the beauties of a small court, the referee Bengaly Souré tells me. It's a compression chamber of technical plays.

''There's no space, but they create space,'' he said.

When a player jumps and kicks the ball into the net midair, Souré turns to the fence and expresses his admiration.

The crowd is part of the fun. Spectators shout their observations over the sounds of African beats, booming from loudspeakers. It is agreed that the player wearing No. 7 for Mauritania -- who plays for a team in Italy -- is a dangerous force. And though the Ivory Coast falls increasingly behind, the game could turn at any moment.

''I've seen a team that's losing 4-1 make a comeback,'' said Makenzy Kapaya, a 37-year-old artist who grew up in the Goutte d'Or but later relocated to a less cramped apartment elsewhere. Like many in the crowd, he has returned to watch the games and to reunite with childhood friends.

''If you have problems, people will help you here, no matter what your origins,'' Kapaya said.

The Goutte d'Or, a dense, ***working-class*** area, often makes news for unflattering reasons -- drugs, prostitution, violence. The library closed for months three years ago because employees said they had been repeatedly threatened by dealers selling near its doors. Following the fatal police shooting of 17-year-old Nahel Merzouk this summer and the subsequent protests across the country, the local police station was attacked.

Éric Lejoindre, the mayor of the 18th arrondissement, pointed out that local volunteers had been quietly helping with homework, cooking and housing for years. A group of therapists in the Goutte d'Or hold regular listening sessions, setting out chairs in an abandoned lot for passers-by to unload their burdens.

For all its problems, the neighborhood has huge heart, Lejoindre said.

''Locals know it, but sometimes we need it to emerge in a spectacular fashion,'' he said. ''For me, CAN is one of those moments when the neighborhood can revel in being a bit exceptional.''

After halftime, the Ivory Coast players rally, bringing the score to 9-7. But then Mauritania yanks the plug from their energy and dreams. As the sky dims into an inky night, and spectators hold up their phones as lanterns, Mauritania scores again. And again. And again. Boom, boom, boom. The players start to do little dances after each goal.

When Souré blows his whistle for full time, a crowd surges onto the tiny court to embrace the young Mauritanian team in a squealing cyclone of joy.

Camara, who will take a few weeks off before beginning preparations for next year's event, said he was continually surprised by how much joy the little tournament had brought to the neighborhood. At a time when anti-immigration sentiments are growing and identity politics are flaring in France, he said he considered it a unifying event. ''We thought we were just starting something for fun,'' he said, ''but we created something bigger.''

Red and white fireworks burst above the little park in the heart of the Goutte d'Or. The celebration will continue for hours.

Juliette Guéron-Gabrielle contributed research from Paris.Juliette Guéron-Gabrielle contributed research from Paris.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/25/sports/soccer/paris-soccer-tournaments.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/25/sports/soccer/paris-soccer-tournaments.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Players from Mauritania, top, raised the trophy after winning the CAN 18 tournament in Paris, a local version of the Africa Cup of Nations. Above, from left, players representing Cameroon and Tunisia faced off

Mamoudou Camara, the tournament's organizer

Ivory Coast fans perched atop a fence to watch the final. (B7)

Enthusiastic spectators are a hallmark of the CAN 18 tournament. Players representing Tunisia and Cameroon, left, waited to take the field in an urban park in the gritty neighborhood. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES HILL FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (B10) This article appeared in print on page B7, B10.

**Load-Date:** July 26, 2023

**End of Document**



[***‘No Hard Feelings’ Review: How Lucky Can a Nerdy Kid Get?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68HG-V591-DXY4-X3RM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 21, 2023 Wednesday 17:06 EST

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**Section:** MOVIES

**Length:** 573 words

**Byline:** Glenn Kenny

**Highlight:** That time when Mom and Dad hired Jennifer Lawrence to introduce you to the pleasures of the opposite sex before you started college.

**Body**

That time when Mom and Dad hired Jennifer Lawrence to introduce you to the pleasures of the opposite sex before you started college.

The premise that motors “No Hard Feelings,” a new comedy directed by Gene Stupnitsky, is, if not outright indecent, at least a little crass. Via online advertisement, Laird and Allison, megawealthy Montauk residents, are seeking an attractive woman in her early 20s to deflower their socially awkward Princeton-bound son, Percy. In return for this service they’ll bestow a not-quite brand-new car on the kinda-sorta prostitute.

Taking up the offer is Jennifer Lawrence’s Maddie, a lifelong Montauker who’s increasingly resentful of the rich folk taking over her town. She’s 32 and a little too old for the gig, but she’s a knockout — as mentioned, she’s played by Lawrence — and has a canny sales pitch.

Capricious and promiscuous as she is, Maddie isn’t a pro escort, but a bartender and ride-hail driver whose car has been repossessed — and if she can’t pick people up, she can’t earn enough to pay the tax lien on the house she inherited from her mother. Assigned to “date date” the puppy-cute but initially highly recessive 19-year-old Percy, she goes after her prey with an aggressiveness that’s initially off-putting to the lad. (He maces her at one point.)

The movie’s trailer has elicited howls of outrage in some sex-unfriendly social media circles. But the movie itself handles the hook in a way that aspires to raise eyebrows, not inspire a Congressional hearing. Once Maddie is obliged to actually hang out with Percy, she starts to like him. And just as she acts on her instructions to “get him out of his shell,” he persuades her to consider why she’ll be dead-ending it in Montauk for the foreseeable future. If you don’t see this coming, you don’t know Hollywood.

The movie doesn’t split the difference between raunchy sex farce and dual personal growth study so much as complacently fall between rom-com subgenres. It amiably alternates commonplace depictions of introspective intimacy with ostensibly bar-raising, outré set pieces. As when, upon being interrupted while skinny-dipping with Percy, Maddie rushes out of the ocean to deliver a buck-naked beat down to some townies trying to steal their clothes.

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](http://youtube.com/embed/7psP7xBEa28)]

One might argue that the movie doesn’t really need that sort of thing, given the confidence and appeal of its lead performers. But again, Hollywood. In any event, Lawrence is a consistently incandescent screen presence, and her role lets her run through her greatest performative hits, so to speak. She’s goofily sexy, poignantly wide-eyed and retains a beaming, you-can-deny-her-nothing smile. As Percy, Andrew Barth Feldman frames the character’s awkwardness in a quiet register for the most part, but in more expansive nerd moments recalls a young Martin Short. Matthew Broderick and Laura Benanti are present and correct as the peculiar parents. But Natalie Morales, Scott MacArthur and Zahn McClarnon as Maddie’s townie pals, who provide sardonic ***working class*** solidarity for our heroine, have some of the picture’s choicest bits.

No Hard Feelings

Rated R for language, themes, sexuality, a buck-naked beat down. Running time: 1 hour 43 minutes. In theaters.

PHOTO: Andrew Barth Feldman as Percy and Jennifer Lawrence as Maddie in Gene Stupnitsky’s “No Hard Feelings.” (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID GIESBRECHT/SONY PICTURES) This article appeared in print on page C7.

**Load-Date:** June 22, 2023

**End of Document**



[***The 25 Photos That Defined the Modern Age; T 25***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C5N-GTF1-DXY4-X19V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 3, 2024 Monday 00:17 EST

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**Section:** T-MAGAZINE

**Length:** 10992 words

**Byline:** M.H. Miller, Brendan Embser, Emmanuel Iduma and Lucy McKeon M.H. Miller is a features director for T Magazine.

**Highlight:** A group of experts met to discuss the images that have best captured — and changed — the world since 1955.

**Body**

This story contains graphic images of violence and death.

Let’s get this out of the way first: Of the dozens of photographers not represented here that a reasonable person might expect to have been included, the most conspicuous absentees include Berenice Abbott, Ansel Adams, Robert Adams, Richard Avedon, Dawoud Bey, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Imogen Cunningham, Roy DeCarava, William Eggleston, Walker Evans, Robert Mapplethorpe, Helmut Newton and Irving Penn. Putting together a list of the 25 most significant photographs since 1955 — both fine art photos and reportage — proved a difficult task for the panelists (even the chosen time frame was controversial). They were: the Canadian conceptual photographer [*Stan Douglas*](https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/stan-douglas), 63; the Vietnamese American photographer [*An-My Lê*](https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/stan-douglas), 64; the acting chief curator of Photography at the Museum of Modern Art, Roxana Marcoci, 66; the American documentary photographer [*Susan Meiselas*](https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/stan-douglas), 75; the American photographer [*Shikeith*](https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/stan-douglas), 35; and Nadia Vellam, 51, T’s photo and video director. Each participant (including myself, the moderator, 36) submitted up to seven possible nominees for the list. We gathered at The New York Times Building on a morning last February (with Shikeith joining on video from a shoot in Los Angeles) to begin our deliberations.

We chose judges from the realms of both fine art and reportage because, increasingly, the line between the two has collapsed. The modern age has been defined by photographs — images that began their lives in newspapers or magazines are repurposed as art; art has become a vehicle for information. Therefore, it was important to us and our jurors that we not draw boundaries between what was created as journalism and what was created as art. What was important was that the photographs we chose changed, in some way, how we see the world.

The conversation naturally turned into a series of questions. Like how important was it for a photograph to have expanded the possibilities of the medium? And how much did it matter who took a photo and what their intentions were? The list that emerged is less concerned with a historical chronology or an accepted canon than it is with a set of themes that have been linked indelibly to the photographic medium since its inception: labor and activism; war; the self and the family. Intriguingly, beyond an image by Wolfgang Tillmans from the ’90s, fashion photography is largely absent. So, too, are many world historical events that have been captured in landmark photographs, including the assassination of JFK, the fall of the Berlin Wall and anything from the pandemic lockdown or the presidency of Donald Trump. There were just too many other photographs to consider.

The process of producing the final list was clearly not scientific. It was more of a debate among a certain group of people on a certain day and is best considered that way. At the end of nearly four hours, jittery from caffeine, the group stood before a pile of crumpled masterworks on the floor as we assembled our chosen 25 images on a conference table. Many of our questions weren’t resolved (indeed, are unresolvable), but the results — which aren’t ranked but rather presented in the order in which we discussed them — are nothing if not surprising. — M.H. Miller

The conversation has been edited and condensed.

M.H. Miller: I thought we should start by talking about the time frame we settled on, starting in 1955.

Stan Douglas: It’s an agenda.

Miller: A little bit. It certainly shows an American bias, so I apologize to our Canadian representative — 1955 is really the beginning of the American civil rights movement, an era from which a number of us nominated photographs, and photography was so important in just making people aware of what was going on in the country. An-My, you chose Robert Frank’s picture of a streetcar in New Orleans, taken that year.

1. Robert Frank, “Trolley — New Orleans,” 1955

Robert Frank used “Trolley — New Orleans” as the original cover of his influential photo book “The Americans,” first published in the United States in 1959. Frank, a Swiss émigré, spent two years traveling the States and capturing what he saw. In this photograph, two Black passengers sit at the rear of a New Orleans streetcar while four white passengers sit at the front; all look out from a row of windows, the mullions between them emphasizing their strict separation. At the time of its publication, “The Americans” was considered by several critics to be a pessimistic, angry portrait of the country. (The magazine Popular Photography famously called it a “warped” and “wart-covered” depiction “by a joyless man.”) Many more viewers and artists, however, found inspiration in the direct, unromantic style pioneered by Frank, whose outsider status likely let him view America’s contradictions from a clarifying distance. He had “sucked a sad poem out of America onto film,” as Jack Kerouac wrote in an introduction to the book. This image, shot in the months before the Montgomery bus boycotts made segregation a national debate, showed America to itself, as if for the first time. The faces in the photographs, Kerouac wrote, don’t “editorialize or criticize, or say anything but ‘this is the way we are in real life.’” — Emmanuel Iduma

An-My Lê: I tried to look for things that spoke to me, but also spoke to a generation.

Douglas: If I had to choose a civil rights image, I wouldn’t choose this one. Great photograph. But something happening on the street would be more appropriate, I think, like the [*dog attacking protesters*](https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/stan-douglas), or the [*photo with the firemen*](https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/stan-douglas).

Roxana Marcoci: But this was the cover of “The Americans,” and it does happen in the street, actually. I think that what you’re saying is, it’s not a photojournalistic image.

Douglas: The most important thing to me is: does a photograph reveal a new reality, or reveal something that’s been hidden previously? I think that’s a key criterion for making it significant. What impact on the world can that image have? A European might not have recognized that this was happening in the U.S. Maybe a lot of Americans in the North didn’t realize this was happening in the U.S. And I love this photograph, so I’m very happy to keep it.

2. David Jackson, Mamie Till and Gene Mobley Standing Before the Body of Emmett Till at a Chicago Funeral Home, 1955

Mamie Till fixes her eyes on her dead son, as her fiancé, Gene Mobley, holding her, stares at the viewer. [*Emmett Till*](https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/stan-douglas), 14, is laid out on a cot in a Chicago funeral home, his face disfigured and bloated. [*His mother allowed the photojournalist David Jackson to take this picture*](https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/stan-douglas) in September 1955, a few days after two white men had abducted and murdered Till while he was visiting relatives in Mississippi. Quickly acquitted by an all-white jury, the men would go on to sell their confession to Look magazine for $4,000. When this photo was published, first in Jet magazine and then in The Chicago Defender and other Black newspapers, it incited an unprecedented level of outrage in America over racial violence; Jet had to reprint the Sept. 15, 1955, issue in which it appeared because of high demand. For the same reason Mamie Till let this picture be taken, she chose to keep her son’s coffin open during the funeral. “The murder of my son has shown me that what happens to any of us, anywhere in the world, had better be the business of us all,” she said. An estimated 100,000 people came to view his body. Jackson’s photograph was a call to action for many, including Rosa Parks, who said she thought of Till when she refused to give up her seat on a Montgomery bus later that same year. — E.I.

Miller: I feel like you can’t have this conversation, especially with the year we designated as the starting point, without talking about Emmett Till. There’s the devastating series of photographs of Till’s funeral. But there’s also the one from the trial — when Till’s great-uncle is identifying the men who murdered his nephew. The judge didn’t allow that photographer, Ernest C. Withers, to shoot in the courtroom. So it’s a miracle that the picture exists, and that it’s composed as well as it is when it had to be taken in secret. And it’s a moment where you saw a larger shift taking place. Up to that point in the South, a Black witness identifying white defendants in court was unheard-of.

Marcoci: The picture [of his body] was also about the power of the witness, right?

Susan Meiselas: Oh, for sure. Mamie Till and her insistence on an open coffin: how brave an act that was. And it ran in Jet and moved around the world.

Douglas: The issue for me with the trial picture is that it needs a paragraph to explain why we’re looking at it.

Marcoci: The courtroom was a travesty. They went free. But this, Mamie Till with her son, created a generation of Black activists.

Shikeith: I grew up in a predominantly Black neighborhood in Philadelphia, and when we were learning about Black history in the fourth or fifth grade, that picture was brazenly shared with students. It was probably the first time I learned how powerful a photograph can be in having real material change in the world. It’s an image that I’ve lived with my [whole] life, and that’s impacted how I viewed the world and racism and its violence. It scares me. But, you know, it’s the truth. The truth can be very scary for a lot of us.

Miller: Shikeith, you also selected this Gordon Parks photograph, which is one of two color images the group nominated from the 1950s and ’60s — and the second was taken from outer space.

3. Gordon Parks, “Department Store, Mobile, Alabama,” 1956

In 1956, Life magazine sent Gordon Parks to document the effects of Jim Crow segregation laws in the American South through the experiences of one extended family in Mobile, Ala. Parks was one of the few Black photojournalists to work for an establishment magazine at the time, and was known especially for his fashion photography, as is easily apparent from this image. For Life, he photographed everyday scenes — a church choir singing or [*children drinking from water fountains*](https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/stan-douglas) — intentionally capturing signs reading “White Only” or “[*Lots for Colored*](https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/stan-douglas).” “Department Store, Mobile, Alabama” (1956) was shot for the Life story, which ran at 12 pages under the title “The Restraints: Open and Hidden” but, for unknown reasons, it didn’t make the final edit, and it wasn’t published until 2012, when a five-volume collection of Parks’s photographs was released. “Department Store,” which, despite its title, was actually shot at the Saenger Theatre in Mobile, has since become a belated icon, one of the most memorable images in a career that also includes directing the 1971 film “Shaft.” Notable most of all for its vivid color, a startling contrast to the predominantly black-and-white imagery from the civil rights era, the portrait depicts Joanne Thornton Wilson, then age 27, dressed in an ice-blue, A-line cocktail dress, with her young niece, Shirley Anne Kirksey, standing beneath the red neon “Colored Entrance” sign behind the theater. Wilson’s upright posture and outward gaze — peering in the opposite direction of the sign’s blue arrow — subtly signify defiance. But there’s an intimacy and vulnerability in the picture, too. In 2013, Wilson, who went on to become a high school teacher, told the art historian Maurice Berger that she regretted that the strap of her slip had visibly fallen. “Dressing well made me feel first class,” she said. “I wanted to set an example.” She had set an example, of course, which Parks had recorded with such clarity: Wilson also told Berger that she refused to take her niece through the “colored” entrance. — Brendan Embser

Shikeith: I think what’s beautiful about this image is that it’s brilliantly composed — it uses beauty to draw you into a poignant moment in history, becoming a record of the Jim Crow laws in the Southern U.S. I tried to pick photographs that had an influence on me, and that I thought my mother would recognize, to indicate their influence on people who might operate outside of art history conversations. It [can be used as] a tool for educating even the youngest of minds about what marginalized communities went through.

Marcoci: I think that’s a great point: the pedagogical nature of photographs. In this picture, there’s the elegance and grace of these two figures, and then the ugliness of that “Colored Entrance” sign. There’s such a tension between them.

Nadia Vellam: You don’t immediately realize the context because you’re so attracted to the two people in the image. It asks you to spend more time looking.

Douglas: It’s quite an exquisite picture. It’s basically an X, which draws your eye into the center, which then takes you to that woman’s gaze outside the frame. Inside the frame, there’s something quite sweet. But outside — both beyond that door and out in the world that’s made that door — there’s something quite ugly.

4. Alberto Korda, “Guerrillero Heroico (Che Guevara),” 1960

Alberto Korda, a favored photographer of Fidel Castro, captured this image of a 31-year-old Che Guevara by chance during a funeral in Havana in 1960 to honor the victims of a freighter explosion. Guevara, at the time the president of the National Bank of Cuba, happened to move into Korda’s line of sight while Castro was giving a speech. His expression is one of restrained anger; the Cuban government accused the United States of being responsible for the tragedy, which it denied. Five years later, Guevara resigned from Castro’s cabinet and joined revolutionary causes abroad, including in Congo and Bolivia, where he led guerrillas in a failed coup attempt. Korda’s photo wasn’t widely published until after Guevara’s execution by Bolivian soldiers in 1967, when posters, murals and eventually T-shirts emblazoned with Guevara’s face began to appear around the world. In the original portrait, he is flanked by another man and some palm fronds, but the reproductions are cropped to show just Guevara’s head. Korda’s image made Guevara into something more than a man, or even a famous revolutionary; he became a symbol for revolution itself. — E.I.

Miller: We have two pictures of Che Guevara to consider. Stan, you picked [*Che following his execution*](https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/stan-douglas), and Susan, you picked the more famous portrait of him by Alberto Korda. It’s in every college dorm.

Marcoci: It’s in every tattoo parlor.

Douglas: They’re both propaganda images. One is the revolutionary looking to the future, which we’ve seen in everything from Soviet realist paintings to Obama posters. So, in many ways, a cliché, even though it’s had this huge impact. The image of Che dead [which was taken by the Bolivian photographer Freddy Alborta] is both iconic in that it’s like [an Andrea] Mantegna [1431-1506] painting of the dead Christ [“[*Lamentation Over the Dead Christ*](https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/stan-douglas),” circa 1480], but also as evidence, on the part of the people who killed him, that the guy is dead. It’s just such a weird photograph: the officer on the right who’s poking at Che’s body to prove he’s just a human. Just mortal. And it somehow seemed like the end of the export of revolution from Cuba, which very much shut down after Che’s death.

Meiselas: And then he’s resurrected as a tattoo.

5. Diane Arbus, “Boy With a Straw Hat Waiting to March in a Pro-War Parade, N.Y.C., 1967”

The boy in “Boy With a Straw Hat” doesn’t look like a typical Arbus subject. Wearing a prim collared shirt, bow-tie and boater hat, with one American flag at his side and another, much smaller one twisted into a bow on his lapel, the thin-lipped paradegoer seems like the paragon of anodyne conservatism. He’s nothing like the cross-dressers, carnival entertainers, nudists and others relegated to the margins of society that fascinated Arbus, whose work prompted one of the more protracted debates on the ethics of photography, as her images were so often said to skirt the lines of voyeurism and exploitation. Yet his steady gaze prompts a similar sense of unease in the viewer, as does the small pin on his jacket that reads Bomb Hanoi. “Boy With a Straw Hat” was the cover image of Artforum’s May 1971 issue, published two months before Arbus’s death by suicide at age 48. In 1972, when her posthumous MoMA retrospective drew record crowds, the art critic Hilton Kramer refuted the idea that she was merely capturing her subjects for the sake of spectacle; he argued that she collaborated with the people she photographed, and that that act of participation provided dignity — or at least authenticity — especially for those individuals who are shunned or otherwise invisible. Arbus herself once said that the “best thing is the difference. I get to keep what nobody needs.” — B.E.

Miller: A number of us nominated Diane Arbus photos.

Douglas: [I picked] the sitting room in Levittown [“[*Xmas Tree in a Living Room in Levittown, L.I., 1962*](https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/stan-douglas)”], which is one of those suburbs created in the postwar period that people could buy [homes in] with their G.I. Bill money, in which Black people couldn’t live. It’s a case of there [being] something outside the image, which is very powerful: The construction of this new suburban reality, while Emmett Till’s being killed.

Marcoci: I chose the “Giant” [“[*A Jewish Giant at Home With His Parents in the Bronx, N.Y., 1970*](https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/stan-douglas).”], because this was one of the first pictures where I was really thinking, “Who is that person? What would it be like to be him?”

Meiselas: One of the things that photographs do is make us emotional. Some of Arbus’s most memorable pictures are the ones that make you feel more than think.

Vellam: I’d vote for “Giant” just because it spawned so many people’s idea of portraiture: Katy Grannan, Deana Lawson, Larry Sultan. Like this idea of going into a place — in her case, middle-class suburbia — that you may not even have spent any time in otherwise. I feel like that became its own genre: There’s so much photography that has come out of her idea of going into people’s homes.

Marcoci: If I were to choose just one Arbus, I’d probably choose “Boy With a Straw Hat”: A portrait of an individual that’s this very interesting collective portrait of America, too. There’s this tension between the innocent face and then those buttons: “God Bless America” and “Bomb Hanoi.”

Shikeith: He’s sort of the archetype for the Proud Boys. You can see that smirk on his face.

Meiselas: There were pictures from the R.N.C. [Republican National Convention] four years ago that looked so much like this.

Miller: Stan and An-My both nominated a very different kind of photograph from the Vietnam War era: Malcolm Browne’s picture of Thích Quảng Đ\xE1\xA9c’s self-immolation.

6. Malcolm Browne, the Self-Immolation of the Buddhist Monk Thích Quảng Đ\xE1\xA9c in Saigon, 1963

The AP reporter Malcolm Browne was among the only photojournalists on the scene when the monk Thích Quảng Đ\xE1\xA9c set himself on fire in 1963 in Saigon as an act of protest against the South Vietnamese government’s persecution of the Buddhist majority. As flames engulfed Quảng Đ\xE1\xA9c, hundreds of monks surrounded him, mourning while he burned. The photo, sent out as soon as possible on a commercial flight to reach the AP’s offices, was published on front pages internationally the following morning. When President John F. Kennedy saw it, he reportedly exclaimed, “Jesus Christ!” and then ordered a review of his administration’s Vietnam policy. (He would later say, “No news picture in history has generated so much emotion around the world as that one.”) Browne would share the 1964 Pulitzer Prize for international reporting with David Halberstam of The New York Times. The photograph contributed to the collapse of support for the South Vietnamese president Ngô Đình Di\xE1\x87m, who was assassinated in a coup that year. President Kennedy was assassinated just a few weeks later, and his successor, Lyndon B. Johnson, would escalate the war. Browne’s photograph, which is newly resonant today, enshrined the act of self-immolation as the most extreme form of protest. — Lucy McKeon

Lê: I think it’s one of the most incredible monuments that exists as a photograph. [It documents] an extraordinary act of sacrifice for a cause. These days, you see [some] people protesting, and it’s all about their egos. And here, there’s no ego. It’s one of the few pictures I know that’s so violent and peaceful at the same time.

Douglas: He was there for five minutes, apparently, burning, and just didn’t flinch, didn’t say a word. This is what you do when you have no other recourse, when you feel the suppression is so severe that this is the only way you can get your statement heard.

Meiselas: It makes me think of the Napalm Girl, as well [[*Nick Ut’s 1972 image of Kim Phuc Phan Thi*](https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/stan-douglas), age 9, fleeing a napalm attack in the village of Trảng Bàng]. That moment impacted a generation. The question is, which one mobilized us further?

Lê: The Napalm Girl picture, for me, represents the notion that all Vietnamese are victims of war. I started watching war movies in college, and every time the word “Vietnam” comes up, that is the image that people have in their mind. I think the monk speaks to [something] beyond himself. He’s not a victim.

7. NASA/William A. Anders, “Earthrise,” 1968

On Christmas Eve 1968, aboard Apollo 8 during its pioneering orbit of the moon, William A. Anders photographed the Earth “rising” above the lunar horizon. The picture was the first of its kind — and it was also unplanned. Anders, the youngest of the three astronauts on the spacecraft, had been tasked with taking photographs of the moon’s craters, mountains and other geological features. He spontaneously decided, however, to include Earth in the frame when he noticed how beautiful it was. “Here was this orb looking like a Christmas tree ornament, very fragile,” [*Anders would recall*](https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/stan-douglas) in a NASA oral history. “And yet it was our home.” His first shot was in black and white. For the next, he switched to color, which emphasized the contrast between the moon’s gray surface and the planet’s blue-green vibrancy. “Earthrise” was the first image most of humanity saw of the planet we live on, a nature photo like none before it and a reminder of how small our world really is, in comparison with the rest of the universe. As Joni Mitchell would sing of the image, on 1976’s “[*Refuge of the Roads*](https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/stan-douglas)”: “And you couldn’t see a city on that marbled bowling ball/Or a forest or a highway/Or me here least of all. …” — E.I.

Lê: “Earthrise” isn’t the first image of the Earth seen from space. There were earlier [*low-resolution ones in the ’40s*](https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/stan-douglas), made from unmanned missiles or whatever. There was one made on [*Apollo 4, in 1967*](https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/stan-douglas). But I think this one, taken by a crew member on Apollo 8 the next year with a Hasselblad, is important because it’s humbling: seeing the Earth in relationship to the Moon, and thinking about us not being the only people on this Earth. Perhaps this is when we started thinking about how we should take care of our home.

Miller: Stan, you nominated a later photo, “[*Sunset on Mars*](https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/stan-douglas)” (2005).

Douglas: I’ve always had this knee-jerk response to Apollo being American propaganda somehow, part of the arms race — who’s going to get [to the Moon] first, the U.S. or the Russians? And once the U.S. got there, they lost interest. It wasn’t really about exploration, but dominance. This image on Mars is something quite extraordinary, because in effect, the camera is a prosthesis. It’s both a very artificial one and a human one. We actually extend our vision through it.

8. Ernest C. Withers, “I Am a Man: Sanitation Workers Strike, Memphis, Tennessee,” 1968

In the last weeks of his life, Martin Luther King Jr. took part in a protest of Black sanitation workers striking for safer conditions and decent wages in Memphis, Tenn. In a speech, King emphasized the connection between the United States’ civil rights battle and the struggles of poor and disenfranchised people worldwide, a message that resonated with the crowd. Their protest signs bore the phrase “I Am a Man,” a stark acknowledgment of all the ways this most basic fact was disrespected. “We were going to demand to have the same dignity and the same courtesy any other citizen of Memphis has,” one of the participants, James Douglas, recalled in a 1978 documentary titled “I Am a Man.” The defining photo of the strike was taken by the Black photojournalist Ernest C. Withers, a Memphis native who previously shot the trial of Emmett Till’s killers, and also made famous images of the [*Montgomery bus boycott*](https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/stan-douglas), the [*integration of Central High School*](https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/stan-douglas) in Little Rock, Ark. Withers’s picture became the official record of King’s last major civil rights action. Years later, however, Withers’s own story was revealed to have been more complicated. Like King, the photographer drew the attention of the F.B.I. Unlike King, he became a paid informant. Yet he continued to produce some of the most iconic images of the movement: On April 4, 1968, less than a week after taking this photo, Withers was on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel, photographing the blood stain at the scene of King’s assassination. — L.M.

Shikeith: I think I first saw this image around the time the Million Man March was happening [in 1995]. I have a greater understanding of manhood [now] and how much of it I want to align with, and how much I don’t. But I understand how vital the need to identify as a man was in that moment.

Meiselas: I love the contrast of “I am a man,” singular, and “I am a collective.” It’s just all there: perfect distance, perfect composition. Whether or not Withers was working for the F.B.I. …

Douglas: Was he?

Meiselas: Yeah.

Douglas: And his role was to just …

Meiselas: Report on his fellow men. They paid him to spy on his colleagues. It’s a dark story. But let’s not go there.

9. Blair Stapp, Huey Newton, Black Panther Minister of Defense, 1968

In the summer of 1968, outside of the Alameda County Courthouse in Oakland, Calif., where Huey P. Newton stood trial for the murder of a police officer, supporters held up posters of him that instantly became synonymous with the Black Panther Party. The year before, Newton, the party’s co-founder and Minister of Defense, had collaborated with fellow Panther Eldridge Cleaver and the photographer Blair Stapp to stage a portrait of himself in a black leather jacket and a tipped beret, holding a shotgun in one hand and a spear in the other. He’s seated on a rattan peacock chair that recalls chairs woven by inmates in the United States-colonized Philippines decades earlier. Its oval back piece frames Newton’s head like an oversize halo. Two Zulu warrior shields are propped against the wall. Stapp’s portrait and the peacock chair itself have since become an enduring symbol of Black Power. Michelle Obama sat in one for [*her 1982 prom portrait*](https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/stan-douglas). Melvin Van Peebles recreated the photograph in his 1995 film “Panther.” The visual artist Sam Durant memorialized [*Newton in bronze in 2004*](https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/stan-douglas), and Henry Taylor [*painted it in 2007*](https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/stan-douglas). After two hung juries, the murder charges against Newton were dropped in 1971. For him, the struggle was about survival — or as he put it, “survival pending revolution.” — B.E.

Shikeith: I was trying to think of images that my grandmothers revered in a way. I think this is one of those images that exists in a lot of Black domestic spaces as a symbol for strength and determination. And it has this royal demeanor that’s been continuously emulated in Black photographic practice, whether amateur or professional.

Marcoci: The beret is almost [like] Che’s.

Shikeith: You can see people replicating this pose on the wicker chair throughout Black portraiture in the ’80s and early ’90s. I’m really interested in photographs that’ve had a long-lasting effect on our daily lives.

10. W. Eugene Smith, “Tomoko in Her Bath,” 1972

In the Magnum photojournalist W. Eugene Smith’s picture of Tomoko Kamimura, 15, she is being bathed by her mother at their home, in Minamata, Japan. Kamimura had been born with a kind of mercury poisoning that would later come to be known as Minamata disease, caused by a chemical factory contaminating the city’s water and food supply for more than 30 years. Smith and his wife, the photographer and activist Aileen M. Smith, lived in Minamata in the early 1970s, taking thousands of photographs to document the toll of the disaster — 1,784 people died after contracting the disease and thousands were left with severe neurological and musculoskeletal disabilities. Images from the series were printed by Life magazine in 1972, and Kamimura’s portrait became, for a time, one of the most famous images in the world. Amid the public outcry, “rumors began to circulate through the neighborhood claiming that we were making money from the publicity,” Kamimura’s father, Yoshio, would later write, “but this was untrue — it had never entered our minds to profit from the photograph of Tomoko. We never dreamed that a photograph like that could be commercial.” The Chisso Corporation, which owned the factory, has paid damages to some 10,000 victims. Kamimura died in 1977, at the age of 21. Smith died the following year. Twenty years later, in accordance with the Kamimura family’s desire “to let Tomoko rest,” Aileen M. Smith decided to no longer allow the photograph to be reproduced. She has rarely granted permission since. — L.M.

Meiselas: Without this documentation by Eugene Smith, I don’t think Minamata and the mercury poisoning would ever have been confronted. So when you do choose to represent a victim, I hope it’s purposeful.

Douglas: I heartily agree. And it’s a beautiful image of a loving relationship between mother and daughter.

Vellam: Smith documented people, but he was also very conscious of what he was doing while he was documenting them. I think he took a very long time after he shot everyone to figure out what he even wanted to show from them.

Meiselas: He believed that they should be better understood.

11. Photo Archive Group, “Photographs From S-21: 1975-79”

Some photographs, taken in the darkest moments of history, end up saying very different things from what their creators intended — like the images that Stalin’s secret police took during the Great Purge, or the ones white spectators took of lynchings in the United States. One of the more extensive photographic records of an authoritarian regime comes from the Khmer Rouge army, which controlled Cambodia from 1975 to 1979 and whose genocidal purges of minority groups and political opponents led to the murder of almost a quarter of the country’s population. Before killing most of its victims, the army took their portraits, in part to prove to leaders that the supposed enemies of the state were indeed being executed. Of the nearly 20,000 people sent between 1975 and 1979 to what was known as the S-21 death camp, the Khmer Rouge’s most notorious torture center, only about a dozen survived. In 1994, the American nonprofit organization Photo Archive Group cleaned and cataloged more than 5,000 photographs taken of prisoners before their executions. A selection of the images, known as “Photographs from S-21: 1975-79,” was published as a book called “The Killing Fields” in 1996 and shown at MoMA the following year. Who was the girl pictured here? What had she seen? It’s impossible to know. And yet the regime’s photographic record offers a way into humanizing and remembering the victims of one of the most ruthless atrocities of the 20th century. S-21 is now the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, where a number of the images from “Photographs From S-21: 1975-1979” are on permanent display. — L.M.

Lê: So these pictures were found in an archive in Cambodia [in 1993]. After the Khmer Rouge took over [in 1975], they went on a rampage, killing teachers and anyone who they felt wasn’t one of theirs. The bodies were buried in different locations. But they photographed these people before killing them. There were thousands of these pictures.

Douglas: If you want to make them disappear, why do you document them?

Lê: But that’s the thing. It’s the banality of evil. It’s unconscionable, right? Civilians being just collateral damage in war. Perhaps there are other ways to speak about violence, and I think this [set of photographs] certainly does.

12. Cindy Sherman, “Untitled Film Stills,” 1977-80

Cindy Sherman was 23 when she began making her “Untitled Film Stills,” a series of 70 black-and-white staged self-portraits that explore stereotypes of women in film and mass media. As a student at Buffalo State College, where she originally studied painting, she became fascinated by performers such as Vito Acconci and Chris Burden, artists who put their own bodies center stage. Sherman also liked to dress up as stock characters for parties, purchasing clothes from flea markets and experimenting with cosmetics. In “Untitled Film Stills,” she plays the career girl, ingénue, [*librarian*](https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/stan-douglas), mistress, femme fatale and [*runaway*](https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/stan-douglas), alternately heartbroken, hung over, daydreaming or determined to escape a predator as though trapped in some film noir. But which film? That feeling of vague recognition was Sherman’s point, as well as that of other artists of the era experimenting with pictures from mass media, who would eventually be called the Pictures Generation, a name based on a 1977 [*exhibition curated by Douglas Crimp*](https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/stan-douglas). They wanted viewers to almost recognize the images, so as to heighten the uncanny nature of their work. Sherman initially sold eight-by-ten prints from “Untitled Film Stills” for $50 out of a binder from her desk at her day job as a receptionist at the nonprofit gallery Artists Space in New York. Douglas Eklund, who organized a Pictures Generation exhibition in 2009, noted that the series “never ceases to astonish, as if Sherman knew how to operate all of the machinery of mass-cultural representation with one hand tied behind her back.” Her intuitive grasp of the self-portrait’s theatrical appeal, especially when that self could be manipulated — decades before anyone could have imagined camera filters on an iPhone — has kept “Untitled Film Stills” relevant ever since. — B.E.

Marcoci: There’s something about the “Untitled Film Stills.” It’s this relationship between still and moving images. Cindy Sherman has the capacity to encapsulate, in a single [work], a narrative. She calls on this pantheon of women’s roles from movies that we think we’ve seen, but none of them are based on an actual film still. There’s one [“Untitled Film Still #13,” 1978] where she looks like [*Brigitte Bardot in a*](https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/stan-douglas) head scarf from Jean-Luc Godard’s “Contempt” (1963), but she’s a librarian. She’s reaching for a book. She makes the Bardot type into an intellectual, which is [an agency] that most male Hollywood filmmakers of the time, or even a filmmaker like Godard, would not have given the real Bardot. She was able to see something about how we engage with mass media and tweak it.

Douglas: I’m not convinced about Sherman. [There’s] an art-world canonization of the work. How important was it? How influential? I don’t think it was that important or influential outside of a very small area.

Marcoci: On the other hand, if you ask people if they know about Sherman, they probably do.

Lê: They do. Many young women find Sherman’s work empowering.

Marcoci: I never thought that we would just be considering photojournalism.

Meiselas: No.

Douglas: I mean, looking at the art world, I would include Ed Ruscha’s “Every Building on the Sunset Strip” [1966].

13. Ed Ruscha, “Every Building on the Sunset Strip,” 1966

As a teenager in Oklahoma City in the 1950s, Ed Ruscha delivered newspapers by bicycle daily along a two-mile route. He dreamed about making a model of all the buildings on his circuit, he later recalled in an interview with the Los Angeles Times, “like an architect standing over a table and plotting out a city.” After moving to Los Angeles for art school in 1956, Ruscha became obsessed with the city’s architecture, particularly on the Sunset Strip, that part of Sunset Boulevard that stretches for about two miles, like his old paper route, across West Hollywood. In 1966, Ruscha photographed both sides of the Strip by securing a motorized camera to the bed of a pickup truck. The result was “Every Building on the Sunset Strip,” a nearly 25-foot accordion-fold, self-published artist’s book. Today, Ruscha is most famous for his text-based paintings, many of which reference corporate logos and advertising slogans, for which he is widely celebrated as postwar America’s answer to the Dadaist nonsense movement. But his photography shares with the paintings a repetitive, deadpan humor. In addition to the Sunset Strip, Ruscha photographed swimming pools, gas stations, parking lots and apartments, and collected the images into small books that provoked the ire of critics — and fellow photographers — who deemed the work lacking in style and meaning. (“Only an idiot would take pictures of nothing but the filling stations,” the photographer Jeff Wall once complained.) But what he created was a kind of time travel, a meticulous, obsessive visual cartography of a long-lost Los Angeles. He and his brother, Paul, still make the trip to photograph the street every couple of years. — B.E.

Marcoci: I love [Ed] Ruscha, and I think we’ve barely touched on conceptual photography. Obviously superimportant, but is he really the photographer that did so much for photography through that series?

Meiselas: I know what you mean. Of course, because the photographs came way early, we rediscovered them after he became famous for painting.

Miller: Well, he’s certainly not as famous as a photographer as some people on this list, but I don’t know if we need to get hung up on that.

Douglas: I think “Sunset Strip” was extraordinary. Ruscha produces photographs governed by a hard-core conceptual procedure. In the case of “Every Building on the Sunset Strip,” the procedure is in the title and, in order to fulfill it, he had to make hundreds of stops along a Los Angeles street. But I also thought this was too inside the art world.

Miller: Maybe this is a good time to talk about Nan Goldin.

14. Nan Goldin, “The Ballad of Sexual Dependency,” 1979-2004

Nan Goldin originally presented “Ballad,” named after a song from Bertolt Brecht’s satirical musical “The Threepenny Opera,” as a series of 35-millimeter slides shown by a carousel projector in bars and nightclubs and backed by an eclectic soundtrack — from Dean Martin to the Velvet Underground. Goldin’s visual diary is itself a bohemian opera of New York’s downtown counterculture, a community freed from convention yet abandoned many times over by society; it documents sex, addiction, beauty, violence, powerful friendship, the AIDS crisis and the joyful struggle to live beyond the limits of the mainstream. Friends were photographed [*doing the twist at a party*](https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/stan-douglas) or preparing to inject heroin. In “Nan One Month After Being Battered” (1984), a portrait of domestic abuse, the artist’s bloodshot eye meets the lens head-on. Goldin’s “Ballad” has since been credited with inspiring everything from selfie culture to the raw, diaristic aesthetic and saturated color now commonplace across social media and in fine art. Over the years, Goldin would revise and update the series, presenting it with new images and a different soundtrack, and it would become an ubiquitous presence in galleries and museums. But because the work has so thoroughly permeated the culture, it’s easy to overlook just how radical it was when it debuted. In “[*All the Beauty and the Bloodshed*](https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/stan-douglas),” Laura Poitras’s 2022 documentary about Goldin, the photographer describes a resistance to her art in the ’80s, “especially from male artists and gallerists who said ‘This isn’t photography. Nobody photographs their own life.’ It was still a kind of outlier act.” — L.M.

Marcoci: We’re talking about an artist who’s very much engaged with youth culture, with the cultures that transgress gender binaries. Also with the ravages of a generation that takes drugs, that loves, that dies young. “The Ballad of Sexual Dependency” is a ballad. It shows this group of people as images set to music.

Meiselas: It was radical, it was very impactful to the photographic medium. But here’s my question: Would we be choosing either Nan [Goldin] or Cindy Sherman if we didn’t know their names?

Marcoci: Did you watch the “Ballad”?

Meiselas: Of course. I watched it in 1985.

Marcoci: How many times?

Meiselas: How many times has she changed it?

Marcoci: But even that I like. You don’t need to choose one picture. It’s interesting for me when photography is not just a moment that’s frozen in time, when it has the capacity to change.

15. Wolfgang Tillmans, “Lutz, Alex, Suzanne &amp; Christoph on Beach (B/W),” 1993

A slightly different, color image of the same people in “Lutz, Alex, Suzanne &amp; Christoph on Beach (B/W)” was first published by i-D magazine in 1993 for an unconventional fashion story about camouflage. The German photographer Wolfgang Tillmans staged the scene in Bournemouth, England, where he’d attended art school the previous year, and captured a whorl of bodies in military fatigues, each person clasping another’s arm, thigh or chest, and all wearing camouflage patterns from different countries — a post-Cold War utopia. The black-and-white version was printed on color paper, which accounts for the warmth of its tone. On the beach, Lutz, Alex, Suzanne and Christoph appear as if from a scene in Charles and Ray Eames’s 1977 short film “Powers of Ten,” which zooms out from a sunny picnic into the farthest reaches of the universe. Tillmans’s photograph “seems to model something like chosen family,” says the curator Phil Taylor, who edited a collection of the artist’s interviews. The way Tillmans envisions family in this early portrait — as a tight embrace amid the implied violence of the outside world — is emblematic of the way he would go on to depict men kissing at gay nightclubs or activists at antiwar demonstrations, each a picture of solidarity against the odds. — B.E.

Lê: I think Wolfgang [Tillmans] captured youth culture — in magazines like i-D and The Face — at a time [the early ’90s] when young people were being captured in a different way: It was very clinical and idealized, and he just came out with this very real [take on] youth culture. The pictures were a little more grainy, and I think it [changed] the way young people are seen. My students always bring up his work. I think it’s a way to photograph your family and friends and turn them into real protagonists. And I see that influence as very long-lasting.

Marcoci: What’s interesting in this image is [that] it’s four friends on a beach, dressed in camouflage. Camouflage immediately makes you think of military uniforms, of obedience, of listening to orders. But in the techno culture of these clubs in the 1990s, it had become a symbol of individuality and freedom: the exact opposite of what the uniform means.

Meiselas: This image, if I didn’t know his name, I would’ve just turned the page.

Lê: I think we need a picture that speaks about youth. And I think even though this picture was made in ’93 …

Miller: … That’s still how young people are photographed today.

16. Lee Friedlander, “Boston,” 1986, From the Series “At Work,” 1975-95

Lee Friedlander is best known for photographing America’s social landscape, from mundane street scenes in the Midwest to nudes of Madonna that were taken in the late 1970s. Between 1975 and 1995, he created six series of photographs depicting employees at different types of workplaces, including Rust Belt factories, a telemarketing call center and a New York investment firm. One of these series, commissioned by the M.I.T. Museum and produced between 1985 and 1986, looks at office workers in the Boston area who used desktop computers for their jobs. At the time, this was a fairly new development, but one that Friedlander presciently recognized would come to define not just corporate life but humanity itself. His subjects are often seemingly oblivious — or indifferent — to the presence of the camera. Likewise, his camera often omits the computers themselves, the ostensible subject of his images. Instead, the workers, sitting at brightly lit desks, are pictured from the chest up, their detached expressions familiar to any of us as they sit engrossed in (or bored by) screens just out of frame. With this series Friedlander had tapped into the dark comedy of the mundane. His influence can be seen in a generation of younger photographers who seek to question everyday life — from Alec Soth to LaToya Ruby Frazier — and whose images would mostly be viewed on screens. — E.I.

Marcoci: I love this series.

Douglas: I love it, too, but I put this in out of guilt for not having more art people in here. It’s images of these people just engaged in the world around them.

Meiselas: In autonomous labor. I remember when I first saw this series of white-collar workers in front of machines.

Lê: No one had done that before.

17. LaToya Ruby Frazier, “The Last Cruze,” 2019

LaToya Ruby Frazier’s series “The Last Cruze,” named after the compact car made by General Motors, follows the 2019 closure of an auto plant in Lordstown, Ohio, that had been open since 1966. Over nine months, Frazier documented the impact one corporation can have on a community, which lost thousands of jobs. A selection of images from the series were first published in The New York Times Magazine in May 2019, and the work was later presented as a multimedia installation: More than 60 portraits and video interviews with union workers and their families were mounted to orange metal trusses at the Renaissance Society in Chicago. In the accompanying monograph, Frazier included essays by artists and critics as well as members of the local chapter of the United Auto Workers union. On its cover is this photograph, which she shot from a helicopter, showing a group of workers and their families protesting the plant’s abrupt shuttering and requesting a new product to work on. Other images show Lordstown residents in various states of mourning — wiping away tears or proudly displaying union memorabilia. Born in a Pennsylvania steel manufacturing town, Frazier embedded herself with the Ohio workers, producing one of the most detailed records of the gutting of America’s ***working class***. “‘The Last Cruze’ is a workers’ monument,” she has said. “It is half-holy, half-assembly line.” — L.M.

Marcoci: LaToya Ruby Frazier is a true artist-activist. These workers were losing their pension plans, their health benefits, you name it. It’s a work that includes more than 60 pictures of union workers along with their testimonies, because she also did these interviews with them.

Miller: I think “The Last Cruze” might be the only complete photographic record we have of the impact that corporate decision-making has on a work force. GM skipped town, cut their costs and the people of Lordstown were left holding the bag. We have another picture, nominated by Susan, that also documents labor.

18. Sebastião Salgado, “Serra Pelada Gold Mine, State of Pará, Brazil,” 1986

One of the most striking aspects of Sebastião Salgado’s photographs of an open-air gold mine in Brazil is the scale. Several thousand men — their bodies hunched and fragile — are rendered miniature against the backdrop of a massive pit in the earth. In the photos, most of the miners are climbing into or out of that pit, holding tools or ferrying sacks up and down narrow ladders and steep slopes. In several shots, Salgado chose not to include the horizon within the frame; the viewer can’t see where the workers’ dangerous journey ends. The photographer, who was born in the state of Minas Gerais (which means “general mines”) in Brazil, spent 35 days at Serra Pelada, living alongside the miners while he took these photographs. When they were published in 1987 in The New York Times Magazine, they revealed a late-20th-century gold rush and the appalling conditions facing those at the bottom of it. In the nearly four decades since, Salgado has gone on to capture the burning oil wells in Kuwait, the genocide in Rwanda and the destruction of the Amazon rainforest. Some critics have labeled him an “aesthete of misery,” using the plight of the poor and disenfranchised to make visually striking pictures. When these images are exhibited in a fine art context, their size is so massive, the sheer aesthetics of the imagery threaten to eclipse the act of documentation. But in a profile in The Guardian this year marking his 80th birthday, Salgado responded, “I came from the third world. When I was born, Brazil was a developing country. The pictures I took, I took from my side, from my world, from where I come from. … The flaw my critics have, I don’t. It’s the feeling of guilt.” — E.I.

Meiselas: The scale of what he presented to us at the time was really quite amazing.

Douglas: It was like, “Holy moly, that’s still going on?”

Meiselas: Exactly.

19. Stuart Franklin, an Unidentified Man Blocking a Column of Tanks in Tiananmen Square, 1989

On June 5, 1989, as a column of tanks rolled into formation on Chang’an Avenue bordering Tiananmen Square, the Magnum photographer Stuart Franklin watched from the sixth-floor balcony of the nearby Beijing Hotel. He was holed up there with several other foreign correspondents, who were all covering the weekslong protests, led by hundreds of thousands of unarmed students, against the Chinese Communist Party. Two nights before, the People’s Liberation Army had cleared the area with force; the next morning, they prevented parents from looking for students lost in the fray, and the soldiers fired live rounds even as medics attempted to rush the injured to safety. (Thousands are thought to have been killed in the protests, although an official death toll has never been released.) Suddenly, around noon on the 5th, a young man in a white shirt and dark pants, holding shopping bags in his hands, approached the first tank. On the video footage, it attempts to maneuver around him. Like a matador taunting a bull, he flings his arms in fury and, when the tank turns back, the man jumps out again. Yet the dramatic photograph Franklin took, with five tanks and a destroyed bus in the frame, draws its power from its stillness, its potential energy. (Four other photographers are known to have captured the same scene, including Jeff Widener, whose tightly framed version for The Associated Press ran on the front page of The Times.) Authoritarian regimes cannot tolerate symbolic images of resistance and, while the Tank Man — whose identity has never been confirmed — became an inspiration for pro-democracy movements across the world, he was snuffed out from official Chinese memory. Today, image searches in China for “Tiananmen Square” only turn up cheerful pictures of a tourist destination. — B.E.

Douglas: Multiple photographers shot this image because they were all in the same corner of a hotel overlooking Tiananmen Square. They couldn’t really shoot anywhere else on the square. The first time I saw this scene, it was a video.

Meiselas: Right, there was a television camera. The stills are very different. And I don’t care whose image it is. I’m thinking about the man in front of the tank and what happens when one man stands up. And I love how this looks alongside Ernest Withers’s “I Am a Man.”

20. Adam Broomberg &amp; Oliver Chanarin, “The Day Nobody Died,” 2008

In 2008, the artist duo Adam Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin were embedded with the British Army in Afghanistan during a period that was, at the time, the deadliest week since the war began in 2001. They brought a lightproof box containing a roll of photographic paper, and, occasionally, exposed six-meter segments of the paper to the sun for 20 seconds at a time. They were creating photograms, which, as opposed to conventional war photographs, display the marks of their making but little else. The resulting works — 12 in total — set out “to create a kind of post-mortem of photojournalistic representation of conflict,” as the artists wrote when the work was first exhibited. They made these images on days when a BBC fixer was executed or a suicide attack killed nine Afghan soldiers. But they also made one on the day that the title refers to — a day with no fatalities. In a literal sense, there isn’t anything to see in the images except splashes of light as abstract as a blurry sonogram. When Broomberg and Chanarin arrived in Afghanistan, the war was in its seventh year and, by then, a surfeit of photographs depicting death and violence had long been circulating. There’s hardly consensus on what to leave out when depicting war, but there is some consensus on the need to bear witness. With their photograms, Broomberg and Chanarin found a new, unexpected, but no less emotional way of doing so. — E.I.

Miller: There were a lot of different kinds of images of war from the George W. Bush era. Nadia, you nominated Adam Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin’s “The Day Nobody Died,” which is very abstract.

Douglas: What is it?

Vellam: They did this project in Afghanistan where they took rolls of photo paper and put them outside, exposing them to the sun or the weather. Whatever would happen while the photo paper was exposed was the work. It’s about a new idea of photography, about it not depicting something specific but creating a mood. And this one was taken, as the title says, on a day nobody died, which is such an interesting and different way to talk about a conflict.

21. Richard Drew, “Falling Man,” 2001

When it was first published by The Associated Press, the photojournalist Richard Drew’s image of a man falling to his death from the World Trade Center on the morning of Sept. 11, 2001, was denounced by many readers as exploitative. Several media outlets published the image once, on Sept. 12 — including The Times, on page A7 — but it then disappeared from circulation, confined to shock websites like rotten.com. There was no shortage of graphic images of 9/11, including footage of the planes flying into the buildings. But Drew’s photo was uniquely unsettling because of its uncomfortable elegance: a single victim, framed by both north and south towers, caught in a fragile stasis before death. The image eventually began a strange afterlife as “one of the most famous photographs in human history,” according to the journalist Tom Junod, who wrote [*a 2003 essay in Esquire*](https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/stan-douglas) in which he attempts to identify the falling man. He couldn’t — not definitively. No one has. Recalling war photography that valorizes the unknown soldier, “Falling Man” would go on to be one of the inspirations for a novel by Don DeLillo and an opera by Daniel Levy. Long after the dust settled on the former site of the World Trade Center, the photograph of the unnamed man remains, like “an unmarked grave,” in Junod’s words, merely asking that we look at it. — E.I.

Miller: I think “Falling Man” is the defining image from the most violent day in America since the Civil War.

Shikeith: I was in middle school when 9/11 happened. Images from that day seem to seep into you. You carry them for life and they dictate certain fears and anxieties.

Miller: And then there are all the images from what happened in the years to come. The pictures of soldiers torturing detainees at Abu Ghraib military prison are arguably the most famous photographs from the war on terror.

22. Staff Sgt. Ivan L. Frederick II, Abu Ghraib Hooded Detainee, 2003

In early 2004, investigations into abuse of Iraqi prisoners by U.S. soldiers at the Abu Ghraib detention facility had already been reported by news outlets including The New York Times and CNN. But the government had kept all photographs of torture out of view — until leaked images reached CBS. Even then, the news anchor Dan Rather would claim, the network’s executives only granted permission to show them when faced with the threat of a scoop by The New Yorker’s investigative journalist Seymour Hersh. (CBS executives justified holding the photos on various grounds, including the desire to avoid retaliation against American hostages.) The Abu Ghraib photos finally appeared in both outlets later that year. Their subject matter is brutal: men stripped naked and made to form a human pyramid with soldiers grinning behind them; a hooded man standing atop a box, hooked to electrical wires. The fact that American soldiers had recorded these scenes on their personal cameras only made them more disturbing. The photos significantly shifted American public opinion on the war on terror, further demonstrating the power of an image to alter a story. They also speak to a broader shift in news photography, in which everyone — no matter their intentions — is now a potential journalist. — L.M.

Shikeith: Both “Falling Man” and the hooded Iraqi detainee have a hard-core bodily effect on me. I think there was a sort of naïveté to the world I grew up in, just this idea that America is the greatest place on earth. For a moment there, we believed the myth. At least I did. When I started seeing these images, I developed a distrust in a lot of things. It only got worse. I have a very pessimistic outlook, but it sort of begins here, with these images.

23. Carrie Mae Weems, “From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried,” 1995-96

Carrie Mae Weems’s “From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried” is a work of appropriation that brings together 34 photographs, many of them of Black Americans, dating from the mid-19th century to the late 1960s, which collectively form a lesson on the history of racism in America. At the heart of the work are four images of people who were enslaved in South Carolina — some of the earliest known images that exist of America’s original sin — taken by the photographer Joseph T. Zealy and commissioned in 1850 by the Harvard University biologist Louis Agassiz. Originally intended to illustrate Agassiz’s baseless phrenological theories of Black inferiority, the pictures were rescaled and reframed by Weems, who also tinted them blood-red, making explicit the violence that allowed for their creation. Stored in Harvard’s archives for more than a century, Zealy’s images fell into obscurity, only to be rediscovered in 1976. After Weems used them without permission, the school threatened her with a lawsuit. “I think that your suing me would be a really good thing,” she told the university, as she later recalled to the art historian Deborah Willis. “You should, and we should have this conversation in court.” Instead of proceeding with the suit, Harvard acquired the work, further complicating the idea of ownership that Weems investigates. — E.I.

Vellam: We should talk about Carrie [Mae Weems].

Meiselas: We should definitely talk about Carrie. There are two very different options [“[*Kitchen Table Series*](https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/stan-douglas),” 1990, and “From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried.”]

Lê: I chose the “Kitchen Table Series” [in which Weems poses as the matriarch in various domestic scenes she staged in a single room, containing little else but an overhead lamp and a table]. The kitchen table is symbolic — it’s the intimacy of the home. In a way I always felt these pictures were about people being able to be themselves, being open and visible in a way that they maybe can’t in public.

Marcoci: To me, the “Kitchen Table Series” is a true performance for the camera in a way that Cindy’s is in “Untitled Film Stills.” But “From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried” is an amazing work because it engages with race, with slavery, with colonialism, through an archive. The subjects here were really originally presented as specimens. But what Carrie does is give a voice back to these subjects, whose voices were completely muted. She enlarges the photographs. She tints them blood-red. The whole thing becomes a poem.

Shikeith: This particular work taught me how to use photographs to tell a story. And the fact that [Harvard threatened to sue her] introduces this whole other issue about who gets to tell what stories.

24. Deana Lawson, “Nation,” 2018

The idea for “Nation” came to Deana Lawson in a dream. She was haunted by a story that George Washington’s false teeth were [*made from the teeth of enslaved people*](https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/stan-douglas). For months, she kept an image of Washington’s dentures — held in Mount Vernon’s collection — on the wall of her bedroom. Lawson dreamed about a person wearing a mouth guard and wondered if she might forge a connection between the majesty of gold — the jewelry of hip-hop and the regalia of the Ashanti Kingdom — and the fact that the first president of the United States could only speak the lofty words of liberty through teeth that once belonged to the oppressed. Lawson is known for portraits she stages in homes and other intimate spaces, often decorated with a large array of objects: family pictures, children’s toys, a Michael Jackson poster. In her images, Black men and women, their skin captured in color with meticulous attention to shade and tone, appear not as documentary subjects but as vessels. “Her people seem to occupy a higher plane, a kingdom of restored glory,” the novelist [*Zadie Smith has written*](https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/stan-douglas) of Lawson’s photography. At the photo shoot for “Nation,” Lawson offered three hip-hop artists a selection of jewelry and a mouth guard, typically worn during dental procedures, painted gold. “Someone said that I’m ruthless when it comes to what I want,” Lawson says in an interview in her self-titled 2018 monograph. “I have an image in mind that … burns so deeply that I have to make it, and I don’t care what people are going to think.” “Nation” presents an endless series of questions about Black lineage, going back centuries before the nation’s founding. Lawson later printed the picture of Washington’s teeth on a card and slipped it into the edge of the work’s golden frame. — B.E.

Miller: Deana Lawson seems to be doing something similar to Weems in “Nation.”

Marcoci: I think that’s an amazing image. It’s actually a collage, with the picture of George Washington’s dentures tucked into the top right corner. She’s said photography has the power to make history and the present speak to each other.

25. Carlijn Jacobs, “Renaissance,” 2022

On July 29, 2022, when Beyoncé released “Renaissance,” the first of what she’s envisioned as a three-act magnum opus (act two, “Cowboy Carter,” was released this March), the public was exhausted after two and a half years of pandemic restrictions and unprecedented change to their daily routines. They were stir-crazy and impatient for the dance floor. Beyoncé embraced the sounds of house music pioneered by Black and queer D.J.s, as well as the subversive, high-gloss styling of ballroom culture. The singer appears on the album’s cover in a Nusi Quero-designed silver rope dress, sitting astride a horse covered in mirrors. The image was taken by Carlijn Jacobs, a Dutch fashion photographer interested in the art of masquerade and maximalist glamour, and alludes to both rodeo and royalty. It also conjures a range of artistic references, including Kehinde Wiley’s painting “[*Equestrian Portrait of Isabella of Bourbon*](https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/stan-douglas)” (2016); Rose Hartman’s snapshots of [*Bianca Jagger on a white horse*](https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/stan-douglas) at Studio 54 in 1977; and [*John Collier’s 1890s painting*](https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/stan-douglas) of Lady Godiva, the 11th-century Englishwoman said to have rode her horse naked through the streets as a form of protest. — B.E.

Vellam: Does anybody else feel like we’re missing a pop-culture celebrity moment? If we’re talking about images that go everywhere, and that people who live in the middle of the country all are going to look at, I don’t feel we have that.

Douglas: I think it’s important to include the idea of celebrity culture in photography. I’m not quite sure what that would be.

Lê: There’s the [2017] picture of [*Beyoncé pregnant with all the flowers*](https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/stan-douglas).

Miller: Initially, Shikeith had also picked Beyoncé from [*the album cover*](https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/stan-douglas) of “Dangerously in Love” (2003).

Marcoci: But sorry, why don’t we then just choose a [Richard] Avedon of a celebrity?

Vellam: [*Marilyn Monroe*](https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/stan-douglas) [from 1957]. But don’t we feel like we have plenty of photographs from the past? Don’t we want to think about what celebrity is now?

Miller: What’s the iconic pop culture image from the last five years?

Douglas: Is there a Kardashian image?

Vellam: I can’t, because I hate them so much. But yes, you want the thing of [Kim Kardashian] when she broke the internet with her butt [an image that ran on [*the cover of Paper magazine*](https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/stan-douglas) in 2014].

Douglas: I’m going back to Beyoncé, because [you want] an image of a celebrity who’s not a person but an image. She’s like a simulacrum somehow.

Vellam: With her “Renaissance” cover, suddenly she was plastered everywhere. It was all over the city.

Douglas: I’d buy that.

Shikeith: I think it’s very important that she released this album and highlighted Black queer contributions to music in the culture because, very frequently, those same contributions are erased or attributed to someone else. Especially in pop culture.

Marcoci: Can you hold it up on your phone?

Vellam: Yeah. I listen to it all the time.

Top: Gordon Parks, “Department Store, Mobile, Alabama” (1956) © the Gordon Parks Foundation; NASA/William A. Anders, “Earthrise” (1968); Alberto Korda, “Guerrillero Heroico (Che Guevara)” (1960) © Alberto Korda, courtesy of the Alberto Korda Estate; Stuart Franklin, an unidentified man blocking a column of tanks in Tiananmen Square (1989) © Stuart Franklin/Magnum Photos; Deana Lawson, “Nation” (2018) © Deana Lawson, courtesy of the artist and David Kordansky Gallery; LaToya Ruby Frazier, “United Auto Workers and Their Families Holding up ‘Drive It Home’ Campaign Signs Outside UAW Local 1112 Reuther Scandy Alli Union Hall, Lordstown, OH, 2019,” from the series “The Last Cruze” (2019) © LaToya Ruby Frazier, courtesy of the artist and Gladstone Gallery

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE JUNE LEAF AND ROBERT FRANK FOUNDATION; NASA/WILLIAM A. ANDERS; ALBERTO KORDA, VIA THE ALBERTO KORDA ESTATE; YANKER POSTER COLLECTION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS; TUOL SLENG GENOCIDE MUSEUM; CARLIJN JACOBS/PARKWOOD ENTERTAINMENT) This article appeared in print on page D3.

**Load-Date:** June 13, 2024

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[***The '23 Elections and the Abortion Effect***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69KH-B1H1-JBG3-60V7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 9, 2023 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1174 words

**Body**

To the Editor:

Re ''How Abortion Lifted Democrats, and More Takeaways From Tuesday's Elections'' (nytimes.com, Nov. 8):

The New York Times and other media continue to repeat what they think is the bad news about President Biden's popularity.

This constant drip, drip, drip wears away at the real story of his many successes and makes connections that don't exist.

After Tuesday's elections, you write, ''The political potency of abortion rights proved more powerful than the drag of President Biden's approval ratings in Tuesday's off-year elections.''

What do Mr. Biden's approval ratings have to do with abortion rights on the ballot? Or with the legislative races in Virginia? Or any number of Democratic wins (or even losses) across the country?

If I were in Ohio, for example, I'd vote my values on the abortion question and would not be thinking an iota about the 2024 presidential election or Mr. Biden's popularity.

Dee BaerWilmington, Del.

To the Editor:

Re ''Voters in Ohio Approve Right to an Abortion'' (front page, Nov. 8):

Ohio's Republicans did everything they could to confuse voters and confound the electorate's will on abortion: an unsuccessful sneaky ballot question in August to require more than a simple majority for constitutional amendments; replacing the actual text of the amendment with a biased summary on the November ballot; and obfuscatory nomenclature (pro-choice was NO on Issue 1 in August, YES on Issue 1 in November).

And the will of Ohio's voters prevailed, despite all the skulduggery!

Next tactic for the G.O.P.: a push for a federal anti-abortion law?

W.T. KoltekLouisville, Ohio

To the Editor:

In the current cultural climate, abortion is not a winning issue for Republicans at the ballot box. And I say this as an anti-abortion conservative.

The passage of Ohio's Issue 1 is the latest in a string of political defeats for the anti-abortion movement. However, I do believe that abortion opponents can make inroads in the future with the right message and leadership.

The anti-abortion movement will not cease to exist, and I will continue to support it.

Matt C. AbbottLake Geneva, Wis.The writer is a Catholic commentator for RenewAmerica.com.

To the Editor:

Re ''Beshear Wins Second Term as the Democratic Governor of Conservative Kentucky'' (news article, Nov. 8):

The decisive victory by Gov. Andy Beshear in Kentucky highlights many reasons why President Biden needs to pass the torch. As a lifelong Democrat, I am mystified why Mr. Biden does not gracefully step aside.

Mr. Beshear is young and energetic, and was in the public square constantly, visiting citizens and holding press conferences through the disasters of Covid, tornadoes and floods.

He won on core issues for the ***working class*** (jobs) and women (abortion rights). He won 52 percent of the vote in a red state that Mr. Biden lost by 26 points in 2020.

The president can go down in history as the man who beat Donald Trump, passed major legislation for climate and infrastructure, and protected democracy. Or he can be known as the man who let Mr. Trump return to power because he tried to hang on too long.

I implore Mr. Biden to listen to the wishes of the American people and let a new leader arise.

Eric De JongeChevy Chase, Md.

Jews in America and the Pain of Oct. 7

To the Editor:

Re ''For America's Jews, Every Day Must Be Oct. 8,'' by Bret Stephens (column, Nov. 8):

Mr. Stephens is correct in calling out those recipients of Jewish ideological support and philanthropy who failed to ally with Jews in the face of unabashed Jew hatred and depravity.

As Hamas reveled in killing, torturing and desecrating Jews in gut-wrenching scenes that any sentient being should recognize as evil incarnate, many invoked some twisted moral equivalence to justify the unjustifiable.

Hamas's atrocities of Oct. 7 should offend the humanity of any observer, irrespective of any tacit expectation of a quid pro quo for prior philanthropy or support. Lack of outrage in the face of evil is itself a moral failure.

Stephen LevinsonEncino, Calif.

To the Editor:

There aren't too many of us left: Jews who fled the Holocaust and settled in America with hope for a new home -- hope for a better, safer life here in the land of the free, home of the brave.

I was 3 when we arrived from Europe. The words ''never again'' became the mantra of my generation. And although there were always incidents of antisemitism, I never felt fear for myself or my children.

I'm 87 now, and I am afraid. Words once not voiced are now everywhere, heard loud and clear -- on TV, in print, in colleges, on placards, at rallies, in the halls of Congress.

The ease with which antisemitism once again seems acceptable brings tears. And disbelief that I now live in fear.

Doris FenigBoca Raton, Fla.

Conversion Therapy

To the Editor:

Re ''Johnson's Ascent Is Triumph for Conservative Christians'' (news article, Nov. 6):

You refer to Speaker Mike Johnson's legal work with the ultraconservative Alliance Defending Freedom on behalf of ''Exodus International, a now-defunct organization promoting the discredited practice of conversion therapy, aimed at changing a person's sexual orientation.''

Exodus International collapsed not with a whimper but with a bang; its president apologized to the gay community, stating, ''We've hurt people.'' The American Psychological Association and overwhelming scientific consensus have concluded that conversion therapy is both ineffective and often harmful.

Twenty states have enacted legislation banning conversion therapy for patients under age 18.

The Supreme Court has repeatedly refused to hear challenges to state bans against conversion therapy for minors. However, the group Mr. Johnson was aligned with, the Alliance Defending Freedom, is once again challenging state bans -- this time on religious liberty and free speech grounds -- in Tingley v. Ferguson.

After several adjournments, the Supreme Court this week is scheduled to once again consider taking up this challenge.

James K. RileyPearl River, N.Y.The writer is an attorney who has filed amicus curiae briefs in support of L.G.B.T.Q. rights with the U.S. Supreme Court.

No Swearing in Class

To the Editor:

Re ''The Secret Power of Swearing,'' by Rebecca Roache (Opinion guest essay, nytimes.com, Nov. 1):

A friend once shared his success in getting a high school teacher to stop swearing in class. Before the teacher's arrival one day, he wrote on the chalkboard, ''Profanity is the mark of a feeble mind trying to express itself forcefully'' (based on a quotation from the late Mormon leader Spencer W. Kimball).

Classmates waited anxiously for the teacher to arrive. Entering the room and noticing the writing on the board, the teacher turned completely with his back now to the class and remained for a longer time than needed to read the message.

Then, turning to the class he said: ''You're right. Thank you.''

And from that point forward he ceased using swear words in his class.

Blair PackardGilbert, Ariz.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/08/opinion/election-abortion.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/08/opinion/election-abortion.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A27.

**Load-Date:** November 9, 2023

**End of Document**



[***‘Lady Killer’ and ‘The Strange Mister Victor’ Review: A Golden Age; Critic’s Picks***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68VN-STG1-JBG3-61GN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 3, 2023 Thursday 13:46 EST

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**Section:** MOVIES

**Length:** 703 words

**Byline:** Beatrice Loayza

**Highlight:** Two newly restored films by the director Jean Grémillon, whom cinephiles discuss like a special secret, get a second life in theaters.

**Body**

Two newly restored films by the director Jean Grémillon, whom cinephiles discuss like a special secret, get a second life in theaters.

Compared to other heavy hitters from the golden age of French cinema — think Jean Renoir (“The Rules of the Game”) or Marcel Carné (“Children of Paradise”) — history hasn’t been kind to Jean Grémillon. This is especially the case in the United States, where the director’s work continues to be discussed among cinephiles like a special secret. It’s a shame. His films are among the most innovative and expressive from a period stretching roughly from the early 1930s through the ’50s — and in many ways they look ahead to the rule breaking of the French New Wave.

Newly restored in 4K, “Lady Killer” and “The Strange Mister Victor” are essentially Grémillon’s breakthrough films, the midpoints between his early documentaries and experimental dramas and his greatest hits (“Stormy Waters,” “Lumière d’été”), which he made during the German occupation of France.

“Lady Killer” stars the leonine Jean Gabin as Lucien, a womanizing legionnaire. Suave and sexy in his uniform, Lucien attracts the female gaze like moths to the flame. Enter the femme fatale Madeleine (Mireille Balin), a beautiful socialite bound to a wealthy benefactor. Lucien falls hard for Madeleine and takes up a job at a print shop in Paris so that they can be together. Then comes betrayal and murder, though Grémillon supplements the bleak fatalism and noirish intrigue with bursts of quivering melodrama that enrich and expand the story beyond its ostensible fatal-attraction framework.

In his early days, Grémillon was a violinist who played with an orchestra that provided accompaniment for silent films. He applies this musical sensibility to his construction of drama. His films move between small, seemingly uneventful moments and ones that hit like a reverberating gong. What starts out as a placid relationship between Lucien and his meek doctor friend, René (Réne Lefèvre), moves on to new, devastating terrain. Their bond is capped by a startlingly intimate scene of male camaraderie that plays like a fever dream.

Working in the tradition of poetic realism, Grémillon intermingled documentarylike visions of ***working-class*** milieus with stylized interludes of psychological tension. “The Strange Mister Victor” begins like a panoramic drama about the socially diverse inhabitants of Toulon, in the south of France, and eventually reveals an ethical crisis about the entanglement of two men. Victor Agardanne (Raimu) is an upstanding businessman with wife and child, though he secretly consorts with a band of crooks. When he kills one of them for threatening to blackmail him, he uses a tool that belongs to his cobbler, Bastien (Pierre Blanchar), as the murder weapon, which leads to that man’s arrest. When Bastien escapes imprisonment, the guilty Victor goes out of his way to harbor the unsuspecting fugitive.

There’s perhaps more to chew on in “Mister Victor,” bolstered by an expert performance from Raimu that straddles genuine moral anxiety and self-interested desperation. Yet one particular scene from “Lady Killer” continues to live in my head rent-free.

Midway through the film, a mirror captures Lucien as he spots Madeleine from a distance and then steps back into the shadows when she meets his gaze. The plots of Grémillon’s films are meaty and sociologically probing, but what sets him apart from the directors of his time — the majority of them narrative-focused artists who came from a theater background — are moments like these: brief, wordless, but throbbing with desire and despair.

Lady Killer

Not rated. In French, with subtitles. Running time: 1 hour 34 minutes. In theaters.

The Strange Mister Victor

Not rated. In French, with subtitles. Running time: 1 hour 43 minutes. In theaters.

Lady Killer Not rated. In French, with subtitles. Running time: 1 hour 34 minutes. In theaters. The Strange Mister Victor Not rated. In French, with subtitles. Running time: 1 hour 43 minutes. In theaters.

PHOTO: Jean Gabin, left, as a legionnaire and Mireille Balin as a socialite in Jean Grémillon’s 1937 film “Lady Killer.” (PHOTOGRAPH BY GRASSHOPPER FILM) This article appeared in print on page C4.

**Load-Date:** August 7, 2023

**End of Document**



[***The High Stakes Behind the U.A.W.’s Strike; DealBook Newsletter***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:695T-K941-JBG3-64SK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 15, 2023 Friday 09:01 EST

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**Section:** BUSINESS; dealbook

**Length:** 1927 words

**Byline:** Andrew Ross Sorkin, Ravi Mattu, Bernhard Warner, Sarah Kessler, Michael J. de la Merced, Lauren Hirsch and Ephrat Livni

**Highlight:** The walkout by thousands of factory workers presents economic and political risks for the Big Three automakers, Midwestern states and President Biden.

**Body**

The walkout by thousands of factory workers presents economic and political risks for the Big Three automakers, Midwestern states and President Biden.

Autoworkers put down their tools

Thousands of autoworkers [*walked off the job*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/14/business/uaw-strike-plan.html) on Friday morning at three Midwest plants in an unprecedented strike, as the United Automobile Workers and Detroit’s three big carmakers remained miles apart on contract talks.

The move could be the most costly yet in a “[*summer of strikes*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/09/03/business/economy/strikes-union-sag-uaw.html).” Thousands of workers in many sectors have joined picket lines to demand higher wages, job security and clarity on how employers will deal with disruptive technologies like artificial intelligence. For President Biden, who is trying to revive his poll numbers by talking up his handling of the economy to help the ***working class***, the strike presents a political challenge heading into the election next year.

The carmakers are already feeling some pain. Ford and General Motors were down in premarket trading. Shares in Stellantis, which makes Dodge, Chrysler, Jeep, and Ram vehicles, fell at the open in Amsterdam, only to recover their losses.

A lengthy strike could dent the Big Three’s profits, analysts say, at a time when the companies are investing heavily in electric vehicles to catch up to Tesla and Chinese rivals. Mary Barra, G.M.’s chief, warned that meeting all or most of the union’s demands could hobble the company’s prospects. “Make no mistake: If we don’t continue to invest, we will lose ground, and it will happen fast,” she said. “Nobody wins in a strike.”

The unions are using new tactics. As The Times’s Neal Boudette reports, this is the first time the U.A.W. has called a strike at all three big carmakers simultaneously. (Typically it’s just one, as in 2019 against G.M.). Union leaders are also focusing on factories that make the most profitable models, including the Ford Bronco and the Chevrolet Colorado pickups.

They’ve also warned that they could expand the strike at any moment. “It’s going to keep them guessing on what might happen next,” [*Shawn Fain*](https://www.wxyz.com/news/uaw-lays-out-stand-up-strike-strategy-against-big-three-to-keep-companies-guessing), the U.A.W.’s president, said. “And it’s going to turbocharge the power of our negotiators.”

The union’s demands include:

* A 40 percent pay raise over four years, which would bring wages for many full-time workers to roughly $32 per hour.

1. Reinstate cost-of-living adjustments, which have become [*a central plank*](https://eu.detroitnews.com/story/business/autos/2023/07/04/why-the-uaw-is-willing-to-go-to-the-mat-for-cost-of-living-adjustments/70360673007/) in contract negotiations amid high inflation.
2. A four-day workweek, a demand that’s [*grown in popularity*](https://www.cnbc.com/2022/12/10/four-day-workweek-the-future-of-work.html) since the pandemic scrambled workplace culture.

The political costs loom large. A 10-day strike could send [*Michigan into recession*](https://www.andersoneconomicgroup.com/10-day-uaw-strike-against-big-three-could-cause-economic-losses-exceeding-5-billion/), according to a recent economic analysis. If the work stoppage were to last six weeks — the 2019 strike at G.M. lasted 40 — it could push the U.S. economy “close to the edge of a recession,” Mark Zandi, an economist for Moody’s, [*told The Times*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/13/business/economy/uaw-strike-economic-impact.html?name=styln-uaw-strike&amp;region=TOP_BANNER&amp;block=storyline_menu_recirc&amp;action=click&amp;pgtype=Article&amp;variant=undefined).

The strike is a big test for Biden. He often speaks of his pro-union roots, but doesn’t have [*a deep relationship with Fain*](https://edition.cnn.com/2023/09/13/politics/biden-uaw-deal-fain-strike/index.html), a relative newcomer in D.C. circles.

The White House is doubling down on its messaging that Bidenomics is creating jobs for the ***working class***. On Thursday, Biden [*took a big swipe*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/14/us/politics/biden-republicans-economy.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share&amp;referringSource=articleShare) at Republicans, calling their vision for America “MAGAnomics” — an agenda that he said benefits the wealthy, not workers.

HERE’S WHAT’S HAPPENING

Disney reportedly explores selling ABC to Nexstar. The media giant has held early talks about a deal to [*divest the broadcast network*](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-09-14/disney-is-said-to-hold-initial-talks-on-sale-of-abc-to-nexstar), according to Bloomberg, after its C.E.O., Bob Iger, suggested such traditional television assets may not be core to Disney’s business. It isn’t clear whether Disney would ultimately pursue a sale or if it did, whether it would do so with Nexstar, a broadcasting giant.

Ray Dalio floats the idea of reasserting control at Bridgewater Associates. The billionaire financier has raised the possibility of [*starting a new investment vehicle*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/15/business/ray-dalio-succession-clash-bridgewater.html) at the hedge fund, after retiring nearly a year ago, according to The Times. Some Bridgewater executives fear that Dalio might use the new fund as a way to take back control; he denied wanting to come back “to run” Bridgewater.

China removes its defense minister, U.S. officials say. Li Shangfu was [*taken away for questioning*](https://www.wsj.com/world/china/chinas-defense-minister-has-been-removed-from-post-u-s-officials-say-ae0761f4) and [*stripped of his duties*](https://www.ft.com/content/d0fa10c5-303c-4129-8283-a147639f70b3), according to news reports that cited American intelligence; Biden administration officials didn’t specify why they believed he was forced out. It’s the latest sign of a power shake-up in Beijing as the country grapples with [*a sputtering economy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/15/business/economy/china-economy-retail-sales.html), including falling apartment prices and a slowing pace of construction.

The European Central Bank suggests it’s done raising rates. After announcing on Thursday its [*10th consecutive increase*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/14/business/european-central-bank-rates.html) in borrowing costs, this time by a quarter of a percentage point, the central bank suggested that rates were now high enough to eventually bring down inflation. Investors will look to see whether the Fed will do the same when its rate-setting committee meets next week.

Arm gives the I.P.O. market a shot of confidence

If the fervor for Arm’s market debut is any indication, the business of initial public offerings may be well on the road to recovery. Shares in the chip designer [*jumped 25 percent*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/14/technology/arm-ipo-stock-market.html) on Thursday, giving the SoftBank-owned company a valuation of nearly $68 billion.

That pop — it’s up again in premarket trading on Friday morning — is welcome news to other companies looking to go public after the I.P.O. markets largely shut over the past year, as well as to the bankers who advise on those deals. But whether that momentum can be sustained remains to be seen.

SoftBank is breathing a sigh of relief. After taking an uncharacteristically conservative approach to pricing Arm’s I.P.O., the Japanese tech investor is claiming a much-needed win. Its shares were up as much as 4.6 percent on Friday.

SoftBank, which is retaining a 90 percent stake in Arm, is bullish about its future. “I think the value is gonna have a good upside, really long term,” Masa Son, the investment firm’s founder and C.E.O., told CNBC. “Our intent is to hold as much as possible as long as possible.”

The question is whether Arm can sustain investor enthusiasm. The chip designer was the [*most popular stock*](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-09-14/arm-s-ipo-lures-in-retail-traders-seeking-exposure-to-ai-trend) on Fidelity’s retail trading platform on Thursday, closing at a [*price-to-earnings ratio of 170*](https://www.cnbc.com/2023/09/14/arm-is-trading-at-a-premium-to-nvidia-after-ipo-pop-even-though-its-a-no-growth-company.html). That’s far higher than what Nvidia, the biggest name in A.I. chips, trades at — and comes after Nvidia saw its stock price triple this year. (Consider also that Nvidia earned $6.2 billion in its most recent quarter, while Arm earned $524 million in its latest fiscal year.)

Still, Arm executives argue that their company is at the technological vanguard, with its chip designs becoming a bigger part of both A.I. data centers and semiconductors for A.I.-enabled smartphones and other devices.

All eyes are on the next big I.P.O.s. On deck for next week are Instacart, the grocery delivery service that’s now also [*an advertising business*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/14/technology/instacart-public-ads.html), and Klaviyo, an ad-tech company. The hearty welcome for Arm’s debut may have given those stock offerings a boost: Instacart [*raised the price range for its I.P.O.*](https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1579091/000119312523235646/d55348ds1a.htm) by $2 a share, potentially valuing the company at nearly $10 billion.

If those deals also perform well, bankers predict that others will dust off their listing plans. But some investors cautioned against getting too excited: Arm’s offering “was priced within its range, which tells me that investors are price sensitive and boards and investment banks are [*showing a little bit of humility*](https://www.reuters.com/markets/deals/softbanks-arm-set-debut-nasdaq-after-blockbuster-ipo-2023-09-14/),” Jordan Stuart, a portfolio manager at the asset manager Federated Hermes, told Reuters.

€10 billion

— The [*budget surplus*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/15/business/ireland-fiscal-budget-surplus.html) Ireland’s government is predicting for this year. The windfall could soar to €16 billion ($17 billion) in 2024 as government coffers overflow with corporate tax revenue, mainly from U.S. tech and pharmaceutical companies that have set up subsidiaries in the low-tax country in recent years.

‘One of the most hated people in the world’

Sam Bankman-Fried, the founder of the collapsed cryptocurrency exchange FTX, was once a prolific voice on Twitter. But after his arrest and detention at his parents’ house in Palo Alto, Calif., last year he wrote a 15,000-word series of tweets that he never posted.

The unsent messages offer self-justifications, criticism of former colleagues and an insight into Bankman-Fried’s state of mind while he was under house arrest, The Times’ David Yaffe-Bellany reports. (Bankman-Fried’s bail was [*revoked last month*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/11/technology/sam-bankman-fried-jail.html) and he was sent to jail.) The messages are part of a [*trove of previously unreported documents*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/14/technology/sam-bankman-fried-ftx-twitter-thread.html) that he shared with Tiffany Fong, a social media influencer who has a YouTube channel about the crypto industry.

Bankman-Fried knows he is in a predicament. “I’m broke and wearing an ankle monitor and one of the most hated people in the world,” he wrote at the end of the unsent Twitter thread. “There will probably never be anything I can do to make my lifetime impact net positive.”

He added: “And the truth is that I did what I thought was right.”

Bankman-Fried blames some of his top lieutenants for the fall of FTX. He criticized Caroline Ellison, the former girlfriend he appointed to run Alameda Research, the hedge fund that he founded, as not up to the job. “She continually avoided talking about risk management — dodging my suggestions — until it was too late,” he wrote. “I’m sure that being exes didn’t help.”

Ellison declined to comment to The Times.

The unsent tweets also offer clues about his potential legal defense. This includes his views on [*Sullivan and Cromwell*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/08/technology/sam-bankman-fried-defense.html), the law firm overseeing the FTX bankruptcy that Bankman-Fried had previously hired to do work for his company.

Some of the documents [*expand on arguments*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/08/technology/sam-bankman-fried-defense.html) that his lawyers have made in court. Bankman-Fried, for example, has asserted that Sullivan &amp; Cromwell were behind the narrative that he misappropriated user funds. “They’ve played it incredibly well,” he wrote in the unsent tweets. “Were it not destructive to just about everything I care about in life, I would tip my cap to them.”

A spokesman for Sullivan &amp; Cromwell declined to comment to The Times, but prosecutors have called Bankman-Fried’s comments “innuendo.”

THE SPEED READ

Deals

* The Miami-based investment firm 777 Partners agreed to [*buy Everton F.C.*](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-09-15/777-partners-agrees-takeover-of-historic-everton-football-club), putting another English soccer club in the hands of North American owners. (Bloomberg)

1. The founder of Abcam, a British supplier of lab equipment for life science companies, said he planned to [*vote against the company’s $5.7 billion sale*](https://www.ft.com/content/20c5e913-4a55-41a4-8893-4e4867aa6232) to Danaher. (FT)

Policy

* Speaker Kevin McCarthy, Republican of California, [*withdrew a Pentagon spending bill*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/14/us/politics/mccarthy-spending-bill-pentagon.html) from consideration in the House, making a government shutdown in two weeks more likely. (NYT)

1. The I.R.S. froze a [*pandemic-era employer tax benefit*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/14/us/politics/irs-pandemic-employee-credit-fraud.html) that has been a magnet for fraud and has cost the federal government billions of dollars. (NYT)
2. The Senate Finance Committee approved a bill that would [*deepen economic ties*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/14/us/politics/senate-committee-taiwan-double-taxation.html) between the United States and Taiwan, potentially further inflaming tensions with China. (NYT)

Best of the rest

* Nearly seven million Americans were [*under a tropical storm warning*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/14/us/hurricane-lee-forecast.html) on Friday as Hurricane Lee moved north across the Atlantic. (NYT)

1. The software giant Salesforce plans to [*hire 3,300 workers*](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-09-14/salesforce-to-hire-3-300-in-sales-engineering-data-after-earlier-job-cuts), months after laying off 10 percent of its employees. (Bloomberg)

We’d like your feedback! Please email thoughts and suggestions to [*dealbook@nytimes.com*](mailto:dealbook@nytimes.com).

PHOTO: “Tonight, for the first time in our history, we will strike all three of the Big Three at once,” Shawn Fain, president of the United Automobile Workers, told cheering members. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Matthew Hatcher/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** September 15, 2023

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[***The ’23 Elections and the Abortion Effect; letters***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69KC-44P1-JBG3-60D1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 8, 2023 Wednesday 23:19 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1158 words

**Highlight:** Readers discuss an Ohio ballot measure and Andy Beshear’s re-election as Kentucky’s governor. Also: Jews in America; conversion therapy; no swearing in class.

**Body**

To the Editor:

Re “[*How Abortion Lifted Democrats, and More Takeaways From Tuesday’s Elections*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/08/us/politics/election-takeaways-abortion-biden.html)” (nytimes.com, Nov. 8):

The New York Times and other media continue to repeat what they think is the bad news about President Biden’s popularity.

This constant drip, drip, drip wears away at the real story of his many successes and makes connections that don’t exist.

After Tuesday’s elections, you write, “The political potency of abortion rights proved more powerful than the drag of President Biden’s approval ratings in Tuesday’s off-year elections.”

What do Mr. Biden’s approval ratings have to do with abortion rights on the ballot? Or with the legislative races in Virginia? Or any number of Democratic wins (or even losses) across the country?

If I were in Ohio, for example, I’d vote my values on the abortion question and would not be thinking an iota about the 2024 presidential election or Mr. Biden’s popularity.

Dee Baer

Wilmington, Del.

To the Editor:

Re “[*Voters in Ohio Approve Right to an Abortion*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/07/us/politics/ohio-abortion-amendment.html)” (front page, Nov. 8):

Ohio’s Republicans did everything they could to [*confuse voters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/02/us/abortion-ballot-ohio-vote.html) and confound the electorate’s will on abortion: an unsuccessful sneaky ballot question in August to require more than a simple majority for constitutional amendments; replacing the actual text of the amendment with a biased summary on the November ballot; and obfuscatory nomenclature (pro-choice was NO on Issue 1 in August, YES on Issue 1 in November).

And the will of Ohio’s voters prevailed, despite all the skulduggery!

Next tactic for the G.O.P.: a push for a federal anti-abortion law?

W.T. Koltek

Louisville, Ohio

To the Editor:

In the current cultural climate, abortion is not a winning issue for Republicans at the ballot box. And I say this as an anti-abortion conservative.

The passage of Ohio’s Issue 1 is the latest in a string of political defeats for the anti-abortion movement. However, I do believe that abortion opponents can make inroads in the future with the right message and leadership.

The anti-abortion movement will not cease to exist, and I will continue to support it.

Matt C. Abbott

Lake Geneva, Wis.

The writer is a Catholic commentator for RenewAmerica.com.

To the Editor:

Re “[*Beshear Wins Second Term as the Democratic Governor of Conservative Kentucky*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/07/us/politics/beshear-kentucky-governor-election.html)” (news article, Nov. 8):

The decisive victory by Gov. Andy Beshear in Kentucky highlights many reasons why President Biden needs to pass the torch. As a lifelong Democrat, I am mystified why Mr. Biden does not gracefully step aside.

Mr. Beshear is young and energetic, and was in the public square constantly, visiting citizens and holding press conferences through the disasters of Covid, [*tornadoes and floods.*](https://spectrumnews1.com/ky/louisville/news/2023/08/10/beshear-storm-disaster-outreach-could-help-with-rural-vote-cameron)

He won on core issues for the ***working class*** (jobs) and women (abortion rights). He won [*52 percent*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/11/07/us/elections/results-kentucky-governor.html) of the vote in a red state that Mr. Biden [*lost by 26 points in 2020.*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/11/03/us/elections/results-kentucky.html)

The president can go down in history as the man who beat Donald Trump, passed major legislation for climate and infrastructure, and protected democracy. Or he can be known as the man who let Mr. Trump return to power because he tried to hang on too long.

I implore Mr. Biden to listen to the wishes of the American people and let a new leader arise.

Eric De Jonge

Chevy Chase, Md.

Jews in America and the Pain of Oct. 7

To the Editor:

Re “[*For America’s Jews, Every Day Must Be Oct. 8*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/07/opinion/us-jewish-israel-sept-11.html?searchResultPosition=2),” by Bret Stephens (column, Nov. 8):

Mr. Stephens is correct in calling out those recipients of Jewish ideological support and philanthropy who failed to ally with Jews in the face of unabashed Jew hatred and depravity.

As Hamas reveled in killing, torturing and desecrating Jews in gut-wrenching scenes that any sentient being should recognize as evil incarnate, many invoked some twisted moral equivalence to justify the unjustifiable.

Hamas’s atrocities of Oct. 7 should offend the humanity of any observer, irrespective of any tacit expectation of a quid pro quo for prior philanthropy or support. Lack of outrage in the face of evil is itself a moral failure.

Stephen Levinson

Encino, Calif.

To the Editor:

There aren’t too many of us left: Jews who fled the Holocaust and settled in America with hope for a new home — hope for a better, safer life here in the land of the free, home of the brave.

I was 3 when we arrived from Europe. The words “never again” became the mantra of my generation. And although there were always incidents of antisemitism, I never felt fear for myself or my children.

I’m 87 now, and I am afraid. Words once not voiced are now everywhere, heard loud and clear — on TV, in print, in colleges, on placards, at rallies, in the halls of Congress.

The ease with which antisemitism once again seems acceptable brings tears. And disbelief that I now live in fear.

Doris Fenig

Boca Raton, Fla.

Conversion Therapy

To the Editor:

Re “[*Johnson’s Ascent Is Triumph for Conservative Christians*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/05/us/politics/michael-johnson-house-speaker-evangelicalism.html)” (news article, Nov. 6):

You refer to Speaker Mike Johnson’s legal work with the ultraconservative Alliance Defending Freedom on behalf of “[*Exodus International*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/11/01/politics/mike-johnson-kfile-invs/index.html), a now-defunct organization promoting the discredited practice of conversion therapy, aimed at changing a person’s sexual orientation.”

Exodus International collapsed not with a whimper but with a bang; its [*president apologized*](https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2013/06/20/193922536/gay-therapy-ministry-shuts-down-says-weve-hurt-people) to the gay community, stating, “We’ve hurt people.” The [*American Psychological Association*](https://www.apa.org/about/policy/resolution-sexual-orientation-change-efforts.pdf) and overwhelming scientific consensus have concluded that conversion therapy is both ineffective and often harmful.

[*Twenty states*](https://perma.cc/75TJ-RB4A) have enacted legislation banning conversion therapy for patients under age 18.

The Supreme Court has repeatedly refused to hear challenges to state bans against conversion therapy for minors. However, the group Mr. Johnson was aligned with, the Alliance Defending Freedom, is once again challenging state bans — this time on religious liberty and free speech grounds — in [*Tingley v. Ferguson*](https://newrepublic.com/article/176465/conversion-therapy-supreme-court-tingley).

After several adjournments, the Supreme Court this week is scheduled to once again consider taking up this challenge.

James K. Riley

Pearl River, N.Y.

The writer is an attorney who has filed amicus curiae briefs in support of L.G.B.T.Q. rights with the U.S. Supreme Court.

No Swearing in Class

To the Editor:

Re “[*The Secret Power of Swearing*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/01/opinion/swearing-language-power.html?searchResultPosition=1),” by Rebecca Roache (Opinion guest essay, nytimes.com, Nov. 1):

A friend once shared his success in getting a high school teacher to stop swearing in class. Before the teacher’s arrival one day, he wrote on the chalkboard, “Profanity is the mark of a feeble mind trying to express itself forcefully” (based on a quotation from the late Mormon leader Spencer W. Kimball).

Classmates waited anxiously for the teacher to arrive. Entering the room and noticing the writing on the board, the teacher turned completely with his back now to the class and remained for a longer time than needed to read the message.

Then, turning to the class he said: “You’re right. Thank you.”

And from that point forward he ceased using swear words in his class.

Blair Packard

Gilbert, Ariz.

This article appeared in print on page A27.

**Load-Date:** November 8, 2023

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[***What Moves Swing Voters; The Morning Newsletter***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:641W-60C1-DXY4-X37V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 9, 2021 Tuesday 06:25 EST

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1833 words

**Byline:** David Leonhardt

**Highlight:** A creative new poll tries to understand.

**Body**

A creative new poll tries to understand.

Political pundits often talk about [*swing voters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2003/12/29/opinion/in-search-of-the-swing-voter.html) as if they were upscale suburbanites, like “soccer moms” or “office-park dads.” And some are. But many are blue-collar. They are the successors to the so-called Reagan Democrats, who let Republicans win the White House in the 1980s and Democrats retake it in the 1990s.

This century, blue-collar swing voters [*helped elect*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/15/upshot/the-obama-trump-voters-are-real-heres-what-they-think.html) Barack Obama twice, Donald Trump once and Joe Biden in 2020. They have also played a deciding role in congressional and state elections, including [*in Virginia last week*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/06/us/rural-vote-democrats-virginia.html).

In the current polarized political atmosphere, many college graduates follow politics obsessively — almost as if it were a sport — and identify with one of the two parties. Many ***working-class*** voters, on the other hand, vote for both parties and [*sit out*](https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2019/04/behind-2018-united-states-midterm-election-turnout.html) some elections.

Figuring out what moves these swing voters is a crucial question in American politics. It has become an [*urgent*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/04/briefing/democrats-election-working-class-voters.html) question for the Democratic Party, which is struggling to win ***working-class*** votes in many places, including some [*Asian*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/16/us/liberals-race.html) and [*Latino*](https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2021/11/new-2020-autopsy-demographics-wont-save-democrats.html) communities.

This morning, a creative new poll exploring these issues is being released. It asks ***working-class*** respondents — defined as people without a bachelor’s degree — to choose between two hypothetical candidates. The candidates are described both personally (their gender, race and job category) and politically (including a sound bite in which they talk about their views).

A central conclusion is that infrequent voters are not a huge Democratic constituency just waiting to be inspired by a sufficiently progressive economic message. “That’s just a fantasy,” Bhaskar Sunkara, the founding editor of Jacobin, a socialist magazine and one of the poll’s sponsors, told me, “and it’s a fantasy we ourselves have engaged in.” (In fairness, numerous other people — including [*Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/08/us/politics/republicans-vote-by-mail.html) and, well, [*me*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/23/briefing/pfizer-vaccine-nba-spotify.html) — have believed that same misplaced idea.)

The poll instead finds that ***working-class*** swing voters hold a swirl of progressive and conservative views. “To mobilize these voters will take a lot of grass-roots organizing efforts, particularly more labor-union-centered organizing,” Sunkara said. “There is no simple programmatic solution” — for either party.

Below, I walk through themes from the poll, focusing on those respondents who said they did not lean toward either party. About 33 percent of them voted for Trump last year and 22 percent voted for Biden, with the remaining voting for a third party or not voting.

YouGov, a large nonpartisan pollster, conducted the poll, in collaboration with Jacobin and the Center for ***Working-Class*** Politics, a new progressive group.

Politics isn’t just issues

Nothing produced a more positive response from poll respondents than hearing that a candidate was [*a small-business owner*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/on-small-business/meet-the-small-business-owners-who-were-just-sworn-in-to-congress/2015/01/06/d43387b6-95bb-11e4-8005-1924ede3e54a_story.html). It offered a bigger lift than any political position or demographic feature, and it was popular across Black, Latino and white respondents.

Voters also had positive feelings about candidates who were listed as being [*teachers*](https://www.edweek.org/policy-politics/jamaal-bowman-poised-to-swell-ranks-of-former-educators-in-congress/2020/06), [*veterans*](https://apnews.com/article/veterans-9cad3c4211a0e15852c44c8d75681254) or construction workers. Lawyers fared less well, and Fortune 500 C.E.O.s did worst of all.

It’s a reminder that big business and small business have very different images — and that Trump’s victory depended on selling himself as a brash entrepreneur rather than a bland corporate manager like Mitt Romney.

Race is undeniably vexing

Many Black ***working-class*** swing voters are attracted to candidates who focus on racial justice — by promising to “end systemic racism,” for example. Many white ***working-class*** swing voters are turned off by these same positions. There is no simple answer on race for the Democratic Party, given that it must attract a multiracial coalition to win.

But the political costs of a campaign message focused on ethnic identity seem significantly larger than the benefits, Sunkara said. Among five different candidate sound bites presented to respondents, the worst-performing was one that the pollsters internally described as “woke moderate.” Its first sentence sounds like something out of a corporate mission statement:

Our unity is our strength, and our diversity is our power. But for too long, special interests have blocked critical progress in addressing systemic racism, climate change, and access to affordable health care. We need creative leaders who will fight for our values, listen to the experts, and make real change happen.

Populism is popular

The second best-performing sound bite was one that pollsters internally referred to as “Republican.” It warned that “freedom is under threat from radical socialists, arrogant liberals and dangerous foreign influences.”

Yet the most successful sound bite was the “progressive populist” one. It was as pugnacious as the Republican entry, albeit with different targets:

This country belongs to all of us, not just the superrich. But for years, politicians in Washington have turned their backs on people who work for a living. We need tough leaders who won’t give in to the millionaires and the lobbyists, but will fight for good jobs, good wages, and guaranteed health care for every single American.

Populism has its limits

***Working-class*** swing voters tend to favor generous versions of Medicare, Social Security and other universal government benefits, polls consistently show. But they also responded positively in this poll to candidates promising vaguely to “cut government spending.”

And while Democratic-leaning ***working-class*** voters liked a “Medicare for all” message, swing ***working-class*** voters preferred candidates who instead promise to “increase access to affordable health care.”

Americans are [*mostly progressive on economics*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/23/opinion/democrats-economics.html), but Democrats can still run too far left on these issues.

You can read [*the full poll results here*](https://jacobinmag.com/2021/11/common-sense-solidarity-working-class-voting-report). (If you do, note that the beginning of the report focuses on a Democratic-leaning group of ***working-class*** voters — who are relevant to primary elections — rather than the swing voters who have been my focus.)

Related: Representative Sean Patrick Maloney of New York says Democrats need to do a better job getting the message out about their achievements, starting with the president. “Free Joe Biden,” he says. [*Read the Q. and A.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/09/us/politics/sean-maloney-democrats.html)

THE LATEST NEWS

The Virus

* With international travel restrictions lifted, U.S. airports were filled with [*tears, hugs and balloons*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/travel/international-travel-reopens.html).

1. Scientists are fighting a new source of vaccine misinformation: [*Aaron Rodgers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/sports/football/aaron-rodgers-vaccine.html).
2. “You guys are leaders,” Jill Biden told elementary school students [*who got vaccinated*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/us/politics/first-lady-looks-on-as-elementary-students-get-coronavirus-shots.html). “Thank you for being so brave.”

Politics

* The Justice Department charged a Russian man with conducting cyberattacks and recovered [*more than $6 million in ransom*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/us/politics/justice-dept-ransomware.html).

1. The House committee investigating the Capitol attack subpoenaed [*additional Trump allies*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/us/politics/jan-6-subpoenas-eastman-flynn-trump.html), including his former national security adviser Michael Flynn.
2. Watch how [*congressional districts get gerrymandered*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/11/07/us/politics/redistricting-maps-explained.html).

Other Big Stories

* A man who was shot by Kyle Rittenhouse [*took the witness stand*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/us/gaige-grosskreutz-rittenhouse-victim-testimony.html), at times lending support to Rittenhouse’s self-defense claim.

1. Scholars and activists are [*starting a university in Austin*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/us/ut-austin-free-speech.html) dedicated to free speech, saying that prestigious U.S. universities are “censorious.”
2. Some African leaders argue that the continent should keep burning fossil fuels as it transitions to clean energy, [*considering the region’s economic realities*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/09/climate/africa-fossil-fuel-gas-transition.html).
3. Four astronauts inside a SpaceX capsule [*splashed down*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/09/science/spacex-nasa-water-landing.html) in the Gulf of Mexico after almost 200 days in orbit.
4. A distress signal from TikTok [*helped save a missing girl*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/us/tiktok-hand-signal-abduction.html).

Opinions

The rollout of the Covid vaccine for children is a chance for Democrats to [*make public schools feel joyful again*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/opinion/public-school-enrollment.html), Michelle Goldberg argues.

[*How experts would fix Facebook*](https://www.vox.com/recode/22762596/how-to-fix-facebook-mark-zuckerberg): Break up the company. Replace Mark Zuckerberg. Or reform federal law.

A Texas death row inmate deserves [*his pastor’s touch*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/09/opinion/ramirez-execution-human-touch.html), says Sister Helen Prejean.

This holiday season, consider [*secondhand gifts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/07/opinion/culture/holiday-gift-shopping-secondhand.html), Annaliese Griffin writes.

MORNING READS

Let them eat cake: The latest trend in baking — [*making a mess*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/t-magazine/messy-cakes-baking-instagram.html).

Bookshop: Powell’s Books survived Amazon. Can it [*survive a changed Portland*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/09/business/powells-books-pandemic.html)

Real estate: If you’ve paid for a repair, here’s [*how to get the landlord to reimburse you*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/06/realestate/rent-stabilized-apartment-repairs.html).

Kabul: The Taliban walked into a Times reporter’s bedroom. Would they [*notice his Marine Corps photo*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/insider/taliban-kabul-afghanistan-journalists.html)

A Times classic: Love in the time [*of low expectations*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/24/style/modern-love-in-the-time-of-low-expectations.html).

Lives Lived: Elaine Romagnoli was a sharp and charismatic businesswoman who founded lesbian bars that became gathering spots for queer activists and artists from all over New York City. She [*died at 79*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/nyregion/elaine-romagnoli-dead.html).

ARTS AND IDEAS

What happened at Astroworld?

For years, fans have flocked to Travis Scott concerts for their [*wild energy and high-concept stage production*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/arts/music/travis-scott-astroworld-concerts.html). He’s part of a generation of performers “who brought a punk-rock sensibility to the mass scale of modern rap,” Joe Coscarelli writes in The Times. That includes mosh pits, crowd-surfing and the kind of rowdy behavior that happens at many live shows without becoming dangerous.

It turned dangerous at Scott’s Astroworld festival in Houston last Friday, when [*eight people died and hundreds were injured*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/astroworld-festival-victims.html). The authorities are still investigating what caused the crowd of 50,000 people to surge.

Attendees have already [*filed at least 20 lawsuits*](https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/ellievhall/travis-scott-cancels-day-vegas-lawsuits) against Scott and the festival’s organizers, including one that accused the rapper of encouraging violence. Others involved with the festival have questioned whether the police should have shut down the show earlier, and whether the medical preparations were sufficient.

Scott said on Saturday that he did not know the extent of the emergency at the time. But, as Coscarelli writes, the tragedy in Houston has turned one of Scott’s biggest selling points — the mayhem of his live performances — into an argument for his culpability. — Sanam Yar, a Morning writer

PLAY, WATCH, EAT

What to Cook

Make this cheesy, creamy mash-up of [*potato gratin and Hasselback potatoes*](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1017724-cheesy-hasselback-potato-gratin).

What to Read

“Youth is wasted on the young, it’s said. It wasn’t wasted on Patricia Highsmith,” Dwight Garner writes [*in a review of the novelist’s diaries*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/books/review-patricia-highsmith-diaries-notebooks.html).

World Through a Lens

Inside [*a volcanic ritual*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/travel/yadnya-kasada-volcano-ritual.html) on the Indonesian island of Java.

Late Night

The hosts went after Ted Cruz for [*going after Big Bird*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/09/arts/television/jimmy-kimmel-ted-cruz-big-bird.html).

Now Time to Play

The pangram from yesterday’s Spelling Bee was implement. Here is today’s puzzle — or you can [*play online*](https://www.nytimes.com/puzzles/spelling-bee).

Here’s [*today’s Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/crosswords/game/mini), and a clue: “It’s the Hard Knock Life” musical (five letters).

If you’re in the mood to play more, find [*all our games here*](https://www.nytimes.com/games).

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

P.S. The National Press Foundation named The Times’s Dean Baquet as [*Editor of the Year*](https://nationalpress.org/award-story/dean-baquet-of-the-ny-times-is-npf-editor-of-the-year/).

Here’s [*today’s print front page*](https://static01.nyt.com/images/2021/11/09/nytfrontpage/scan.pdf).

“[*The Daily*](https://www.nytimes.com/thedaily)” is a conversation with a Virginia Democrat. On “[*The Ezra Klein Show*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/09/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-kiese-laymon.html),” revising writing — and our lives.

Claire Moses, Ian Prasad Philbrick, Tom Wright-Piersanti, Ashley Wu and Sanam Yar contributed to The Morning. You can reach the team at [*themorning@nytimes.com*](mailto:themorning@nytimes.com).

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

PHOTO: Election Day in New York City. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Ahmed Gaber for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** November 9, 2021

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[***A Language-Learning Institute With a Disturbing Secret; Fiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68NH-3971-DXY4-X4T6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 10, 2023 Monday 17:55 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 648 words

**Byline:** Rafael Frumkin

**Highlight:** In her debut novel, “The Centre,” Ayesha Manazir Siddiqi explores class anxiety, identity, appropriation and more through a sinister language school.

**Body**

In her debut novel, “The Centre,” Ayesha Manazir Siddiqi explores class anxiety, identity, appropriation and more through a sinister language school.

THE CENTRE, by Ayesha Manazir Siddiqi

In her ingenious debut novel, “The Centre,” Ayesha Manazir Siddiqi introduces us to a world where language learning doesn’t stop with a textbook. The would-be polyglots in this thriller aren’t just striving to memorize verb conjugations and recite poetry; they’re up to something far more sinister.

When we meet Anisa, she’s a wannabe literary translator eking out a meager living by captioning Bollywood films. She is Pakistani and has a white boyfriend, Adam, whose unassuming nature belies the impressive fact that he speaks almost a dozen languages with a native speaker’s fluency. Stalled out and frustrated, Anisa demands to know Adam’s secret. Reluctantly, he reveals it: the Centre, a language-learning facility in the English countryside that promises total mastery of any language in 10 days for a price of 20 grand. Anisa, who is the daughter of a successful surgeon, doesn’t balk at the fee. She enrolls.

What Anisa finds feels like something out of a Yorgos Lanthimos film: a highly curated environment containing a rather large and disturbing secret. But it’s not just the skeletons lurking behind the ivy-covered walls of the institute that make the novel so propulsive — it’s also what “The Centre” has to say about class and the interplay of language and identity.

Anisa grew up in Karachi’s upper middle class and now lives a Western life in London, where she barely has a chance to speak Urdu. When Adam, who grew up a member of London’s ***working class***, learns to speak Urdu fluently at the Centre and travels with Anisa to Pakistan to visit her parents, he’s hailed as a hero for learning a nonwhite language. Anisa is incensed, feeling as if her mother tongue has been stolen out from under her. Later, when arguing about their relationship, Adam explodes about Anisa’s middle-class trappings. Manazir Siddiqi is juggling many themes at this point — cultural appropriation, class anxiety, the immigrant experience — but she does so with aplomb, and without detracting from the story’s addictive momentum.

At the Centre, Anisa first studies German, then Russian. The method? Listen to a recording of a “Storyteller” rambling aimlessly in the target language for hours at a time. On the fifth or sixth day of listening, Anisa suddenly understands every word perfectly, a revelation just as confusing as it is thrilling.

Acquiring these European languages affords her the translation career of her dreams, and she also develops a huge crush on the nymph-like Shiba, the institution’s current director and the daughter of its founder. Anisa’s thirst to know Shiba is bound up with her eagerness to understand the Centre’s method. The process is “almost like osmosis,” Shiba explains cagily. “Almost like a miracle. It just … works.” In following Anisa’s quest to unpack this too-good-to-be-true phenomenon, Manazir Siddiqi weaves a narrative web connecting the vagaries of language with national identity and the perils of class conformity.

Wittgenstein wrote that “the meaning of a word is its use in the language,” which is to say: It’s not about what you say, but how you say it. Manazir Siddiqi seems to have taken this to heart with “The Centre,” a novel that knows that whether you’re trying to place an errant foreign word or unlock a dark secret behind a pedagogical miracle, context is key. This is a book whose many delights and horrors are unlikely to be lost in translation.

Rafael Frumkin is a professor of creative writing at Southern Illinois University and the author of “The Comedown” and “Confidence.”

THE CENTRE | By Ayesha Manazir Siddiqi | 275 pp. | Zando/Gillian Flynn Books | $28

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY MANISH SWARUP/ASSOCIATED PRESS) This article appeared in print on page BR21.

**Load-Date:** September 13, 2023

**End of Document**



[***‘Beckham’ Is Worth Watching, Especially for the Style***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69D6-RWJ1-JBG3-61RT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 15, 2023 Sunday 21:42 EST

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**Section:** FASHION

**Length:** 963 words

**Byline:** The Styles Desk

**Highlight:** The new Netflix series is about a famous athlete and his famous family. But it’s also a love story told through fashion.

**Body**

The new Netflix series is about a famous athlete and his famous family. But it’s also a love story told through fashion.

Netflix has a [*new most popular show*](https://www.broadcastnow.co.uk/netflix/netflix-top-10-2-8-october/5186852.article). “Beckham,” which was released Oct. 4, is a splashy four-part documentary series about one of the most famous footballers of all time.

In the series, David Beckham now 48, charts his journey from ***working-class*** obscurity in south London to a young star at Manchester United, captain of the England squad and half of one of the biggest celebrity couples in contemporary pop culture. His wife of 24 years, Victoria Beckham — once known as Posh Spice — supports him from the sidelines. Viewers are treated to interviews with his tight-knit family and a constellation of teammates, celebrity friends and even some of the paparazzi who built careers on chasing the Beckhams’ every move.

The doc takes us from the 1990s and the duo’s matching leather catsuits through their flamboyant purple wedding outfits, his varied hairstyles as he moves to clubs like Real Madrid and LA Galaxy and her hair extensions and the microshorts that defined her WAG era through to complimentary cashmere and denim looks of the present day.

Vanessa Friedman There are many reasons to watch the Netflix Beckham documentary, but the sheer joy of going down that turn-of-the-millennium fashion hole has got to be one. It was like a mini history lesson in style (and style faux pas).

Guy Trebay It was a millennium fashion hole for sure — their purple wedding suits, for example. But I found it way more enjoyable as a snapshot of class. The period mostly covered in the first two episodes was an open time of flouting the class divide.

Elizabeth Paton Their engagement in 1998 could have been a royal one, there was so much delirium about it. It is hard to overestimate how obsessed the world — but particularly the British public — were with their his-and-hers fashion efforts. The double denim looks. Matching black leather catsuits from Gucci (at a Versace party). The fact her hair was shorter than his.

G.T. Bullingdon boys didn’t wear Mohawks.

Stella Bugbee His hair was an important subplot in this series — the many bleach jobs and half-ponytails dovetail with the changes in his career. The filmmakers seem to implicate his shaved his head as the catalyst for the rift that would send him packing from Manchester United. His buzz cut spawned a craze for young fans who shaved their heads to look like him. He appears to have enjoyed that relationship with his fans and used his hair as a tool for hype.

V.F. Sometimes his hair was apparently styled by Victoria! Even just after she gave birth, when he had to face the press, he asked her to fix his hair first. I was struck by how much she seemed to be shaping his image behind the scenes, but I appreciate a man who is willing to admit to his vanity. To pick up the wedding thread: Royal is the right word, Lizzie. Down to the matching purple outfits — which they laugh about now.

E.P. Soccer is a macho arena. And here is David Beckham, wearing a purple suit, or being photographed wearing a sarong. That was genuinely groundbreaking for a celebrity like him in 1998.

G.T. The sarong was important — and I return to class here — because lads and lager louts were not wearing skirts.

V.F. The sarong speaks to his — and her — ambition for careers beyond the original game of football and pop music. ​​Victoria always understood image creation. It’s also telling that the first public sign of their relationship was he gave her a Cartier watch to match his own. In some ways, this is a love story told in clothes.

G.T. They are low key in the doc — his wool pullover, her jeans and tee.

E.P. It’s interesting to note the evolution from them wearing identical outfits to their gently complementary looks now. Their tendency to twin hasn’t gone away. Just matured.

V.F. The designer list from her WAG years was very flashy: Dolce &amp; Gabbana, Roberto Cavalli, Antonio Berardi.

S.B. What she wore wasn’t a big part of this series, which seems like a deliberate choice — Vanessa pointed out that they don’t even mention her career as a serious designer. Obviously it’s a show that forefronts him, but it’s still a miss.

V.F. Victoria seems to be positioning herself in the background, as the less showy person. We don’t see her closet, but we get a glimpse of David’s, which is extraordinary.

S.B. His meticulous closet! The documentary doesn’t care about what’s in it as much as the way it shows his O.C.D. tendencies — which they hint at in other parts of the filming, too — the compulsive neatness in the kitchen, for example.

G.T. The most human part of him, the least managed — or manageable — is the O.C.D. There’s a moment where he adjusts a clothes hanger by a millimeter.

V.F. I was struck by his attention to detail for the Miami club — picking the pink, having a pink net, picking the team’s suits. He is still very attuned to image. In the documentary, you realize how much he changed the game when it comes to footballers and brands. Messi (the Messi store), Neymar and L.V. — Beckham really opened up those possibilities. Now he seems to be actively managing his own transition to owner.

E.P. I don’t know how it’s been received in the U.S., but in the U.K., people are feeling very nostalgic and fuzzy toward the couple, if probably slightly guilty about the hideous way in which celebrities in the 1990s and 2010s were treated. It’s a master class in keeping your personal brand positive.

Elizabeth Paton, Vanessa Friedman, Guy Trebay and Stella Bugbee contributed reporting.

Elizabeth Paton, Vanessa Friedman, Guy Trebay and Stella Bugbee contributed reporting.

PHOTO: Victoria and David Beckham: a love story told through clothes. (PHOTOGRAPH VIA REUTERS) This article appeared in print on page ST9.

**Load-Date:** October 20, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Democrats Are Driving Latinos to the G.O.P.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652D-HVV1-JBG3-64WN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 23, 2022 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 19; GUEST ESSAY

**Length:** 1412 words

**Byline:** By Mike Madrid

**Body**

Democrats working to save their slim majority in the House in November's elections have been sounding alarms lately over research showing that Republican attacks on culture-war issues are working, particularly with center-left, Hispanic and independent voters. Hispanic voters, many of us alienated by progressive labels and mottos like ''Latinx'' and ''defund the police,'' have been drifting rightward as Donald Trump marginally increased the G.O.P. Hispanic vote share in 2016 and again in 2020 -- a phenomenon, it should be noted, that goes beyond Mr. Trump or any individual campaign.

Democrats now understand that they are losing support among Hispanics on culture as well as pocketbook issues, leaving little in the message arsenal for the party's candidates to stanch what appears to be a long-term bleed.

The Democrats' problems with Hispanics are especially glaring when you consider that Republicans are not exactly flawless when it comes to appealing to these voters. Both parties have committed a mind-boggling form of political malpractice for years: They have consistently failed to understand what motivates Hispanic voters, a crucial and growing part of the electorate.

As the growth of the Hispanic eligible electorate continues to outpace other new eligible voting populations', the caricatures and stereotypes of ''Hispanic issues'' are proving further and further removed from the experience of most Hispanics. Yet, for all the hype and spin about Republican gains with Hispanic voters, the rightward shift of these voters is happening despite Republicans' best efforts, not because of them.

In the eyes of some on the American right, Hispanics are hyperreligious Catholics or evangelicals and entrepreneurial, anti-Communist social conservatives reminiscent of the ethnic white voters of yesteryear. To some on the left, we're seen as angry, racially oppressed workers of the cultural vanguard who want to upend capitalism while demanding open borders. While none of these caricatures are accurate, in them there are enough grains of truth to lull self-righteous partisans on both sides into believing that they may be on the winning side of the emerging ethnically pluralistic American majority.

In our current era of negative partisanship, voters are motivated as often to oppose the party they dislike or view as extreme as they are to support the party with which they align. Latinos, of course, are no different, and it is at the cultural extremes where Democrats face the greatest threat of losing what they have long viewed as the foundational base of their long-term majority prospects. As ''culture'' grows as a proxy for ''race,'' the electoral math for Democrats will most likely get bleaker as political campaigns continue as referendums on ''critical race theory'' and ''defunding the police.'' It will be worse still if Hispanics increasingly do not view themselves as an aggrieved racial minority.

This understanding will help determine which party controls Congress and the White House, beginning with the 2022 midterms. Under newly drawn district lines, four of the most competitive House seats will have Hispanic populations of at least 38 percent and are in California, Texas, New Mexico and Colorado. Additionally, Hispanic voters will be essential components of Senate and other statewide contests in Arizona and Nevada. The Latino voters in these states and districts are important for both parties. As the Democratic Party drifts away from its ***working-class*** roots and emphasizes cultural issues, Republicans are well positioned to pick up these politically untethered voters and with them the reins of power.

The recent debate over the term ''Latinx'' symbolizes the cultural alienation of institutions far removed from the realities of life for an overwhelming number of ***working-class*** Hispanics. ''Latinx'' was created as a gender-neutral alternative term in Spanish, a gendered language, that refers to a male as ''Latino'' and a female as ''Latina.''

Commonly used by media, political and academic elites as a sign of gender inclusivity, ''Latinx'' is virtually nonexistent in the communities it refers to. In 2020, Pew Research revealed that only 3 percent of Latinos use the term, while 9 percent of white liberals think it is the most appropriate term to use. In fact, only 14 percent of Latinos with a high school degree or less had even heard of it.

This was not a sign of intolerance but rather was emblematic of one class with the luxury of being consumed with such matters trying to impose its values on ***working-class*** families trying to keep up with paying the rent. Members of the Democratic Party don't just live in a distinct cultural bubble removed from the realities of their blue-collar counterparts; they are so removed from the rapidly growing Hispanic ***working class*** that many of them are now literally speaking a different language.

The growing cultural divide in America, in which Hispanics appear to be increasingly turned off by progressive mottos and movements, is linked to the education divide in America between college-educated and non-college-educated voters of all ethnicities. According to Pew Research, Republicans increasingly dominate in party affiliation among white non-college voters, who make up 57 percent of G.O.P. voters. This in a country where 64 percent of voters do not have a college degree.

The Democratic Party is losing its brand among white ***working-class*** voters and Hispanics. This is especially pronounced among Hispanic men and Hispanic non-college-educated voters, who are trending more Republican, just as their white non-college-educated peers are. Latinos are increasingly voting similarly to non-college whites, perhaps because they don't view themselves as all that different from them. Pew Research studies on Hispanic identity have shown that fully half of the country's Hispanics viewed themselves as ''a typical American''; fewer identified as ''very different from a typical American.''

For all the discussion about diversity within the Latino community and the now trite adage that the community is not monolithic, in fact what unites most Hispanics is that they are an important share of the blue-collar non-college-educated work force, and their presence in the labor force is only growing. The essential workers of the pandemic are disproportionately Black and Latino, and as a decidedly younger demographic, Hispanic workers are filling the manufacturing, agricultural and construction trades in states with large Hispanic populations.

Democrats have increasingly become a party shaped by and reliant upon white voters with college degrees. Compared with 40.1 percent of white adults age 25 and older, only 18.8 percent of Latino adults in that age group have a bachelor's degree. Latinos are and increasingly will be a key part of the blue-collar work force, and their politics are reflecting that.

From Hispanics' 71 percent support for President Barack Obama in 2012 to 66 percent for Hillary Clinton and 59 percent for Joe Biden in 2020, Democrats find themselves slowly but measurably losing hold of Latinos, the fastest-growing segment of the electorate. As Latino voters grow in number in key battleground states, they are increasingly rejecting the minority construct promulgated by the media, academia and Democratic politicians and consultants.

The party that is able to express the values of a multiethnic ***working class*** will be the majority party for the next generation. As we continue to watch the country's culture war increasingly divided by education levels, it is quite likely that Latino voters will continue to trend, even if marginally, into the ranks of Republican voters. The country stands on the precipice of a significant political shift. As President Ronald Reagan once quipped, quoting a Republican nominee for sheriff, ''I didn't leave the Democratic Party; the Democratic Party left me.''

Mike Madrid is an expert in Latino voting trends; was a visiting professor at the University of Southern California, where he taught Race, Class and Partisanship; and is on the board of directors of the League of Minority Voters.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/22/opinion/politics/latinos-democratic-party.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/22/opinion/politics/latinos-democratic-party.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDRII SHYP/GETTY IMAGES)

**Load-Date:** March 23, 2022

**End of Document**



[***Protests and Sorrow After Fatal Police Traffic Encounter in France***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68JY-TD21-DXY4-X32V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 28, 2023 Wednesday 09:50 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; europe

**Length:** 1435 words

**Byline:** Aurelien Breeden and Constant Méheut

**Highlight:** The shooting of a teenage driver in a suburb of Paris fed into longstanding complaints about the French police. Protesters burned cars and clashed with riot officers.

**Body**

The shooting of a teenage driver in a suburb of Paris fed into longstanding complaints about the French police. Protesters burned cars and clashed with riot officers.

In a ***working class*** Paris suburb, two police officers confront a 17-year-old driver in a canary yellow Mercedes who was stopped in traffic. They shout at him, video footage shows, and one officer appears to have his gun drawn. The teenager is then fatally shot in broad daylight.

The shooting — and the diverging accounts of what caused it — led to spasms of violence on the streets and criticism of the officers by French officials normally loath to utter the words “police violence.”

The initial accounts of the events on Tuesday, provided to the French news media by anonymous police sources, claimed the driver had plowed into the officers, leading one to shoot. Then a video surfaced on Twitter.

That footage, believed to have been captured by a witness, showed the car was stopped as an officer on the driver’s side pointed a gun into the vehicle. When the car started to pull away, a blast was heard, and the car hurtled off, crashing into a nearby sidewalk.

The teenage driver died an hour later.

The shooting fed into longstanding complaints about the French police, who have faced accusations of brutality, especially in Paris’s poorer suburbs, which are often home to people from immigrant backgrounds.

As the video spread, President Emmanuel Macron called the shooting “inexcusable.” Lawmakers held a moment of silence for the teenager, whose name was given only as Nahel M.

Prime Minister Élisabeth Borne, while taking pains to note the commitment of officers and gendarmes “who are in the field every day,” offered stark criticism, saying the footage showed an operation “that clearly does not appear to comply with the rules of engagement of our police forces.”

Even Gérald Darmanin, Mr. Macron’s [*tough-talking interior minister*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/12/world/europe/macron-france-terrorism-darmanin.html?searchResultPosition=1) and a frequent defender of the police, was unusually critical, saying, “An act like the one that we saw, if the investigation confirms the videos that we have seen, is never justified.”

Local prosecutors in Nanterre, the western suburb of Paris where the shooting occurred, have opened a manslaughter investigation. The officer accused of shooting the teenager has not been publicly identified and has not been charged, but was in custody for questioning.

Alliance Police Nationale, a police union, reacted angrily to Mr. Macron’s comments and said in a [*statement*](https://twitter.com/alliancepolice/status/1674019083774226432?s=20) that police officers, “like any citizen, have the right to the presumption of innocence,” and that it was “inconceivable” for Mr. Macron or other officials to “condemn our colleagues” before the end of the investigation.

So far, no official has disputed the content of the unconfirmed video, which spread widely on social media. The woman who said she had posted the [*original video*](https://twitter.com/Ohana_Fgn/status/1673608693265453056) on Twitter told The New York Times that it had been given to her by the witness, with whom she is close. The woman asked that her name be withheld to avoid repercussions for sharing the footage.

After unrest erupted overnight Tuesday, Mr. Darmanin said that 2,000 police officers and gendarmes would be deployed across the Paris region on Wednesday evening to contain any more violence. As night fell, sporadic clashes erupted once again in several French cities, including Toulouse and Lille. In Nanterre, protesters set cars on fire and set off fireworks; in Viry-Châtillon, south of Paris, a group of young people set a bus on fire, but no injuries were reported.

During earlier violence, rioters threw rocks and fireworks at riot police, who responded with tear gas. Protesters burned about 40 cars. A City Hall annex in Mantes-la-Jolie, a town west of Paris, was destroyed. And more than 30 people were arrested, according to the French authorities.

Sofia Berkoukeche, 29, an occupational psychologist who has lived in Nanterre for nearly a decade, said on Wednesday that there was “a general frustration with police violence” and called the shooting “the last straw.”

“You can’t take such radical measures to impose order,” said Ms. Berkoukeche, who was working on the terrace of a cafe in the suburb. “It makes the police less credible.”

The shooting inflamed [*long-simmering anger*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/08/world/europe/fury-rises-in-france-over-accusations-police-beat-and-raped-a-black-man.html?searchResultPosition=1) in suburbs where relations between the police and residents are often freighted with mistrust. In one of the most infamous episodes in the Paris suburbs, two teenagers, [*Zyed Benna and Bouna Traoré*](http://www.nytimes.com/2005/11/07/international/europe/07youths.html), running from the police were electrocuted in 2005 after they hid in an electrical substation, provoking weeks of violent protests across the country.

It also revived debate about the French police’s use of deadly force, with some left-wing lawmakers saying it was yet more evidence that a 2017 law making it easier for officers to shoot at moving vehicles should be repealed, or at least revised.

The law says officers can shoot if they deem the moving vehicle dangerous to their lives or to those of others. It was passed after several police unions argued that it was needed to better protect officers. Critics have said that it is too vague and might lead to unnecessary deaths. While acknowledging that police shootings at moving vehicles have increased since the law passed, the French authorities have said that the rise is mostly because more drivers are refusing to stop.

Laurent Nuñez, the Paris police prefect, told the French TV channel CNews that the two officers had tried to stop the car on Tuesday because the driver had committed several traffic violations and had not complied with orders to stop, before getting stuck in traffic.

“Why is it that, in our republic, a failure to comply can be punishable by a bullet in the chest or head?” Sabrina Sebaihi, a lawmaker representing the district where the teenager was killed, [*said in Parliament*](https://twitter.com/SabrinaSebaihi/status/1673720446183784449) on Tuesday.

Mr. Darmanin said the officer involved in the shooting would be punished if warranted. Both officers, who are in their late 30s and early 40s, are experienced members of the traffic police and have no record of misconduct, Mr. Darmanin added.

The prosecutor’s office in Nanterre said that the shooting had occurred near Place Nelson Mandela, a square not far from La Défense, a business district northwest of Paris. Two people were in the vehicle, a Mercedes-AMG, in addition to the driver, the office said: One was released after questioning; the other was still being sought after fleeing the scene.

Yassine Bouzrou, a lawyer for Nahel M.’s relatives, said that they were planning to file a complaint accusing the officer of murder. The family would also file suit accusing the other officer of complicity, the lawyer said.

Assa Traoré, an [*activist*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/17/world/europe/race-france-adama-traore.html?searchResultPosition=1) whose half brother, Adama Traoré, [*died of asphyxiation*](http://redux.slate.com/cover-stories/2017/01/the-death-of-adama-traore-has-become-frances-ferguson.html) while in custody in 2016 after fleeing a police identification check, said that the video from Tuesday had been key in quickly spurring widespread protests. Many similar encounters are not caught on camera, she noted.

“He is a symbol of all the other ones that we don’t see,” Ms. Traoré said of Nahel M.

Nanterre, with a population of nearly 100,000, is home to one of the Paris region’s largest universities. It is a more ***working-class*** area than neighboring cities, though not nearly as impoverished as some of the other suburbs that ring Paris.

Patrick Jarry, the mayor of Nanterre, said at a news conference on Wednesday that the suburb had experienced “one of the worst days of its history.”

“Let us stop this destructive spiral,” Mr. Jarry said. “We want justice for Nahel; we will obtain it through peaceful mobilization.”

A march in the teenager’s name is scheduled for Thursday.

Residents of Nanterre said they were both shocked and unsurprised by the shooting.

Mathilde Emery, a 17-year-old high school student who was on a park bench, said she had known Nahel and described him as an easygoing classmate who liked to joke around.

“We already have a bad perception of the police,” she said. “It’s just disappointing.”

Actors, artists and athletes also noted the shooting with sadness.

The actor [*Omar Sy*](https://twitter.com/OmarSy/status/1673823699579854848) and the soccer player Kylian Mbappé both expressed support for Nahel M.’s family on social media.

Writing on Twitter, Mr. Mbappé said, “My France hurts.”

Juliette Guéron-Gabrielle contributed reporting from Nanterre, France, and Catherine Porter from Paris.

Juliette Guéron-Gabrielle contributed reporting from Nanterre, France, and Catherine Porter from Paris.

PHOTO: Protesters of the police shooting of a teenager outside Paris clashed with officers Wednesday for a second night. Top officials also labeled the shooting unwarranted. (PHOTOGRAPH BY STEPHANIE LECOCQ/REUTERS) This article appeared in print on page A10.

**Load-Date:** July 3, 2023

**End of Document**



[***You Can't Fix Immigration While Holding Ukraine Hostage***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69TX-FPF1-DXY4-X4WB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 9, 2023 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 22; FARAH STOCKMAN

**Length:** 1439 words

**Byline:** By Farah Stockman

**Body**

They weren't bluffing.

On Wednesday night, Senate Republicans made good on their threat to hold up military aid to key allies -- Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan -- unless President Biden agreed to big changes to policies on the southern border. Never mind that most of those Republicans supported aid to Ukraine a year ago, and have rubber-stamped aid to Israel for their entire careers. Never mind that support for policies to counter China have been a bipartisan bright spot on Capitol Hill. Never mind that the world is watching in horror -- or in the case of our adversaries, delight -- as American foreign policy priorities are put in jeopardy over domestic politics.

That might have mattered years ago to your grandparents' Republican Party. But Senate Republicans these days are far less interested in Ukraine and the world than in channeling public anger about immigration. They see border security as a winning political issue for them, and they aren't wrong about that. Republican voters consistently rank securing the border and halting irregular immigration among their top priorities. That's why party leaders in Washington are falling over themselves to prove their devotion to the cause.

Even Senators Mitch ''Not the time to go wobbly'' McConnell and Mitt ''Russia's Our No. 1 Geopolitical Foe'' Romney were on board with the Republicans' ultimatum: We'll cut off the flow of missiles to Ukraine unless you Democrats cut off the flow of migrants into Texas.

Curiously, though, Senate Republicans have been so busy demanding big changes to Mr. Biden's policies that they apparently haven't noticed how much of their wish list has already been granted.

They want the resumption of the construction of the border wall. The Biden administration already conceded to resuming construction this fall when it agreed to spend money that Congress allocated for that purpose in 2019.

They want to deny asylum to those who have passed through a third country en route to the United States. That's an expansion of a rule that the administration has already instituted.

And they are insisting that asylum seekers meet a higher standard during screenings at which migrants have to demonstrate a ''credible fear of persecution,'' to make sure that fewer claims are granted. The Biden administration has already done that for people who have been apprehended between ports of entry -- in the desert, for instance, or crossing the Rio Grande.

This is not to say that the Biden administration and the Republicans are on the same page about immigration. There are real differences of opinion regarding what legal protections asylum seekers should get, where they ought to wait while their cases are heard, and how wide to open the door to people from countries like Cuba, Haiti and Venezuela. Many of those people don't meet the traditional definition of asylum seeker and are just trying to find work and feed their families.

Democrats tend to err on the side of opening the doors so wide that their own poor and ***working-class*** voters can feel displaced. But increasingly Republicans talk of slamming the border shut, a demand that is both unrealistic and economically damaging. Resisting those demands requires an important fight, but not until next year, when lawmakers have time to give these issues the attention they deserve.

The biggest thing that Senate Republicans seem to be demanding is that the president take the problems of the border seriously, after years of downplaying or avoiding the subject. That seemed to be their main message as they stormed out of a raucous classified briefing this week with top military brass who were there to talk about Ukraine. But the administration's request for almost $14 billion for border security -- an amount that is much higher than the numbers discussed over the summer -- shows how far the Biden administration has come toward the Republican position that something big must be done.

''The money is a major acknowledgment and concession to Republicans, just in terms of the level of importance and seriousness,'' Doris Meissner of the Migration Policy Institute, a nonpartisan research group, told me.

The White House request includes funding to hire an additional 1,300 Border Patrol agents -- a key Republican demand -- as well as 1,000 Customs and Border Protection officers, 1,600 asylum officers and support staff members, and 1,470 Immigration and Customs Enforcement attorneys. That growth in personnel reflects the vast expansion of the number of people who have been showing up at the border and entering our hopelessly backlogged asylum system.

The new amount also includes $1.4 billion for local governments and nonprofit groups that bear the brunt of housing asylum seekers and migrants, a request that came after the White House got an earful from Democratic leaders in New York, Chicago and other cities that have been struggling to feed and house the migrants that have been arriving by the busload daily.

President Biden, whose press secretary avoided using the word ''crisis'' to describe the border during his first year in office, admits that the system needs fixing.

''We all know it's broken,'' he said in videotaped remarks from the White House this week, begging Senate Republicans to vote for the military aid package or at least to roll up their sleeves and hammer out a deal.

''I am willing to make significant compromises on the border,'' he said.

Of course, there are things that the Biden administration should not compromise on. Some Republicans want to shut down asylum completely. That would be morally wrong but also unwise, making it harder to persuade the Latin American countries that have taken in the bulk of the asylum seekers in the hemisphere to keep shouldering that burden.

Senate Republicans are also trying to take away the president's power to grant humanitarian parole, which is a permission slip to enter the country and stay for a limited period. It's true that the Biden administration has leaned more heavily on this tool than previous administrations, creating a program that allows up to 30,000 people per month to travel to the United States from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela and work for two years. The creation of that program has been a sore spot for Senate Republicans working on immigration.

''We never signed off on that,'' one Senate staff member told me, adding that it ''kind of poisoned the well,'' making the current negotiation more difficult. But the Biden administration was trying to persuade people not to walk thousands of miles to the southern border by giving them hope for a legal pathway if they applied from home. The program has had mixed results, relieving some pressure at the border but creating a new problem of a growing population inside the United States with temporary status.

Still, even those who are angry about that program should understand why presidents need the authority to grant humanitarian parole. Presidents have used it at least 126 times since its creation in 1952 for everything from rescuing allies during the fall of Saigon to allowing orphans who were in the process of being adopted to be evacuated to the United States after an earthquake, according to David J. Bier of the Cato Institute. A compromise could be struck to put some guardrails around the use of parole while keeping this power intact.

Of course, there are Republicans who want to hold out for more, like Mike Johnson, the new speaker of the House, who is insisting on more draconian demands included in a bill that passed the House this year. The bill would make it easier for families to be held in detention indefinitely and make it a federal crime to overstay a visa, among other things.

''The House is saying, 'Give us the farm or you get nothing,''' said Aaron Reichlin-Melnick, policy director at the American Immigration Council, an immigrants' rights group in Washington.

If Republicans want to pass this aid package before the end of the year -- and I believe that deep down, plenty of them do -- there is a deal to be had. There are bipartisan ways to limit the abuse of our immigration system while preserving the rights of the most vulnerable. But truly fixing this broken system is going to take more time than Congress has at the moment. Our allies in Ukraine need help now.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/07/opinion/ukraine-war-immigration-republicans.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/07/opinion/ukraine-war-immigration-republicans.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY VERÓNICA G. CÁRDENAS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A22.

**Load-Date:** December 9, 2023

**End of Document**



[***While Democrats Debate ‘Latinx,’ Latinos Head to the G.O.P.; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6526-WW71-DXY4-X32C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 22, 2022 Tuesday 10:22 EST

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**Section:** OPINION; politics

**Length:** 1409 words

**Byline:** Mike Madrid

**Highlight:** The Democrats’ problem with Latinos.

**Body**

Democrats working to save their slim majority in the House in November’s elections[*have been sounding alarms*](https://www.politico.com/news/2022/02/15/gop-culture-war-attacks-alarmingly-potent-dccc-warns-00009265?_amp=true)lately over research showing that Republican attacks on culture-war issues are working, particularly with center-left, Hispanic and independent voters. Hispanic voters, many of us alienated by progressive labels and mottos like “Latinx” and “defund the police,” have been drifting rightward as Donald Trump marginally increased the G.O.P. Hispanic vote share in 2016 and again in 2020 — a phenomenon, it should be noted, that goes beyond Mr. Trump or any individual campaign.

Democrats now understand that they are losing support among Hispanics on culture as well as pocketbook issues, leaving little in the message arsenal for the party’s candidates to stanch what appears to be a long-term bleed.

The Democrats’ problems with Hispanics are especially glaring when you consider that Republicans are not exactly flawless when it comes to appealing to these voters. Both parties have committed a mind-boggling form of political malpractice for years: They have consistently failed to understand what motivates Hispanic voters, a crucial and growing part of the electorate.

As the growth of the Hispanic eligible electorate continues to outpace other new eligible voting populations’, the caricatures and stereotypes of “Hispanic issues” are proving further and further removed from the experience of most Hispanics. Yet, for all the hype and spin about Republican gains with Hispanic voters, the rightward shift of these voters is happening despite Republicans’ best efforts, not because of them.

In the eyes of some on the American right, Hispanics are hyperreligious Catholics or evangelicals and entrepreneurial, anti-Communist social conservatives reminiscent of the ethnic white voters of yesteryear. To some on the left, we’re seen as angry, racially oppressed workers of the cultural vanguard who want to upend capitalism while demanding open borders. While none of these caricatures are accurate, in them there are enough grains of truth to lull self-righteous partisans on both sides into believing that they may be on the winning side of the emerging ethnically pluralistic American majority.

In our current era of negative partisanship, voters are motivated as often to oppose the party they dislike or view as extreme as they are to support the party with which they align. Latinos, of course, are no different, and it is at the cultural extremes where Democrats face the greatest threat of losing what they have long viewed as the foundational base of their long-term majority prospects. As “culture” grows as a proxy for “race,” the electoral math for Democrats will most likely get bleaker as political campaigns continue as referendums on “critical race theory” and “defunding the police.” It will be worse still if Hispanics increasingly do not view themselves as an aggrieved racial minority.

This understanding will help determine which party controls Congress and the White House, beginning with the 2022 midterms. Under newly drawn district lines, four of the most competitive House seats will have Hispanic populations of at least 38 percent and are in California, Texas, New Mexico and Colorado. Additionally, Hispanic voters will be essential components of Senate and other statewide contests in Arizona and Nevada. The Latino voters in these states and districts are important for both parties. As the Democratic Party drifts away from its ***working-class*** roots and emphasizes cultural issues, Republicans are well positioned to pick up these politically untethered voters and with them the reins of power.

The recent debate over the term “Latinx” symbolizes the cultural alienation of institutions far removed from the realities of life for an overwhelming number of ***working-class*** Hispanics. “Latinx” was created as a gender-neutral alternative term in Spanish, a gendered language, that refers to a male as “Latino” and a female as “Latina.”

Commonly used by media, political and academic elites as a sign of gender inclusivity, “Latinx” is virtually nonexistent in the communities it refers to. In 2020, Pew Research revealed that [*only 3 percent of Latinos*](https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/2020/08/11/about-one-in-four-u-s-hispanics-have-heard-of-latinx-but-just-3-use-it/) use the term, while [*9 percent*](https://echeloninsights.com/in-the-news/hispanic-latino-latinx/)of white liberals think it is the most appropriate term to use. In fact, only 14 percent of Latinos with a high school degree or less had even heard of it.

This was not a sign of intolerance but rather was emblematic of one class with the luxury of being consumed with such matters trying to impose its values on ***working-class*** families trying to keep up with paying the rent. Members of the Democratic Party don’t just live in a distinct cultural bubble removed from the realities of their blue-collar counterparts; they are so removed from the rapidly growing Hispanic ***working class*** that many of them are now literally speaking a different language.

The growing cultural divide in America, in which Hispanics appear to be increasingly turned off by progressive mottos and movements, is linked to the education divide in America between college-educated and non-college-educated voters of all ethnicities. According to Pew Research, Republicans increasingly dominate in party affiliation among white non-college voters, who make up 57 percent of G.O.P. voters. This in a country where 64 percent of voters do not have a college degree.

The Democratic Party is losing its brand among white ***working-class*** voters and Hispanics. This is especially pronounced among Hispanic men and Hispanic non-college-educated voters, who are trending more Republican, just as their white non-college-educated peers are. Latinos are increasingly voting similarly to non-college whites, perhaps because they don’t view themselves as all that different from them. Pew Research studies on Hispanic identity have shown that fully half of the country’s Hispanics viewed themselves as “a typical American”; fewer identified as “very different from a typical American.”

For all the discussion about diversity within the Latino community and the now trite adage that the community is not monolithic, in fact what unites most Hispanics is that they are an important share of the blue-collar non-college-educated work force, and their presence in the labor force is only growing. The essential workers of the pandemic are disproportionately Black and Latino, and as a decidedly younger demographic, Hispanic workers are filling the manufacturing, agricultural and construction trades in states with large Hispanic populations.

Democrats have increasingly become a party shaped by and reliant upon white voters with college degrees. Compared with [*40.1 percent of white adults*](https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2020/educational-attainment.html#:~:text=%E2%80%8B) age 25 and older, only 18.8 percent of Latino adults in that age group have a bachelor’s degree. Latinos are and increasingly will be a key part of the blue-collar work force, and their politics are reflecting that.

From Hispanics’ 71 percent support for President Barack Obama in 2012 to 66 percent for Hillary Clinton and 59 percent for Joe Biden in 2020, Democrats find themselves slowly but measurably losing hold of Latinos, the fastest-growing segment of the electorate. As Latino voters grow in number in key battleground states, they are increasingly rejecting the minority construct promulgated by the media, academia and Democratic politicians and consultants.

The party that is able to express the values of a multiethnic ***working class*** will be the majority party for the next generation. As we continue to watch the country’s culture war increasingly divided by education levels, it is quite likely that Latino voters will continue to trend, even if marginally, into the ranks of Republican voters. The country stands on the precipice of a significant political shift. As President Ronald Reagan once quipped, quoting a Republican nominee for sheriff, “I didn’t leave the Democratic Party; the Democratic Party left me.”

Mike Madrid is an expert in Latino voting trends; was a visiting professor at the University of Southern California, where he taught Race, Class and Partisanship; and is on the board of directors of the League of Minority Voters.

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**Load-Date:** March 23, 2022

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[***Hammered***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6997-67D1-DXY4-X045-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 1, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 8; NONFICTION

**Length:** 1018 words

**Byline:** By Gavin Mueller

**Body**

Brian Merchant's ''Blood in the Machine'' compares the labor struggles of the Industrial Revolution to today's abusive gig economy.

BLOOD IN THE MACHINE: The Origins of the Rebellion Against Big Tech, by Brian Merchant

Revolutions inevitably birth counterrevolutions. The Industrial Revolution was no exception. In the early 19th century, textile workers in the north of England, set on a course toward obsolescence by new machines, struck back. Under the banner of a mythical apprentice named ''Ned Ludd,'' they staged nightly factory raids, using massive hammers to smash machines and forcing the British government to place the entire region under military occupation. Ever since, the Luddite movement has spawned mythologies of its own, drawing in writers attracted to its doomed Romantic broadsides against modernity, and its status as a militant workers' movement erupting at the dawn of industrial capitalism.

Brian Merchant is something of an oddity in this pantheon of writers, which includes the eminent historians Eric Hobsbawm and E.P. Thompson and the firebrand activist Kirkpatrick Sale. Merchant is the tech columnist at The Los Angeles Times and the author of a history of the iPhone; and though the bulk of his new book, ''Blood in the Machine,'' is derived from an immense trove of archival materials and secondary historical sources, he brings a journalist's touch to the Luddites' travails, drawing connections between the conflicts and indignities of their epoch and our own.

The book is structured around the stories of the individuals, famous and otherwise, whose lives were violently unsettled by technological change in this auspicious time: the Prince Regent (the future King George IV), whose decadent revelries provided a foil to the weavers' escalating privation; Lord Byron, the infamous Lothario whose populist defenses of the ***working class*** helped bring about his celebrity; Robert Blincoe, the orphan whose brutal experiences in a cotton factory from the age of 7 likely inspired Charles Dickens's character Oliver Twist. Most central is the story of George Mellor, a brawny and charismatic cropper who leads Luddite cadres into increasingly daring actions, which culminate in the vengeful assassination of a notoriously cruel millowner and the subsequent unraveling of the movement.

Merchant capably situates the Luddite story within its historical context, but, like his forebears, he uses the past as a lens onto the present. Thompson's Luddites entered debates on political consciousness in the 1960s; Sale deployed them to lend urgency to environmental politics in the de-radicalized 1990s. Today's Luddish writers (myself included) invoke the Luddites to tarnish the shiny facades of Silicon Valley apps as they remake our world -- particularly as they reconfigure decent jobs into hyper-surveilled and algorithmically managed gigs. Merchant memorably describes the typical such platform (Amazon, Uber, Instacart) as a ''psychic factory'' that ''cyborgizes its workers for maximum productivity.''

To make the book's political stakes even plainer, Merchant renders the early 19th century in current-day language. Factory owners are ''entrepreneurs,'' ''the one percent,'' even ''tech titans'' who are ''disrupting'' the textile industry -- moving fast and breaking things, to borrow Facebook's old slogan. Factory technologies spread ''virally'' and represent a form of ''automation'' (a term, as Merchant notes, that was not coined until the 1940s). The Luddites themselves are likened to decentralized movements such as Occupy Wall Street and Black Lives Matter. In the book's final section, Merchant shifts back into a journalistic register, interviewing labor lawyers, analysts and workers struggling against the worst abuses of the gig economy. Chris Smalls, the magnetic warehouse employee who led the first successful unionization drive at Amazon last year, emerges as our era's nearest analogue to Mellor.

Luddite histories are not just political, but almost always corrective. Today the term ''Luddite'' is divorced from the context of labor struggle, and instead signifies an irrational technophobia or a stubborn adherence to older ways. You might be a Luddite if you prefer to pay in cash, or if you think smartphones have ushered in the downfall of society. As Merchant argues, this is a holdover from how the elites of the day depicted the weavers' struggles, as tantrums against technology. In fact, machine breaking was not a raison d'être for the Luddites, but a last resort when appeals to law, custom and morality fell on the deaf ears of authorities. If smashing a stocking frame became the signature Luddite action, it was because it got the goods, so to speak: Many millowners submitted to Luddite demands on pay and working conditions rather than risk their machines -- or their lives.

Merchant is keen to reframe the Luddites as proto-unionist reformers rather than violent revolutionaries. Mellor's story ends with a letter from his prison cell, where he awaits his execution, requesting that his name be added to a petition calling for restrictions on machines. In Merchant's account, gig economy workers and their advocates focus on regulation and fair treatment, never sabotage. It is not an unfair conclusion to draw: No American worker movements approach the militancy of the Luddites during their raids, and President Biden's ear bends more readily than that of the Prince Regent. But if we truly want to break from the future that Jeff Bezos and Elon Musk have planned for us, with our blood in their machines, it could take more than legislation to do so. It might require a few hammers.

Gavin Mueller is an assistant professor of new media and digital culture at the University of Amsterdam, and the author of ''Breaking Things at Work.''

BLOOD IN THE MACHINE: The Origins of the Rebellion Against Big Tech | By Brian Merchant | Illustrated | 465 pp. | Little, Brown & Company | $30Gavin Mueller is an Assistant Professor of New Media and Digital Culture at the University of Amsterdam and the author of ''Breaking Things at Work.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/21/books/review/brian-merchant-blood-in-the-machine.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/21/books/review/brian-merchant-blood-in-the-machine.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page BR8.

**Load-Date:** October 1, 2023

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[***You Can’t Fix Immigration While Holding Ukraine Hostage; Farah STockman***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69TJ-TC71-DXY4-X3RG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 7, 2023 Thursday 23:53 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1443 words

**Highlight:** There is a bipartisan way to fix the asylum system and still provide aid to Ukraine. That’s not what Republicans want.

**Body**

They weren’t bluffing.

On Wednesday night, Senate Republicans made good on their threat to hold up military aid to key allies — Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan — unless President Biden agreed to big changes to policies on the southern border. Never mind that most of those Republicans supported aid to Ukraine a year ago, and have rubber-stamped aid to Israel for their entire careers. Never mind that support for policies to counter China have been a bipartisan bright spot on Capitol Hill. Never mind that the world is watching in horror — or in the case of our adversaries, delight — as American foreign policy priorities are put in jeopardy over domestic politics.

That might have mattered years ago to your grandparents’ Republican Party. But Senate Republicans these days are far less interested in Ukraine and the world than in channeling public anger about immigration. They see border security as a winning political issue for them, and they aren’t wrong about that. Republican voters consistently [*rank*](https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/democrats-republicans-have-sharply-distinct-priorities-for-2023-ap-norc-poll-finds) securing the border and halting irregular immigration among their top priorities. That’s why party leaders in Washington are falling over themselves to prove their devotion to the cause.

Even Senators Mitch “[*Not the time to go wobbly*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2023/09/06/mitch-mcconnell-ukraine-aid/)” McConnell and Mitt “[*Russia’s Our No. 1 Geopolitical Foe*](https://www.cnn.com/2022/02/22/politics/mitt-romney-russia-ukraine/index.html)” Romney were on board with the Republicans’ ultimatum: We’ll cut off the flow of missiles to Ukraine unless you Democrats cut off the flow of migrants into Texas.

Curiously, though, Senate Republicans have been so busy [*demanding big changes*](https://www.judiciary.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/senate_republican_working_group_one_pager.pdf) to Mr. Biden’s policies that they apparently haven’t noticed how much of their wish list has already been granted.

They want the resumption of the construction of the border wall. The Biden administration already conceded to resuming construction this fall when it agreed to spend money that Congress allocated for that purpose in 2019.

They want to deny asylum to those who have passed through a third country en route to the United States. That’s an expansion of a rule [*that the administration*](https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/biden-administration-to-limit-asylum-to-migrants-who-pass-through-a-3rd-nation) has already instituted.

And they are insisting that asylum seekers meet a higher standard during screenings at which migrants have to demonstrate a “credible fear of persecution,” to make sure that fewer claims are granted. The Biden administration has already done that for people who have been apprehended between ports of entry — in the desert, for instance, or crossing the Rio Grande.

This is not to say that the Biden administration and the Republicans are on the same page about immigration. There are real differences of opinion regarding what legal protections asylum seekers should get, where they ought to wait while their cases are heard, and how wide to open the door to people from countries like Cuba, Haiti and Venezuela. Many of those people don’t meet the traditional definition of asylum seeker and are just trying to find work and feed their families.

Democrats tend to err on the side of opening the doors so wide that their own poor and ***working-class*** voters can feel displaced. But increasingly Republicans talk of slamming the border shut, a demand that is both unrealistic and economically damaging. Resisting those demands requires an important fight, but not until next year, when lawmakers have time to give these issues the attention they deserve.

The biggest thing that Senate Republicans seem to be demanding is that the president take the problems of the border seriously, after years of downplaying or avoiding the subject. That seemed to be their main message as they [*stormed out of a raucous classified briefing*](https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/congress/republicans-storm-briefing-congress-battles-israel-ukraine-aid-package-rcna128245) this week with top military brass who were there to talk about Ukraine. But the administration’s request for almost $14 billion for border security — an amount that is much higher than the numbers discussed over the summer — shows how far the Biden administration has come toward the Republican position that something big must be done.

“The money is a major acknowledgment and concession to Republicans, just in terms of the level of importance and seriousness,” Doris Meissner of the Migration Policy Institute, a nonpartisan research group, told me.

The White House request includes funding [*to hire*](https://fedmanager.com/news/white-house-requests-nearly-14-billion-for-border-security-new-hires) an additional 1,300 Border Patrol agents — a key Republican demand — as well as 1,000 Customs and Border Protection officers, 1,600 asylum officers and support staff members, and 1,470 Immigration and Customs Enforcement attorneys. That growth in personnel reflects the vast expansion of the number of people who have been showing up at the border and entering our hopelessly backlogged asylum system.

The new amount also includes $1.4 billion for local governments and nonprofit groups that bear the brunt of housing asylum seekers and migrants, a request that came after the White House got an earful from Democratic leaders in New York, Chicago and other cities that have been struggling to feed and house the migrants that have been arriving by the busload daily.

President Biden, whose [*press secretary*](https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2021/04/19/white-house-backtracks-bidens-comment-crisis-border/7288376002/) avoided using the word “crisis” to describe the border during his first year in office, admits that the system needs fixing.

“We all know it’s broken,” he said in videotaped remarks from the White House this week, begging Senate Republicans to vote for the military aid package or at least to roll up their sleeves and hammer out a deal.

“I am willing to make significant compromises on the border,” he said.

Of course, there are things that the Biden administration should not compromise on. Some Republicans want to shut down asylum completely. That would be morally wrong but also unwise, making it harder to persuade the Latin American countries that have taken in the bulk of the asylum seekers in the hemisphere to keep shouldering that burden.

Senate Republicans are also trying to take away the president’s power to grant humanitarian parole, which is a permission slip to enter the country and stay for a limited period. It’s true that the Biden administration has leaned more heavily on this tool than previous administrations, creating [*a program*](https://www.uscis.gov/CHNV) that allows up to 30,000 people per month to travel to the United States from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela and work for two years. The creation of that program has been a sore spot for Senate Republicans working on immigration.

“We never signed off on that,” one Senate staff member told me, adding that it “kind of poisoned the well,” making the current negotiation more difficult. But the Biden administration was trying to persuade people not to walk thousands of miles to the southern border by giving them hope for a legal pathway if they applied from home. The program has had mixed results, relieving some pressure at the border but creating a new problem of a growing population inside the United States with temporary status.

Still, even those who are angry about that program should understand why presidents need the authority to grant humanitarian parole. Presidents have used it at least 126 times since its creation in 1952 for everything from rescuing allies during the fall of Saigon to allowing orphans who were in the process of being adopted to be evacuated to the United States after an earthquake, according to [*David J. Bier of the Cato Institute*](https://www.cato.org/blog/126-parole-orders-over-7-decades-historical-review-immigration-parole-orders). A compromise could be struck to put some guardrails around the use of parole while keeping this power intact.

Of course, there are Republicans who want to hold out for more, like Mike Johnson, the new speaker of the House, who is insisting on more draconian demands included in a bill that passed the House this year. The bill would make it [*easier*](https://immigrationforum.org/article/bill-analysis-the-secure-the-border-act-of-2023/) for families to be held in detention indefinitely and make it a federal crime to overstay a visa, among other things.

“The House is saying, ‘Give us the farm or you get nothing,’” said Aaron Reichlin-Melnick, policy director at the American Immigration Council, an immigrants’ rights group in Washington.

If Republicans want to pass this aid package before the end of the year — and I believe that deep down, plenty of them do — there is a deal to be had. There are bipartisan ways to limit the abuse of our immigration system while preserving the rights of the most vulnerable. But truly fixing this broken system is going to take more time than Congress has at the moment. Our allies in Ukraine need help now.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/31/opinion/letters/letters-to-editor-new-york-times-women.html) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://help.nytimes.com/hc/en-us/articles/115014925288-How-to-submit-a-letter-to-the-editor). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](mailto:letters@nytimes.com).

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PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY VERÓNICA G. CÁRDENAS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A22.

**Load-Date:** December 9, 2023

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[***Five Takeaways From the Republican Debate***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69TG-H5D1-JBG3-6231-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 7, 2023 Thursday

The New York Times on the Web

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**Section:** Section ; Column 0; National Desk

**Length:** 1408 words

**Byline:** By Shane Goldmacher, Maggie Haberman and Jonathan Swan

**Body**

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Nikki Haley clashed repeatedly with Ron DeSantis on Wednesday night in the fourth Republican presidential debate, facing her most sustained scrutiny of the race as the two leading candidates for second place tussled in Tuscaloosa, Ala.

Tensions ran high as Chris Christie called Vivek Ramaswamy ''obnoxious,'' Mr. Ramaswamy held up ''Nikki = Corrupt'' on a notepad, and Mr. DeSantis repeatedly lashed Ms. Haley's record.

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Here are five takeaways from what may prove to be the final official Republican National Committee debate:

The 'fellas' hit Nikki Haley hard.

Ms. Haley knew there would be a target on her back. The onstage crowd of candidates had thinned out, and her star had risen high enough that her rivals -- especially Mr. DeSantis -- needed to block her from moving higher.

''Nikki Haley, she caves every time the left comes after her,'' Mr. DeSantis said in response to a question about why his campaign has struggled. Mr. Ramaswamy took turns, too, suggesting she had engaged in unsavory moneymaking when she left the Trump administration. ''Now you're a multimillionaire,'' he said. ''That math does not add up. It adds up to the fact you're corrupt,'' he said.

Mr. DeSantis also accused her of being against a bill banning some medical treatments for transgender children, which she denied, but the question may have an audience with evangelical voters in Iowa. Mr. Ramaswamy attacked her for her connection to major donors, including a contribution to her super PAC from a major Democratic donor, jabs that could hurt her with the Republican base.

At one point, Mr. Christie stepped into defend Ms. Haley after Mr. Ramaswamy mocked her as being unable to name three eastern Ukrainian provinces where she would send troops, despite her support for Ukraine against Russia.

''This is a smart, accomplished woman,'' Mr. Christie said. ''You should stop insulting her.''

Ms. Haley appeared grateful, but also said nothing to defend herself in that moment. It was emblematic of a night where she receded for long stretches after three debates of asserting herself. Her restraint was cutting at moments. After another long Ramaswamy attack, she declined to respond altogether. ''It's not,'' she said, ''worth my time.''

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Mr. DeSantis's diminished standing in the race was clear from the bruising opening question from Ms. Kelly. She listed his early advantages, including money and how he had seemed the best positioned to consolidate the anti-Trump vote. ''You haven't managed to do it,'' she said.

''I'm sick of hearing about these polls,'' he responded. And surely he is.

But Mr. DeSantis stuck with his risk-averse strategy toward Mr. Trump. He carefully and selectively offered criticism of the front-runner, who has mercilessly bludgeoned him for months.

Instead, Mr. DeSantis saved his sharpest words for slicing attacks on Ms. Haley. He more than once invoked her ties to donors. ''Nikki will cave to those big donors when it counts,'' he said. (She had a ready-made retort: ''He's mad because those Wall Street donors used to support him and now they support me.'')

But as for Mr. Trump?

Mr. DeSantis took some pokes. But more often he demurred. When Ms. Haley criticized Mr. Trump for adding to the national debt, Mr. DeSantis chose a more vague denunciation of ''both parties in Washington, D.C.''

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Father Time is looming in this primary, too. And if Mr. DeSantis is not ready to take on Mr. Trump now, it is not clear when he will be, or if he will get that chance.

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Mr. Christie delivered the kind of forceful and inspired performance that his supporters have been waiting for at a now-or-never juncture for his flagging candidacy.

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But the boos that rang out more than once as he spoke were another reminder that despite his manifest skills as a campaigner, he remains out of the mainstream of the modern Republican Party.

In a sign that his future may be beyond elected office, Mr. Christie dropped a reference to a forthcoming book (early in 2024, he said). Still, he made a specific case against Mr. Trump as ''unfit'' and unmoored to the public interest.

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She came to Tuscaloosa apparently itching for a fight and spared nobody.

''Aren't you too tight with the banks and the billionaires,'' she suggested to Ms. Haley, ''to win over the G.O.P.'s ***working-class*** base, which mostly wants to break the system, not elect someone beholden to it?''

She confronted Mr. DeSantis with his collapsing poll numbers and faltering campaign; she confronted Mr. Ramaswamy with his apparent inability, from one debate to the next, to decide whether his opponents are corrupt or people of integrity; and she confronted Mr. Christie with the fact that most Republican voters can't stand him.

Most importantly, she and the other moderators -- the Washington Free Beacon's Eliana Johnson and NewsNation's Elizabeth Vargas -- confronted all of the candidates with a topic that many of them still prefer to avoid: Donald Trump.

Vivek Ramaswamy had his Alex Jones moment.

Mr. Ramaswamy has ratcheted up his incitements with every debate -- though his poll numbers seem to be declining the more outrageous he gets.

Mimicking what Mr. Trump did in 2016, Mr. Ramaswamy, a wealthy businessman, has portrayed himself as the lone ''outsider'' onstage, the only one uncorrupted by big donors and willing to speak the shocking ''truth.'' He lashes out at his rivals but never has a bad word to say about Mr. Trump, often looking more as if he is auditioning for a spot in Mr. Trump's cabinet than trying to defeat him.

On Wednesday, Mr. Ramaswamy added some new material to his unusual act. Emulating Alex Jones, he declared that ''Jan. 6 now does look like it was an inside job'' -- a reference to a far-right conspiracy theory that the attack on the Capitol was orchestrated by the federal government rather than by Trump supporters.

He also said ''the climate change agenda is a hoax'' and that ''the great replacement theory'' -- the theory that liberal immigration policies are part of a scheme to dilute the power of white Americans -- ''is not some grand right-wing conspiracy theory, but a basic statement of the Democratic Party's platform.''

He was crude and cruel. He mocked Mr. Christie's weight, suggesting he walk himself off the stage, ''have a nice meal and get the hell out of this race.'' Mr. Ramaswamy went on to portray Ms. Haley as a ''puppet'' of corporate America and the military-industrial complex.

The crowd often booed, never more so than when he attacked Ms. Haley as a ''fascist.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/07/us/politics/republican-debate-takeaways.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/07/us/politics/republican-debate-takeaways.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: The fourth Republican debate featured a smaller group of candidates after several departures from the race. The moderators pressed them more forcefully on uncomfortable questions. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Bob Miller for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** December 7, 2023

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The New York Times

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1424 words

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On Wednesday, Mr. Ramaswamy added some new material to his unusual act. Emulating Alex Jones, he declared that “Jan. 6 now does look like it was an inside job” — a reference to a [*far-right conspiracy theory*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/23/us/politics/mike-johnson-jan-6-video.html#:~:text=The%20vast%20majority%20of%20posters,hold%20and%20charge%20the%20participants.) that the attack on the Capitol was orchestrated by the federal government rather than by Trump supporters.

He also said “the climate change agenda is a hoax” and that “[*the great replacement theory*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/15/us/replacement-theory-shooting-tucker-carlson.html)” — the theory that liberal immigration policies are part of a scheme to dilute the power of white Americans — “is not some grand right-wing conspiracy theory, but a basic statement of the Democratic Party’s platform.”

He was crude and cruel. He mocked Mr. Christie’s weight, suggesting he walk himself off the stage, “have a nice meal and get the hell out of this race.” Mr. Ramaswamy went on to portray Ms. Haley as a “puppet” of corporate America and the military-industrial complex.

The crowd often booed, never more so than when he attacked Ms. Haley as a “fascist.”

PHOTO: The fourth Republican debate featured a smaller group of candidates after several departures from the race. The moderators pressed them more forcefully on uncomfortable questions. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Bob Miller for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** December 7, 2023

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[***Happily Ever After Isn't the Goal***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B54-38N1-JBG3-6025-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 21, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section ST; Column 0; Style Desk; Pg. 1; VOWS

**Length:** 1819 words

**Byline:** By Valeriya Safronova

**Body**

Nadya Tolokonnikova, a founding member of Pussy Riot, and John Caldwell have always prioritized being ''helpful,'' he said, over being happy.

When Nadya Tolokonnikova, one of the founding members of the anti-establishment punk collective Pussy Riot, reached out to John Caldwell on Discord, an encrypted messaging app, he asked if she was a bot.

''She just said 'haha,''' said Mr. Caldwell, who was already familiar with her work. ''I was very suspicious.''

Ms. Tolokonnikova had developed an interest in cryptocurrency and blockchain and had heard about Mr. Caldwell, a partner at a financial services company who specialized in crypto, from a friend. ''I was jumping on Zooms with random people with no romantic intentions, just learning about crypto,'' she said.

They met for dinner a few days later, in mid-September 2021. ''It ended horribly,'' Mr. Caldwell said. ''She faked a call to Europe and left.''

Ms. Tolokonnikova, an activist, musician and artist, described herself as a ''super introverted person,'' and said she normally spaces out meetings with new people. But at the time, she was in the process of crash educating herself on a new topic, and had therefore scheduled several meetings in one day, and the dinner with Mr. Caldwell was last.

''I was overwhelmed,'' she said. So she left abruptly. But, she said, ''it was not a reflection on John at all.'' In fact, she had been intrigued by their conversation about reproductive rights and religion, and by Mr. Caldwell's suggestion that she tap into the deep pockets of the crypto world to raise funds for causes she was interested in.

Despite Mr. Caldwell's sense that the meeting had been a disaster, Ms. Tolokonnikova reached out again, and the two decided to work together on a new venture: UnicornDAO, a fund-raising and investment vehicle focused on female, nonbinary and L.G.B.T.Q. artists and creators.

Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, 34, was born in Norilsk, Russia, and studied philosophy at Moscow State University. At 22, before she could complete her degree, she was imprisoned for nearly two years for her role in ''Punk Prayer,'' a public performance piece that protested the Russian government's close relationship with the Russian Orthodox Church (the protest was also the subject of an HBO documentary in 2013). In 2014, she and another Pussy Riot member, Maria Alyokhina, founded an independent news outlet in Russia called Mediazona. Ms. Tolokonnikova was married previously to Pyotr Verzilov. They split up in 2016.

Ms. Tolokonnikova's continued outspokenness against President Vladimir V. Putin and his government landed her on Russia's list of ''foreign agents,'' a label the authorities use to suppress opposition figures. Because of concerns for her safety, she does not disclose where she lives. In 2019, she received an honorary doctorate from the Rhode Island School of Design, fulfilling a personal dream. She is currently working on a memoir.

John Ferguson Caldwell, 40, was born in Providence, R.I., but grew up in the Pacific Palisades neighborhood of Los Angeles. Mr. Caldwell graduated from Pepperdine University in 2006 with a bachelor's degree in art. He worked in surfing tourism in the Marshall Islands, managing a private island and organizing luxury yacht charters, until the pandemic began. After returning to the United States in March 2020, his interest in cryptocurrency and blockchain led him to join Wave, a financial services company. He is a founder of RFLXT, a company that is building a platform of artificial intelligence and crypto tools for creators.

After Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, Mr. Caldwell and Ms. Tolokonnikova led an effort to raise $7.1 million in cryptocurrency for Ukraine. The crypto wallet they used for the fund-raiser publicly listed Mr. Caldwell's name. ''All my friends were like, 'The Russian government will put you on a list,''' Mr. Caldwell said. ''I don't think it's a coincidence that was the moment Nadya got little hearts in her eyes.''

''That was a very clear moment for me,'' Ms. Tolokonnikova said. ''I really cherish kindness and bravery and consistency and high moral values in people.''

Mr. Caldwell, too, was full of admiration for Ms. Tolokonnikova. After she messaged him on Discord, he decided to learn more about her and watched the speech she gave at her trial in Russia in 2012, in which Ms. Tolokonnikova described herself and her fellow Pussy Riot activists as ''freer than the people sitting opposite us and representing the prosecution because we can say everything we like, and we do.''

''It's one of the most inspiring moments in humanity's recent history,'' Mr. Caldwell said. ''And that's just in the background. She's funny and beautiful and smart and goth -- and now vegan.'' Mr. Caldwell has been vegan for more than two decades and succeeded in converting Ms. Tolokonnikova to the diet in the fall of 2022.

Now they enjoy eating at new vegan restaurants together. ''John knows every single place for vegan food on planet earth, and it's always the best,'' Ms. Tolokonnikova said.

They also like to stage political actions together; in November, for example, they protested against restrictions on abortion rights in front of Indiana's Supreme Court building. ''We brought a giant inflatable vagina, and I came up with the contraption to inflate it, so I was holding it,'' Mr. Caldwell said.

''His friends called him the Man Behind the Pussy,'' Ms. Tolokonnikova said.

Both struggle with depression and other mental health issues and find comfort in helping others. ''Most people, if one of the members of their partnership was put on a criminal wanted list in their country and exiled and couldn't visit their home and their family and everything they knew, they would consider it a challenge,'' Mr. Caldwell said. ''But it's just our reality. We're not sitting around feeling sorry for ourselves. We just want to be helpful.''

He added that he does not prioritize happiness. Instead, he said, ''I prioritize ideals and being useful and creative and being supportive of people around me.''

Ms. Tolokonnikova said she found Mr. Caldwell's approach comforting. ''I don't even necessarily know what happiness is,'' she said. ''I spend most of my time on my art or my activism. I don't spend much of my time on human activities, like going to a bar or just having fun.''

And so, fun was the top priority for Mr. Caldwell's proposal. ''Nadya has been through a lot,'' he said. ''I wanted to give her something cute and nice and kind of traditional.''

A few days before a trip to London, Mr. Caldwell commissioned Alligator Jesus, a jewelry designer and friend, to create an engagement ring for Ms. Tolokonnikova. Within 24 hours, Alligator Jesus delivered a black gold ring with diamonds and a pink sapphire. Mr. Caldwell also asked Gera Riot, Ms. Tolokonnikova's 15-year-old daughter, for permission to propose, which she granted.

On Nov. 11, Mr. Caldwell and Ms. Tolokonnikova were joined by Marina Abramovic, a close friend who, Ms. Tolokonnikova said, ''spiritually adopted'' the couple, in central London. They were there to see a short art film, ''Nadya Means Hope,'' in which Ms. Tolokonnikova burns a candle in the shape of an eggplant emoji, play on an enormous screen in Piccadilly Circus. At the end of the video, a poem written by Mr. Caldwell appeared on the screen, followed by the words ''Will You Marry Me?'' in Russian and English. Mr. Caldwell got on his knee and took out the ring.

''I fell on the ground because I was so surprised,'' Ms. Tolokonnikova said. Literally. And then she said, ''Da!''

They were legally married on Jan. 12 at a courthouse in Los Angeles. Afterward, Nathan Monk, a priest who left the Russian Orthodox Church because he did not support its stance on gay marriage, led a short ceremony in their friend's yard in front of about 200 guests.

''He spoke about Ukraine, about the fact that this love was brought together by challenges of the modern world, but also our common wish to make the world a little bit better, more just,'' Ms. Tolokonnikova said.

Ms. Tolokonnikova's daughter made the party's playlist, which featured Soviet pop and contemporary Russian trap. For food, Ms. Tolokonnikova suggested serving pickles and vodka, but Mr. Caldwell insisted on something more robust.

He asked Wendell Hooper, a friend who is a chef, to cater. ''He answered my call a week before,'' Mr. Caldwell said. ''He said, 'This is normally planned six months in advance,' and I said, 'Welcome to Pussy Riot.'''

They served vegan meatballs, vegan charcuterie, vegan shrimp and eggplant caviar. Ms. Tolokonnikova baked a large vegan Napoleon cake, dyed it black and assembled it in the shape of a cross, a symbol she uses often in her artwork.

The dress code was ''gopnik,'' a word that encapsulates a style of dress, music and art reflecting the ***working class*** in the former Soviet states in the 1980s and 1990s. Mr. Caldwell asked Mark Hunter, a.k.a. the Cobrasnake, to serve as wedding photographer. ''I like his pop-event club style.''

Guests showed up in tracksuits, house slippers, Adidas slides and newsboy caps, and one brought an accordion. Ms. Tolokonnikova wore a corset top from Adidas, a skirt from Depop with a petticoat over it, a faux leather jacket and velvet, high-platform Doc Martens.

She sewed three stripes -- the Adidas trademark -- along the arms of a suit jacket for Mr. Caldwell, using a skill she picked up in prison. ''I thought I would never sew again,'' she said. But for this occasion, she was happy to.

''Everybody was saying it was the most comfortable party they've been to,'' Ms. Tolokonnikova said. ''It was absurd and goofy at times, and the overall vibe was very cozy.''

Binge more Vows columns here and read all our wedding, relationship and divorce coverage here.

On This Day

When Jan. 12, 2024

Where Los Angeles

Breaking Bread A friend gave Ms. Tolokonnikova and Mr. Caldwell a loaf of dense rye bread, which they pulled from opposite sides until it broke. Per Russian tradition, whoever ends up with a bigger chunk will be in charge. ''We did it exactly equal,'' Ms. Tolokonnikova said. ''Well, maybe mine was a little bit bigger.''

Bitter Cries At Russian weddings, when guests shout the word ''gorko,'' or ''bitter,'' the newly married couple should immediately kiss. But not all the guests at Ms. Tolokonnikova and Mr. Caldwell's international wedding understood what the word meant. ''They would scream at me and he'd be at the opposite side of the house,'' Ms. Tolokonnikova said.

Master of Ceremonies A friend of the couple's who is a translator and speaks Russian and English, Max Lawton, acted as the ''tamada,'' or toastmaster, in the Georgian tradition. Besides organizing the toasts, Mr. Lawton led the guests in playing games, like one in which people hold a balloon in their lap and others try to sit on it until it pops.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/17/style/nadya-tolokonnikova-john-caldwell-pussy-riot-wedding.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/17/style/nadya-tolokonnikova-john-caldwell-pussy-riot-wedding.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: The newlyweds Nadya Tolokonnikova and John Caldwell aim to help others. (ST1)

Above, Nadya Tolokonnikova and John Caldwell, who were married this month, at a ceremony with Nathan Monk, a priest who left the Russian Orthodox Church. Second row from left: the musician Masha Mitkov playing a Balkan Roma wedding song for the couple

and Nastya Kreslina, holding the microphone, and Nick Kostylev, wearing a hood, of IC3PEAK performing at the ceremony. Third row from left: the couple's friends Riley Reid, left, and Alligator Jesus, who designed Ms. Tolokonnikova's engagement ring

and the visual artist Yulia Shur carrying a wedding gift. Above right, Ms. Tolokonnikova and Mr. Caldwell with a portrait by the artist Anna Leo Valerie. At left from top: the wedding cake

and the tearing of bread, a Russian tradition. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK HUNTER/THE COBRASNAKE) (ST4) This article appeared in print on page ST1, ST4.

**Load-Date:** January 21, 2024

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[***Read Your Way Through Madrid***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69T8-W3X1-JBG3-61C0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 6, 2023 Wednesday 12:58 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS

**Length:** 1381 words

**Byline:** Elena Medel

**Highlight:** Like many who call Madrid home, Elena Medel was born elsewhere, but forged her identity in the Spanish capital. Here, she recommends books about this city that “refuses to be reduced to an ideal.”

**Body**

Like many who call Madrid home, Elena Medel was born elsewhere, but forged her identity in the Spanish capital. Here, she recommends books about this city that “refuses to be reduced to an ideal.”

[*Read Your Way Around the World*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/literary-guides) is a series exploring the globe through books.

Few challenges are as complex in Madrid as finding a cat. Not the animal, but a gato — someone who was born in Madrid, whose parents and grandparents were born in Madrid. Nobody in Madrid was born here: You’ll seldom be asked where you are from, because the assumption is that you’re from somewhere else, although suspicion — and prejudice — can come up when you have a certain accent or skin color.

I was not born in Madrid, but I am from Madrid. When I think of the books that have been written about the city, the thread that unites them has to do with the gaze — and the experience — of those who come from elsewhere to forge their identity here: that feeling of looking for a place of one’s own in a city that is difficult, often hostile, and that refuses to be reduced to an ideal.

But Madrid, of course. The city of the corrales de comedias, open-air theaters where the medium was reinvented during our Golden Age. The city in whose cafes Leandro Fernández de Moratín, Ramón Gómez de la Serna and Gloria Fuertes all talked about literature — unfortunately not at the same time, though what a discussion that would have been! The city of the [*Generation of 1927*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/literary-guides), where Federico García Lorca, Lucía Sánchez Saornil and Vicente Aleixandre began their careers. The city that was also Rubén Darío’s, Gabriela Mistral’s and Juan Carlos Onetti’s, no matter that they hailed from another continent. The city where Carmen Laforet, who was born in Barcelona, and Ángela Figuera Aymerich, from Bilbao, wrote. “The Capital of the World,” as [*Ernest Hemingway called it*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/literary-guides) in his short story, which takes us back to the months before the Spanish Civil War.

What should I read before I pack my bags?

No one has portrayed Madrid with greater intensity than Benito Pérez Galdós. Part of his 46-volume, Balzacian series “National Episodes” takes place here; from it, I’d choose “Fortunata and Jacinta,” a choral novel that discusses the way the city constructs its social classes, and vice versa. Camilo José Cela’s “[*The Hive*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/literary-guides)” is also a good choice, teeming with hundreds of characters who cross paths in the Madrid of the early years of Francisco Franco’s dictatorship, for which the author worked as a censor. To get to know those who live in Madrid, you must also read “Living’s the Strange Thing,” a gorgeous novel by Carmen Martín Gaite about daily life in the city.

What books can take me behind closed doors or show me other facets of the city?

I have a weakness for the play “Bohemian Lights,” by Ramón María del Valle-Inclán. In it, we spend almost 24 hours with the poet Max Estrella, reflecting on the decadence of Spanish society in the 1920s (in general, reflecting on the decadence of Spanish society in any era is one of Madrilenians’ obsessions). The play mentions many places that still exist: the [*chocolate shop*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/literary-guides) in San Ginés, the mirror-lined [*Callejón del Gato*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/literary-guides) (Cat Alley). I would also recommend “The Maravillas District,” an autobiographical novel by Rosa Chacel that takes place in the streets of a Malasaña very different from the gentrified district beloved by students (and [*tourists*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/literary-guides)) today. To continue getting to know a Madrid far removed from postcards, not only socially but also geographically, you should read “A Working Woman,” by [*Elvira Navarro*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/literary-guides). It is a reflection on the precarity of labor, especially in the field of culture: The protagonist works as a freelancer in the publishing industry, and barely survives in the neighborhood of Aluche.

What writer is everyone talking about? And which books are they reading?

Almudena Grandes. Her work, which includes novels, short stories and articles, is a long love letter to Madrid, and she [*died in November 2021*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/literary-guides); the [*photos of her funeral*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/literary-guides) are moving, with Republican flags mingling with her books in the hands of thousands of readers. She wrote eloquently about Spain’s recent past — the Second Republic, the Civil War and the years of dictatorship that followed.

“The Ages of Lulu” is perhaps her most popular book that has been translated into English, but I prefer “The Frozen Heart,” also a Madrilenian novel, and the start of her most political phase.

As for the book that everyone is reading — in Madrid, in Spain, in the world! — it is “Bad Habit,” by Alana S. Portero, which will be published in the United States by HarperCollins in April 2024, in a translation by Mara Faye Lethem. It tells the story of a ***working-class*** transgender woman full of rage and beauty, pain and poetry, who walks through the neighborhoods of Chueca and Malasaña, in the city center, and San Blas, in the suburbs. (By the way, I have just realized that she and Almudena Grandes are the only two authors I have recommended who were born in Madrid, which confirms my theory.)

Who are the literary icons I might see on street signs, statues or public monuments?

Although he did not write any books about Madrid, the city permeated the entire life of Federico García Lorca. He settled here in 1919 and always returned after stays in America or visits to his family in Granada; it was in Madrid that he worked on many of his best books. It is easy to trace Lorca’s footsteps through the city: the Residencia de Estudiantes where he met Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí, the Café Gijón where his cohort would gather, the Ateneo de Madrid cultural institution, his last house at 96 Calle de Alcalá (now home to a [*bookstore*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/literary-guides)) and the stages where his plays premiered. Following this Lorca route, you could end by leaving flowers at his statue in the Plaza de Santa Ana, in front of the Teatro Español.

What’s a good place to curl up with a book on a day off?

Bookstores, of course! Don’t miss [*Desperate Literature*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/literary-guides), with secondhand books, English-language books and a children’s section; they also organize many events. Also for books in English, you should visit [*Pasajes*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/literary-guides). Let their excellent booksellers recommend some titles: There you might find a copy of Ben Lerner’s “[*Leaving the Atocha Station*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/literary-guides),” a vibrant novel about Madrid through the eyes of a young American poet. Some of my other favorite bookstores include [*Librería Rafael Alberti*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/literary-guides), [*Enclave de Libros*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/literary-guides) and [*Grant*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/literary-guides).

Madrid’s network of public libraries is also fabulous, especially for the neighborhood events they do to promote reading, bringing culture closer to us no matter where we live. And try to time your trip to coincide with the [*Madrid Book Fair*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/literary-guides), held in the first weeks of June in El Retiro, a historic park in the center of the city. It’s a great festival where readers, writers, booksellers and publishers meet. And I confess: I spend a lot of time on public transport, so I’ve learned to enjoy reading on the bus, while the city passes by outside my window.

And for the kids — any book recommendations?

When I moved to the neighborhood of (Lower) Carabanchel — on the outskirts of the city, on the other side of the M30, a highway that is the real river of Madrid — everyone asked me: Do you live near Manolito Four-Eyes? Manolito is a character created by Elvira Lindo who has starred in a [*series of children’s novels*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/literary-guides) — and yes, he lives with his family in (Upper) Carabanchel. The books make for a very funny portrait of Spain in the ’90s; I read them as a teenager, and I remember my little sister loved them.

Elena Medel’s Madrid Reading List

* “Fortunata and Jacinta,” Benito Pérez Galdós

1. “The Hive,” Camilo José Cela
2. “Living’s the Strange Thing,” Carmen Martín Gaite
3. “Bohemian Lights,” Ramón María del Valle-Inclán
4. “The Maravillas District,” Rosa Chacel
5. “A Working Woman,” Elvira Navarro
6. “The Ages of Lulu” and “The Frozen Heart,” Almudena Grandes
7. “Bad Habit,” Alana S. Portero
8. “Leaving the Atocha Station,” Ben Lerner
9. “Manolito Four-Eyes,” Elvira Lindo

Elena Medel is a poet and essayist whose first novel, “[*The Wonders*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/literary-guides),” was recognized with the Francisco Umbral Award in Spain and translated into more than 15 languages. She is also the founder of the poetry publishing house La Bella Varsovia.

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY EMILIO PARRA DOIZTUA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (BR13) This article appeared in print on page BR12, BR13.

**Load-Date:** August 7, 2024

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[***Corporate-Friendly Courts Were the Real Plan***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65R6-W371-DXY4-X49W-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 19, 2022 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section SR; Column 0; Sunday Review Desk; Pg. 3; GUEST ESSAY

**Length:** 1145 words

**Byline:** By Sohrab Ahmari, Patrick Deneen and Chad Pecknold

**Body**

With the potential overturning of Roe v. Wade, the Federalist Society appears poised for a triumph. This organization of conservative and libertarian lawyers and law professors and students turns 40 this year.

Yet contrary to progressive perceptions, the society's function has not been solely, or even primarily, to roll back abortion and other elements of the sexual revolution. If you look at the full scope of its activities, you will notice that a far more important mission has been to mount an economic revolution of its own, on behalf of corporations and other powerful market actors.

The Federalist Society has become a judicial pipeline of the Republican Party, helping to supply numerous nominees to the federal bench. In the progressive imagination, the society is a secretive cabal of theocrats and cultural reactionaries. In reality, it is best understood as a professional-development club for what the writer Michael Lind calls ''libertarians in robes'' who shift power ''from ***working-class*** voters to overclass judges.''

The society was largely one of many institutions nurtured by the right wing of the American donor class to roll back the legal and material achievements of U.S. workers dating back to the New Deal and to elevate economic deregulation to high moral and constitutional principle. In tandem, other right-of-center institutions emerged to solidify America's status abroad as a hegemon guarding the rule of global capital against rival claimants for organizing world order.

None of this is news to leftist critics of 20th-century conservatism. But a growing number of dissidents within conservatism view these legacy institutions -- not just the Federalist Society but also the Heritage Foundation, National Review Institute and others -- as ultimately hostile to core commitments that ought to inform the right. These would include cultivation of republican and personal virtue that rests on common prosperity and, yes, a measure of material equality; robust social-democratic support, especially for working families, who shouldn't have to choose between paying their bills and having children; and modesty about Washington's role in foreign affairs.

Yet the institutions of Conservatism Inc. persist in advancing a pro-business agenda despite opposition from the large populist-right segment of the Republican rank and file. While the G.O.P. has never been a workers' party, many of its voters are. Yet Conservatism Inc. refuses to embrace a multiethnic, ***working-class*** ethos.

Having seen the workings of institutional conservatism firsthand for several decades, we believe that the best way to understand the contemporary conservative intellectual movement is by examining the material interests that underwrite its workings and shape its mission. Those material interests aren't all perfectly in agreement with one another, which is why the organizations in question don't always play nice together. There are disagreements at the margins. But the North Star of all is rule by large corporate and financial power, and support for militarism and cultural aggression abroad.

The Federalist Society itself offers the best illustration of the misguided development of movement conservatism. Hot-button social questions are sometimes fiercely contested among those with ties to the society. For instance, it was Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch who in 2020 led a majority of the court in ruling that sexual orientation and gender identity apply to the 1964 Civil Rights Act's definition of sex. And Edward Whelan, an originalist stalwart, countered arguments in favor of constitutional protection of fetal personhood -- the likely next stage in the anti-abortion battle if or when Roe falls.

Where the society has been supremely effective -- and far more united -- is in the realm of political economy. In the same decades of progressive ascendancy on cultural issues, society-certified judges on the federal bench pushed through a raft of decisions aimed at thwarting collective action by workers and government action against monopolies.

Over the past several decades, society heroes like Justice Antonin Scalia upended decades of settled law and clear congressional intent to expand the use of commercial arbitration to employment and consumer contexts. This was despite the manifest imbalance in power between the parties agreeing to arbitrate their disputes.

The conservative legal scholar Robert Bork proposed reforms to U.S. antitrust law by arguing that it should focus on ''consumer welfare,'' often understood to mean lower prices, even if monopoly power means a less competitive economy lorded over by a few giant companies.

The Federalist Society is not the only conservative institution to pursue a similar, pro-corporate agenda. Others, like the Heritage Foundation, the Hudson Institute and National Review Institute, also receive large sums from wealthy individuals and trusts and have similarly too often equated conservatism with a neoliberal, imperial agenda.

What does this tell us about whether the right can really be realigned with the ***working class***? There are a number of smaller right-of-center institutions trying meaningfully to adapt, but Conservatism Inc. at best pays only lip service to ***working-class*** concerns. The largest institutions are still dedicated to inventing, often from whole cloth, as the Ronald Reagan and Newt Gingrich revolutionaries also did, a version of movement conservatism that holds at bay authentic American traditions that run counter to corporate interests.

In the republican tradition, the political economy must be embedded, with state intervention as needed, within a moral order. Yet the longstanding American tradition that fretted over compromises to civic virtue and democratic self-rule demanded by unchecked financial power and imperial expansion has very little institutional expression in today's Conservatism Inc.

In his farewell address, in 1961, President Dwight Eisenhower warned his compatriots about just this threat: the rise of a military-industrial complex that shuts out the primacy of public order and the common good to secure the economic commitments of corporate entities. This is what the conservative movement became, the jackals of Mammon. And it is what threatens the common good of the nation.

Sohrab Ahmari is a founder and editor of the journal Compact. Patrick Deneen is a professor of political science at the University of Notre Dame. Chad Pecknold is an associate professor of systematic theology at the Catholic University of America.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/14/opinion/conservatism-federalist-society-populists.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/14/opinion/conservatism-federalist-society-populists.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY SAMUEL CORUM FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** June 19, 2022

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[***Transcript: Ezra Klein Interviews Annie Lowrey; The Ezra Klein Show***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C6J-M5K1-JBG3-602W-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 7, 2024 Friday 12:41 EST

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**Section:** PODCASTS

**Length:** 14880 words

**Highlight:** The June 7, 2024, episode of “The Ezra Klein Show.”

**Body**

Every Tuesday and Friday, Ezra Klein invites you into a conversation about something that matters, like today’s episode with Annie Lowrey. Listen [*wherever you get your podcasts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/19/opinion/how-to-listen-ezra-klein-show-nyt.html).

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[MUSIC PLAYING] EZRA KLEIN: From New York Times Opinion, this is “The Ezra Klein Show.”

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I’ve been thinking about this episode for a bit, so I’m going to spend a couple of minutes here, setting it up.

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Back in September, the economist put out this interesting model that pulled in a bunch of different bits of economic data, so things like the unemployment rate, inflation, gas prices, the S&amp;P 500. And they used all that to predict how people would feel about the economy. And they showed that from 1980 to 2019. All these bits of data, they do predict how people feel about the economy.

And then the pandemic hits and the model completely falls apart. By late 2023, the model is looking at low unemployment, it’s looking at falling inflation, it’s looking at a great stock market, and it predicts consumer sentiment. It’s going to be 98 out of 100, 98 out of 100. That is Joe Biden gets his face on a coin territory. Here, in reality, the actual consumer sentiment was 69. That is Joe Biden might lose re-election territory.

There’s been this debate for a year or two now about whether the economy is good or it is bad. And the language of that, the binariness bothers me. It’s like asking if the 19th century was good or bad. I mean, good or bad for whom? Compared to what? The economy is like this vast, multidimensional hyperobject. It’s a little too big for good or bad. I think we need to be more precise.

This debate is not about whether the economy is good or bad. The debate is about our expectations. Given what we’ve seen before, we would expect — we did expect people to be happier with the economy than they are right now, a lot happier. One way you can try to reconcile that is you can say, the public is misinformed or misled.

There’s this Guardian Harris poll that came out a few weeks ago. It found 56 of Americans, 56 think we’re in a recession, 49 percent think the S&amp;P 500 is down this year, and 49 percent think that unemployment is at a 50-year high. For the record, we are not in a recession. The S&amp;P 500 is at a record high. And unemployment is at 3.9 percent, which is extremely low. So factually, people are wrong about the economy.

But it gets weirder than that because when you ask people how they’re doing, they say they’re doing pretty well. The Federal Reserve collects this data. In 2016, 70 percent of Americans said they were doing at least OK financially. In 2018, 75 percent said they were doing at least OK. And in 2023, 72 percent said they were doing at least OK. So that doesn’t look like an economy that people are experiencing in a way where they should think we’re in a recession or at a 50-year high in unemployment. And yet, people are unhappy about something.

So go back to that Federal Reserve report. By the way, if you’re a nerd who wants to read along here, I’m looking at “The Economic Well-Being of U.S. Households in 2023.” On page 10, they have this chart, which shows the main financial challenges people said they were facing in 2016 and in 2023 — inflation, living expenses, debt, retirement costs, medical costs, educational costs, employment. But in 2016, none of those get above percent, and 53 percent of people say they’re facing no real financial challenges at all. So that’s 2016.

In 2023, they ask the same question but get a very different response. 35 percent say inflation is their main financial challenge. 21 percent say basic living expenses. Only 31 percent say they’re not facing any challenges at all. So yeah, people say their financial situation is at least OK, but they also say they’re facing much more financial challenge than they were eight years ago. And they’re very clear about what those challenges are.

So I’ve been working around this big theory of the economy right now. And it’s based on something that got published in The Atlantic in February of 2020, that cursed month right before everything shuts down.

In February of 2020, there’s this big piece on what they call “the great affordability crisis.” And the point the piece makes is that a lot is looking good in the economy — unemployment is down, wages are rising, people are feeling good. But if you look at the things people really need, housing, health care, education, child care, costs have just exploded. Quote, “The spiraling cost of living has become a central facet of American economic life.”

That piece read a little counterintuitively at the time. People felt the economy was great. How could you say there’s a crisis? And people hadn’t been paying much attention to costs for a while. The big problems after the Great Recession had been unemployment, consumer demand, financial fragility. This affordability problem, it was building in the background, but it wasn’t the thing we were looking at.

But then the pandemic hit, and then came inflation. And it was like this portal of salience for prices. Suddenly, all anybody was focused on was prices. The monthly inflation report got the attention that the monthly jobs report used to get — gas prices, food prices, car prices. Then the Federal Reserve begins raising interest rates, that makes it much harder to borrow money, much harder to finance buying a home.

And so the economy reorders itself to piss you off about how expensive everything is all of the time. The price of a cup of coffee is a reminder of the cost of a house, of child care, of a car, of a movie ticket. Maybe you can pay it. Maybe your financial situation is even OK after you pay it. But it doesn’t mean you like it and you’re reminded of it constantly.

What happened is not that the economy is terrible now and it was great in 2019, it’s at an affordability problem was building in 2019, a cost of living problem. Then inflation hit, and it made prices much worse, and it made the cost of living problem much worse. And now, prices and affordability are the part of the economy that people are seeing, and they hate it.

The 2020 Atlantic piece, which has done so much to shape my thinking, it was written by Annie Lowrey. She’s a staff writer at The Atlantic and an economics correspondent. She’s the author of the book “Give People Money.” And a little awkwardly for this podcast, she’s also my wife — or I’m her husband. So you can imagine what pillow talk is like in my home, but there’s really no one for me better to talk about this with. As always, my email, [*ezrakleinshow@nytimes.com*](mailto:ezrakleinshow@nytimes.com)

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Annie Lowrey, welcome to the show.

ANNIE LOWREY: Thank you for having me.

EZRA KLEIN: It’s a little bit of an odd —

ANNIE LOWREY: It’s a really weird —

EZRA KLEIN: [LAUGHS]

ANNIE LOWREY: It’s a really weird — It’s also one of the strange things about it is that we’re in a really nice podcasting studio, but we’re sitting like five feet apart from one another. So it has a little like, are we in a legal dispute?

EZRA KLEIN: Yeah, that’s a rich person’s Thanksgiving.

ANNIE LOWREY: [LAUGHS] Exactly.

EZRA KLEIN: But unfortunate to have you here because as you know better than other people do, this piece you wrote years ago has wormed its way into my brain. And I bring it up every six months. And it’s become like the way I see the economy.

So 2020, right before the entire world shuts down, you write “The Great Affordability Crisis.” What led to writing the piece?

ANNIE LOWREY: Both you and I became reporters during the George W. Bush administration. And I was doing a lot of intense beat reporting during the Obama administration. And throughout this entire period, and this is what people are experiencing in the economy, the economy is defined by low growth, low interest rates, low inflation, high inequality. And the primary problem that policymakers are trying and failing to solve has to do with consumer demand, with demand in the economy. The issue is that people aren’t making enough money to buy things.

This entire time, this cost of living crisis is also brewing. And you can even date it somewhat earlier, but I think probably, the aughts are a good place to start it, where the cost of — I identify four things, but there are probably five. These are costs that are big and are sticky, and that you are not transacting frequently. And the four things are health care, child care, higher ed, so higher ed debt, and then housing. And the cost of all four of those things becomes really, really brutal, not just for low income Americans, but middle income, and in some cases, even upper-middle income Americans.

And it really changes our relationship to the economy. And it sneaks up on us again because we’re in this circumstance in which the primary issue is wages and low demand.

EZRA KLEIN: You said there was a fifth that you would have included if you’d gone back. What was number five?

ANNIE LOWREY: Elder care, which is a really, really big issue and has some of the same pressures as child care in terms of wages and accessibility. This is actually becoming a bigger issue as the American population ages.

EZRA KLEIN: Why is inflation low? Because housing is going up, child care is going up, the education is going up. So how do prices seem low to people, even as the affordability of basic — the basic items of both middle class life and upward mobility are skyrocketing?

ANNIE LOWREY: There’s two things that I think are quite important here. So one is that you can have inflation increasing just a little bit more for these items than the overall rate of inflation. And over time, that’s going to lead you to a big problem because if these are large parts of family budgets and large parts of the economy overall, if you have inflation in health care, that’s one percentage point higher than the overall rate of inflation, you’re going to develop a problem really quickly.

The second thing is that our consumer expenditure statistics and our inflation statistics do not take into account the trade offs that people make in order to keep their personal budgets reasonable. So let’s say, as an example, that you would like to live with your partner in a high cost city like D.C., and you’d like to rent an apartment together, but you can’t. So instead, you’re living together in a group house. You probably don’t have a consumer expenditure problem on paper in terms of the amount of money that you’re spending on rent, but you really don’t like the feeling of that.

So I think especially, when it comes to housing, folks, for instance, maybe you’d really like to — you get a great job in LA and you’d really like to live there, but you have three kids and you’re like, I can’t afford that. So you stay where you are. And so your — by being pushed out to a different urban area or an exurb or a suburb, you are probably keeping your spending in line, but you’re probably pretty upset. And cost pressures are still defining your life in some sense. And so that’s why I think that these snuck up on people.

EZRA KLEIN: There are two things during this period that are really cheap or maybe two baskets of things. One is things you do buy a lot of. You don’t buy your house very often. You pay your mortgage monthly, but you don’t buy a lot of houses if you’re a normal person. But you do buy a lot of food. You do go to the gas station a lot.

And in this period, consumer purchasing is pretty cheap, right? Things are cheap. You can get a flat screen television for very little money, laptops, smartphones, all these kind of electronics famously come way down. And money is cheap. Interest rates are low.

ANNIE LOWREY: Yup.

EZRA KLEIN: How much was the cheapness of other things, the cheapness of money, the cheapness of debt, the cheapness of consumer electronics, cheapness of food, creating a sense that prices were under control that allowed some of these other things to go nuts.

ANNIE LOWREY: Absolutely. So the consumer expenditure that people notice the most — I would say, probably, the two that they notice the most are gas and food. Gas is really important because it’s a throughput. So if the price of gas goes up, the price of other things goes up. But also people, it’s a pretty large single purchase that a lot of folks make every couple days or maybe once a week, and it’ll be like 100 bucks to fill up your tank or $50 to fill up your tank.

And food, folks tend to transact really, really frequently with that. So if you have the cost of stuff that you are purchasing in a store frequently is really pretty low, I think the perception of inflation can be somewhat lower. I think people don’t really think of health care and rent as being really important parts of inflation, but they are because they’re a big part of the overall consumer basket.

EZRA KLEIN: So then what connected these four or five categories — health care, housing, child care, elder care, higher ed. Give me a sense of how much prices had gone up, but why in those five? If other things are cheaper, if money is cheap, why is that set of things expensive?

ANNIE LOWREY: It’s slightly different for each of them. So let’s take housing first, because this is the biggest one and in some ways, I think, the worst one. So housing starts currently are about 1.4 million. It’s a 1.4 million annual pace.

EZRA KLEIN: That’s how many new houses were —

ANNIE LOWREY: Yeah, exactly, how many new houses are getting permitted and are going to get built. We had more housing starts in 1959 than we do now. The population has doubled. And so after the housing crisis, housing starts go as low as like 500,000. And we have a whole decade of depressed residential construction.

So we have decades of under production, and especially, under production in the high cost areas, high wage areas, where most people want to work. So San Francisco or New York are two really, really great examples of this. But we end up having a housing shortage everywhere, and it means people aren’t living where they want to be living, and it means that people are paying a tremendous amount for housing.

So right now, the median sales price for a single family home is six times higher than the median household income. That’s the highest ratio of any statistic that we have. That’s from the Harvard Joint Center on Housing Studies. The number of cost burdened renters. so folks who are spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing, has gone up to a record 22 million households. 12 million American households are spending more than 50 percent of their income on housing.

And so this is a problem that, again, you get over the course of decades. And the cost of housing increases the cost of everything else because businesses pay rent also, and folks need to have wages that cover the cost of housing, right? So there’s that.

Health care is somewhat different. So the health expenditure to G.D.P. ratio in the United States is 17 percent. It’s a little bit less than double the O.E.C.D. average.

EZRA KLEIN: So the percentage of our economy that goes to health care.

ANNIE LOWREY: Exactly. And we don’t have better health outcomes than other countries in the O.E.C.D., we just literally pay more. And so in 1990, the health share of G.D.P. is 12 percent. And it starts just this long, slow climb.

And so there’s actually some good news in health care, which is that the share of G.D.P. that is spent on health care has actually been somewhat flat since the Obama administration. This is great news. The problem here isn’t really inflation, it’s the level. We’re just paying an extraordinary amount for health care.

One of the ways that this is burdening folks is that out of pocket costs controlled for inflation have just gone up and up and up and up and up slowly. So the average person is now paying about $1,400 a year on out-of-pocket health costs. And that’s despite the fact that we have a large share of our population on Medicaid, where out of pocket costs are seriously, seriously controlled.

EZRA KLEIN: Yeah, I think of this as the paradox of health care spending, where one way we got overall costs down was we shifted costs onto people. So on the one hand, if you look at health care spending as a percentage of G.D.P., it looks like it is not going up as fast as it was before. And that’s actually true for a bunch of different reasons.

ANNIE LOWREY: Yes. Yes.

EZRA KLEIN: But one way we also got health care cost increases down is to just make people pay more out of pocket. And that does have an effect of getting people to forego both some unnecessary care and some necessary care. But to people, it doesn’t feel like they’re spending less. They are noticing themselves spending more, so they’re pissed about it.

This was always a problem with the Obamacare bending the cost curve idea in the end. What people wanted was to spend less on health care themselves, not for the entire country to spend less on health care. But the way we got the entire country to not see health care costs grow so much was to make people pay more out of pocket, and that makes them mad, not happy.

ANNIE LOWREY: Absolutely. And the costs are just really high — the costs for surgical procedures, the cost for prescription medication. I’m a type 1 diabetic. I take insulin. Insulin is nine times as expensive in the United States as it is in most of our peers. It is a 100-year-old drug, it is not a new drug. It’s literally 100 years old. Why is it nine times the cost? And I think that we are starting to see some movement towards cost control, but it’s just been really hard in the United States.

So then child care. So child care for zero to five, this is a cost that families are paying for relatively short time in their lives. And it is absolutely, absolutely crushing. Average child care costs for a year are between $18,000 and $24,000 a year. And the problem is not just with how much people are paying, it’s that people don’t pay. A lot of folks cannot afford that. And we do not have enough coverage through programs like Head Start. Head Start is severely underfunded. One in five kids who would qualify for head start, gets head start.

And so folks drop out of the labor force. They rearrange their work schedules. They get family members to help. And the issue is that we have basically maxed out what people can afford to pay, and that still doesn’t mean that child care workers who are among the lowest paid in American life have a living wage. Most child care workers are still making $14 or $15 an hour, it’s just not enough.

And so we just, as a country, don’t spend enough on this. U.S. devotes about 0.3 percent of G.D.P. to early childhood education, that’s less than other O.E.C.D. countries. Another way to think about this is that we have about a 20 to 1 ratio of children under the age of four to child care workers who are aimed at that set. Canada, for instance, it’s 6 to 1. So the issue is that we are not spending enough public money on this to make it affordable, and folks are just paying absolutely obscene amounts.

EZRA KLEIN: I had a sociologist on a couple of months ago, Caitlin Collins, who did this great book, looking at parenting and work in a bunch of different countries. And the thing that is seared into my mind is her saying that in Sweden, the cost of child care is capped at well under $200 a month, capped. You just can’t pay more than that. And everybody can get it for that.

ANNIE LOWREY: It’s absolutely wild. Whereas, here, we’ve said that affordability should be at 7 percent or less per month. Just nobody pays that.

EZRA KLEIN: So then there’s higher ed.

ANNIE LOWREY: Then there’s higher ed. So a really important note here is that folks with college degree have seen really important gains in the labor market. They’ve had higher wage and earnings growth, higher wealth growth than people without a college degree. And so there’s been this long debate about like, is it worth it? And the answer, broadly, is yes.

That said, we have about $1.7 trillion worth of outstanding student loan debt, not all of which will get paid back, but a lot will get paid back. 43 million Americans currently have student loan debt.

Prior to the pandemic, the typical payment was 200 to $400 a month, which might not sound like that much, but is a lot. Add that to rent, add that to whatever you’re paying out of pocket for health care, add that to child care, if you have children, it really, really adds up.

So folks making student loan payments, for instance, they have a lower savings rate for retirement. They have smaller balances in their 401(k)s. They’re likely to delay homeownership because they’re paying their student loan debt. And I think that we’ve started to see a tremendous amount of movement on this. So the Biden administration has given forgiveness to roughly four million borrowers. It’s about $140 billion worth of student loan forgiveness. Nevertheless, this remains a really, really big problem. So these are the four things that I identify that they’ve just created this cost crisis where folks feel like they’re just sprinting to stay in place.

EZRA KLEIN: So one of the ways you would frame that piece, that was part of why it struck me at the time, was that everybody was really happy about the economy in early 2020. You have this line up top where it’s like, some of the best years the economy has ever recorded, people are getting bled dry on all these dimensions. If all of that was as bad as you’re saying, and it was, why aren’t people more upset in February of 2020?

ANNIE LOWREY: There’s a few things. So one is that directionality matters quite a bit. If things are rapidly improving or are falling apart, deteriorating really quickly, that’s going to matter more than a steady state. And here, I think that you are seeing a reversal of some of the trends in wage and inequality that we’ve had for a long time. That’s changing. And I think that people react to that.

The other thing is that the cost of living crisis that I had laid out, it built very slowly over decades. It’s a boiling the frog thing where just extremely, extremely slowly, you start to see all of these things ratchet up. And again, it’s a crisis not of inflation, not of change, it’s a crisis of level at that point.

And so I think that people, it’s less front of mind. The salient things about the economy are the wage gains. These kind of long standing problems are not quite front of mind for people. And things are getting better in a really noticeable way for folks.

EZRA KLEIN: I want to pick up on a word you just used, which is “salient,” because this has been — my motivation in this conversation a bit is trying to think about the economy and the politics of it this year, which we’ll get to. And the thing that keeps coming to mind is this question of salience, which is, we can’t hold the whole economy in our head, even in periods when we say there’s a really good economy, it’s bad for a lot of people. Millions of people are in poverty. Millions of people are losing their jobs. Periods where there’s a bad economy, lots of people are starting businesses, people are still getting rich. In a very complicated way, we have to choose what to pay attention to.

And part of my theory of this, having been an economics reporter during that period, is we just weren’t paying much attention to prices. We were paying so much attention to unemployment. We were paying so much attention to wages. We were paying so much attention to inequality. And prices had been really stable in most things for a very long time. Interest rates were low. Most consumer goods were low. And yeah, there were some problems building in housing. We did pay a fair amount of attention, actually, to health care prices. That was a lot of the Affordable Care Act debate. And you would hear people debate higher education prices.

And then the pandemic hits and everything scrambles for a while. And then inflation comes. And inflation makes prices salient. And even now, as inflation eases, that doesn’t stop.

Tell me a bit about how, actually, at this point, you understand the inflationary period we just went through, but also, how you understand the debate about whether or not it is over.

ANNIE LOWREY: So to give a little bit of a historical perspective on inflation, inflation is really high when Ronald Reagan comes into office. It’s like 13 and \xC2 percent. Then it goes on this long, slow whoosh down through the George H.W. Bush administration. And it’s in a 2 percent to 4 percent range from George W. Bush, Obama, it’s really low, it’s less than 2 percent.

So you have this long period of quietude in which consumer prices, overall, are not changing that much. And the cost of some really important consumer goods, things that people are transacting for on a day to day basis actually go down. Electronics are the most notable example of this. But as a general point, you have this extremely long period of time in which stuff and basic services, things like haircuts or whatever, it’s all really cheap. It’s really, really cheap.

And what happens is in the first half of 2021, we see price increases concentrated among a relatively small set of items in the basket of things that the government looks at to determine the Inflation rate. So energy and car prices go up. You start to see really spiking commodity prices. Then you have this two-year period in which there’s giant spikes in almost everything. Food at home spikes. Food away from home, it spikes. Gas prices go up, natural gas prices, electricity prices. Shelter prices don’t increase in the way that food prices do, but they increase a lot, and they’re so expensive that that really matters. Commodities outside of food and energy go up. So it’s really, really unbelievably broad-based.

And so now, we’ve seen inflation, overall, come down from a 9 percent annual rate to a 3 percent annual rate. But basically, what it did, it was big enough to create this phase shift in prices. And prices don’t really go down. It’s really bad when prices, overall, go down, because it means that people stop spending because why would you pay for something now if you could wait two weeks and the price would drop? I think that there was almost just no muscle memory of it. And folks got really, really, really mad. And the fact that wage gains were enough to cover it, people just didn’t believe it.

EZRA KLEIN: How good is our measurement here? How sure are we that the median American or the median ***working class*** American has more money, after all their bills and spending today, than five years ago?

ANNIE LOWREY: I wouldn’t say that statistics are perfect because what an individual family is purchasing and the trade offs that they’re making to keep themselves in budget, it’s really hard to account for all of that. But I would say that generally, our inflation statistics are pretty good. What happens is that we collect prices on a set of items from all around the economy, and then we tabulate them, and we put them into this basket of goods. And then we note the changes in that over time. And we have many alternative measures of inflation.

One thing that I would note is that there’s evidence that the Inflation experienced by lower income families has actually increased faster than higher income families because goods have gotten so much better, and there’s been so much more production aimed at high income families than low income families. So I just want to caveat that. But no, our data is quite reliable, showing that accounting for inflation, families have come out ahead and real consumption has gone up. So the amount of stuff leaving aside prices has gone up.

Inflation is just one statistic. And consumption is just one statistic. And I think that you need to look at a more holistic understanding of what people are spending money on, what they’re getting for their money, and the trade offs they’re making to keep themselves in budget.

EZRA KLEIN: I remember talking to the Biden economists when they came in. This is 2021. And they were thinking a lot about how to get to full employment, how to run the economy hot, how to accept the trade offs of running the economy hot, how to get wage gains up, how to make sure you were running at full employment for long enough that wage gains got to the poorest workers, wage gains got to Black workers, wage gains got to Hispanic workers. It’s really fairly easy to get wages up for rich people, but it takes longer in a hot economy to get them up for poorer people.

And they actually do a great job in a way on full employment. I mean, it’s amazing that unemployment is still under 4 percent. It’s amazing that wage gains have grown so quickly for the poorest workers. But they don’t really have a genuine basket of ideas early on to say nothing of political rhetoric for what to do about costs. They rename Build Back Better the Inflation Reduction Act. But it’s not really an Inflation Reduction Act, it’s a green energy spending act with some Medicare drug pricing and Obamacare subsidies thrown in.

And this, I think, actually is a fairly big problem. It takes a political system time to adjust to a new set of problems. The player that does adjust is the Fed and begins raising rates, but people don’t enjoy having interest rates go up.

And this gets, I think, to something that Larry Summers and others have been pointing out, which is that our measure of inflation has come down. Inflation tracks how much prices in these different things are going up. But the prices of the things have not come down. And our measure of inflation doesn’t track interest rates. So what people are paying now if they want to get a mortgage, which is much more expensive, if they want to be paying off credit card debt, education debt, any kind of new debt, the price of money is meaningful.

Summers and his team estimated that if you put that into inflation, it goes from roughly, some months ago, 3 percent to 9 percent for people. Do you think there’s something to the idea that actually, the inflation problem isn’t over, that if you’re a family, that because of what you’re paying now for money — you’re paying the high prices of inflation, now you’re paying the prices of higher money, and so actually, to you, it hasn’t really changed that much?

ANNIE LOWREY: So it’s really important to note, as you did, the cost of borrowing is not included in common price indices. And so in 30-year mortgage rates, they’re close to 7 percent now. The country’s median mortgage rate is just a little bit more than 3 percent. So if you’re trying to get a mortgage now, it’s just blankly unaffordable. You have to buy less house in order to get your monthly price to be the same.

Purchasing a car. About half of folks who purchase a car use financing. And the rates for that are above 8 percent. And so I think that this explains a lot.

I want to go back to something you said, which is that we actually have a tremendous policy toolkit for increasing demand. We can send out stimulus checks. We can do things like sending out child tax credit payments. We can expand the unemployment insurance system. All of these things are things that we did during the Covid recession. And just in general, we can increase the value of the earned income tax credit. There’s a million things that you can do.

On prices, we have a very anemic toolbox. And the problem is that if you have high prices caused by shortages, by things like under-building, a lot of the solutions for that are, A, long term, and B, themselves temporarily inflationary. So if we were going to build a ton more housing in order to bring down rents, if we were like, we are going to solve the housing shortage, we’re estimating at five million units, we’re building five million units, you would create a lot of inflation because that would be just so much additional building. The price of materials would go up. The price of wages would go up. And so I think that we’re in a really tough spot.

So if you’re in the White House, what can you do about inflation? You can release gas from the strategic reserve, which they did do, in response to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. You can do more negotiating on prescription drug prices, which they’ve done. You can do some stuff on antitrust to make companies compete more and to lead to lower prices. But that’s not a really quick fix. And a lot of that is instead going to prevent price increases in the future rather than bringing prices down now. You just don’t have a lot of great options.

And it’s why I think that you’ve seen the Biden administration doing things like tackling junk fees, which are right, there are costs that people pay, and at least, you can get a little bit more traction there. And it’s not, this is not a complete list of ideas and a complete set of things that they’ve been doing. The point is that it’s pretty easy to juice demand. And it’s hard to affect supply and hard to affect prices with the economic tools that we have that are readily there.

EZRA KLEIN: Yeah, one thing that’s really striking in the housing market, and you wrote this slightly devastatingly titled piece, “It Will Never Be a Good Time to Buy a Home.” One thing that is striking about the housing market is we turned up the dial on interest rates really quite high by recent historical experience, and prices of homes kept going up. They really show us how bad the supply crunch is, that prices are up, what, like 50 percent over the course of the — since before the pandemic. So now the borrowing cost is much higher, but also the price of a home is much higher.

And yeah, a lot of people have a mortgage from before, but that means they can’t sell because to sell would mean that you have to then buy your new home at this higher price with this higher interest rate. And so also, you have all this supply being kept off the market. The housing market seems really quite broken to me.

And housing, I think, has a pretty outsized effect on how people feel about the future. Young people who are not trying to buy a house right now but want to in the next 5 to 10 years, think about housing. It affects how they feel about the economy, even if they’re not in the market for it right now.

Parents who see their kids not being able to buy a house, that matters to how they feel about the economy. Housing does, sometimes, feel like this master price to me that affects everything. And the level of brokenness there feels quite profound.

ANNIE LOWREY: Absolutely. Because what’s going to happen when interest rates go down is a bunch of people who have their down payments ready are going to flood back into the housing market, and they’re going to hold prices at the same level or maybe even push them higher. Unless you’re in a world where there’s more supply over long period of time, I don’t see the fundamentals changing, even if prices and levels might go up and down a little bit. We have a very big hole to dig ourselves out of.

The only good thing I can say about it is that you have a lot of political figures who really care about this now, and you have both blue state and red state governors who are really starting to take this seriously. For the first time since I’ve been a policy reporter, you have folks starting to say something like, how can we get everybody on the same building code? What can we do to create carrots and sticks so that places will allow dense construction? And we didn’t have that for a really, really long time.

I actually remember, after the housing crisis, when housing economists started to say, we’re underconstructing. And I remember, at the time that they started to say that, being like, what is wrong with you? What are you talking about? How could this possibly be an issue? But they were completely correct, because the problem actually started before the housing crisis. In some cities, we start underconstructing in the 1970s.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

EZRA KLEIN: So you have prices way up, basically, on everything now. So prices went up for every good. The affordability crisis set of prices has been up and went even higher post-pandemic. The price of money is way up. And at the same time, you have this debate about whether or not the economy is really great or something is missing. You have these measures, these predictions of what consumer sentiment will be like, given an inflation rate and given an unemployment rate. And they show consumer sentiment should be really high if it is tracking historical trends.

You have this endless back and forth about, well, on the one hand, people say their own personal financial situation is pretty good. On the other hand, they say that the national economy is really bad. People seem to think we’re in a recession, but they don’t look financially like they’re in a recession.

Why has there been this sense of confusion? We’re laying out this whole theory of prices. It just looks really bad. And on the other hand, a lot of economists have been scratching their heads over why people are so upset. So what accounts for the head scratching response?

ANNIE LOWREY: We’ve talked about this, but I think it’s important to stress. Wages have gone up more than prices, and that is particularly true for lower income folks. So if you are in the bottom decile of earners, your real wages, so wages adjusted for inflation have gone up 12 percent since 2019. If you’re in the highest decile of folks, it’s just about 1 percent. So real consumption, meaning, consumption holding prices constant has increased about 10 percent over the past four years. We are buying more stuff.

And if you look at levels of — measures of material hardship, those have been going down. And that’s not to say that there aren’t problems. I also believe that inflation, A, it was kind of a surprising change for folks, and B, there are some economic facets and behavioral economic facets of it that make people particularly angry about it.

So one is that unemployment is absolutely devastating for the folks who experience it. But even in an enormous, terrible recession, perhaps, 1 in 10 folks who wants a job will be unemployed, whereas inflation affects literally everybody. In an economy, and when I talk to people, inflation is much more pernicious for lower income folks because they’re really spending every dollar that they have on basic necessities, and for higher income folks, that’s not true. But you can talk to really rich people and they will be mad about inflation. They are mad about how much they are paying for things. It’s just universally enraging to people.

And there’s this perceptual problem. So the economist, Stefanie Stantcheva, who is at Harvard, who has found that Americans believe that their purchasing power is falling in a world in which there’s a lot of inflation. About four in five respondents to this survey that she conducted said that prices systematically increase faster than wages. That means nobody’s really getting ahead. This is not true, but this is what people think, real consumption and real wages are up.

And her polling also shows that folks blame corporate greed. They blame Washington for inflation. They don’t see it as a function of input prices, energy costs, supply shortages, rising wages. And they also don’t see inflation as part of any kind of an economic trend that’s positive, including their own wage gains, even though their own wage gains are partially a product of inflation.

EZRA KLEIN: I want to hold on that. How does somebody experience a wage gain? Your boss calls you into the office and says, we’re giving you a 6 percent, a 5 percent, a 7 percent raise. You’ve done great work. Thank you for everything you’ve done. Or you go look for a job and are able to bargain a higher salary than you were able to do before. That feels like something you did. I got a good raise.

And inflation feels like something happening to you. I got this raise. I’m making $2 more an hour than I was. And inflation is eating 80 percent of that. Inflation is a bad thing happening to you. And wage gains are a good thing you did. And the fact, frankly, that any of your wage gain is getting eaten by faster than normal inflation or prices that you have not in any way adjusted to, it’s really maddening.

ANNIE LOWREY: Absolutely. And look, the reason that interest rates are so high right now is to get inflation down because inflation is economically destabilizing when it’s too high, and it’s socially destabilizing. This is really well known. And again, you can tell people over and over and over again that they’re better off, but if you have inflation rates at 9 percent, people aren’t going to listen to you. They don’t like it. They don’t want to have to do mental math every time they go to the grocery store.

And when I talk to people about why they think the economy is bad, the first thing that people say to me, often, is, lunch at Chick-fil-A is $15. And lunch at Chick-fil-A being $15 is neither here nor there in the grand universe of what people are earning and paying for, but it’s a price that people notice, and it really ticks them off.

The other thing is inflation has come down. It’s going to take a while for people to believe that. And one thing that I do think is changing now is that you are starting to see companies really start to compete for consumers on price. So both Burger King and McDonald’s have set out these $5 value meals. And Target said that it’s cutting prices for 5,000 frequently purchased items — things like diapers, and cat food, and dog food.

And we’ve been in this million, which prices just feel like they go up, and up, and up, and feel people feel like they’re not getting a break. And already, you’ve seen consumer sentiment start to tick up. And I think that companies engaging in price wars will actually have a pretty profound effect for as long as it sticks around for.

EZRA KLEIN: How much do you think the high prices of the small things act as a constant reminder of the high prices of the big things, which is to say, in a world where you know that health care, and housing, and education are incredibly expensive, how much does the fact that Chick-fil-A is $15, that a cup of coffee is $7 act as this constant salience portal to keep you thinking about this thing that is making you mad all through the economy?

ANNIE LOWREY: I think this is really important. So let’s say, as an example, the average American adult makes a purchase two or three times a day. And some people make purchases way more frequently than that. And a lot of families make purchases less often. They get gas once a week. They get groceries once a week and maybe a few other little things.

And so if two or three times a day, you are being reminded of the fact that your money is going less far than it used to be, I think that you’re going to be pretty angry about that. So one in three Americans eats something from a fast food restaurant every day. And about two in three Americans eat something from a fast food place once a week. It’s just really, really, really common. And the prices for fast food went up a lot. And I think that that contributed quite a lot also. Americans are currently spending more than 11 percent of their income on meals. That’s the largest share since the 1990s. So I think a lot of this is about food and restaurant costs going up quite sharply.

Between the summer of 2021 and the summer of 2022, grocery store prices go up nearly 14. And the cost of some grocery store staples — so dairy products, things like sugar and oil, cereals, it’s more than percent. And so I think that for high frequency items, all of a sudden, you just get this blasted in your face again and again and again. And even if you’re not spending that much overall on these things, I think it’s basically just tapping your shoulder over and over and over again and saying your money is going less far.

Whereas, even something like rent, which people complain about and talk about all the time, but it usually gets set once a year and you pay it monthly, so you’re reminded of it less frequently, even though that’s a much bigger line item on the budgets and fundamentally, I think a much more problematic part of the economy. And notably, rent goes up a tremendous amount during the pandemic. It’s a nightmare. It was really expensive. It’s even more expensive now.

EZRA KLEIN: One of the things that economists will say when they’re pushing back on the idea that how people feel about the economy is merited, I think that’s actually the right word for this pushback, is, look, if it was so bad, people would be changing their behavior more than they are, that people are still going out to eat a lot, they’re still buying a lot of food out of the house, that we see what it looks like when people are under very high levels of financial stress. And they make different decisions. Their consumption patterns change really radically. If you lose your job, you don’t keep spending in the same way.

But my sense from them is the consumption data has been pretty stable. And that has been a confusing thing to economists in this period. Inflation should lead to a lot of changes in how people act. It’s not led to very many changes in how people act, but it has led to a lot of anger from those same people. First, is that true? And second, how do you read the both reality and politics of that consumption data?

ANNIE LOWREY: So if you have price increases and just cost pressures within families, folks tend to make some pretty predictable responses. So one is that they purchase fewer items per shopping trip or they might reduce the number of shopping trips. So folks have not really cut the number of shopping trips much, but they have reduced the number of items that they are purchasing when they go get consumer packaged goods.

The second is that they’ll trade down. So you’ll go for Kirkland rather than Pampers. You will go for Aldi rather than Wegmans. You’ll go camping instead of going to Disney. And folks are doing that. But the main way that consumers have responded is just by paying higher prices. And you can actually go back and look at company earnings calls. The corporate executives themselves are like, well, we kind of keep on testing the water and we’re not seeing much effect. So we’re going to keep on pushing prices upward.

We’ve not seen a dramatic pullback in luxury goods shopping, or travel, or jewelry, all of those things that you would expect to be the first to go because people give those up and they keep on purchasing food. People are just mad about it, but they kept on paying. I do think that that has changed a fair bit recently.

So one is that we’ve started to see a really big increase in credit card balances and an increase in delinquencies. And so that’s some evidence that lower income consumers are starting to get stressed. And they’re putting things on their credit card rather than being able to pay for them themselves. And again, we’ve also seen these companies be like, OK, we’ve tapped out, we’re going for the value meal. We’re going to try to get consumers an increase foot traffic by competing on price.

And so it’s important to note that the costs for big box stores, for fast food restaurants, you’ve had a really big increase in labor costs. You had a lot of big increases in input costs. And both of those things have calmed down. But I do think that we’re in this period where probably, this is as much as folks can safely spend.

EZRA KLEIN: You mentioned a minute ago those corporate earnings calls, where C.E.O.s would be like, look, we’re raising prices, people are still paying it. We’re going to raise prices again. One of the more popular explanations among more left-leaning people for inflation was what got called greedflation, which is, there wasn’t really a problem here, except that corporations were taking advantage of a weird moment in the economy to do huge markups. Was the greedflation theory correct or how do you understand that part of it?

ANNIE LOWREY: I certainly don’t think it was the only thing going on, if it was part of what was going on. The cost of labor really went up. It started going up when you started to have increases in local and state minimum wages, which begins during the Obama administration. Then you have a really big increase in wages for lower income workers that starts around 2018. And the pandemic actually intensifies it quite a bit. So there’s that.

And then input costs go up too. And so the way that companies are going to respond to that is by passing that on to consumers. I do think that there was a moment where companies basically thought that because of inflation, they could increase prices even more, and in this miasma, people would pay it. But I don’t think that it was exclusively corporate greed. I would note that corporate bottom lines are looking pretty good right now, despite the fact that you have really high interest costs and these increases in costs more generally. So I don’t think it was the only thing.

EZRA KLEIN: Sometimes, I think the problem with the greedflation thesis was simply the name. Greed made it sound like they were doing something evil, when what corporations do naturally is try to find the price at which they can balance market demand and the highest profits they can possibly make. But it was true that there was more room for them to raise prices than I think they had thought in 2020. And things that you might have thought would happen, like really intense comparison shopping or intense use of coupons didn’t happen.

And it does seem to me that one thing that occurred was a step change reshuffling of prices. And now, consumers are stressed enough that you’re beginning to have price wars bringing things down in certain areas. You mentioned Burger King, for instance, and Target trying to think about how to bring in more budget-conscious consumers.

But there was this period where they’re pretty open about this on earnings calls. And I don’t think the right way to understand it is greed. Corporations trying to earn profits is what corporations do. But it turned out that there was a zone of price increases you could inflict on people, where instead of them changing their behavior, they would get really mad. And that feels to me like the economic zone we’ve been in for a little while. The person paying the cost on this is Joe Biden, not Target or Walmart or McDonald’s, but people are mad about it. It’s just like, the corporations actually did this adroitly enough that they didn’t lose a lot of demand, they just pissed people off.

ANNIE LOWREY: There is a really interesting raft of studies that has come out in the last five years from economists that show that American consumers have gotten less price-sensitive. So when prices shift, consumption doesn’t shift like we would expect. It doesn’t shift like it would used to. And these studies are mostly looking at consumer packaged goods, consumer goods.

So other ways that we think that households have become less price-sensitive, people are using fewer coupons, they’re spending less time shopping and comparison shopping. So why might this be true? One is just that stuff is cheaper, thanks to globalized trade and manufacturing advances. The second is that people are wealthier. So you’re just less price-sensitive when you’re richer.

Third is women in the workforce — so it used to be much more common for one partner to work and the other to spend the money. And so you would probably have that time, it would be part of your job as a household worker to comparison shop. But now, given that so many prime age women are in the workforce, there’s less time for them to do that. Consumers seem to have gotten more brand loyal is part of this, that’s one theory.

And another theory is that it’s just inertia. People have gotten older. And they tend to have this inertia that they will be less likely to try new things, buy new things as they get older. And so you just always buy the Starbucks coffee, so you’re going to keep on getting the Starbucks coffee.

I also think there’s some chance that targeted advertising and dynamic pricing has something to do with this, but I don’t know. It’s just a really interesting shift that I’m not sure that we completely understand and completely understand the implications of yet.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

EZRA KLEIN: I want to shift then into the macro politics of this. And I want to separate two pieces of it, which is how people feel about the economy and how those feelings about the economy translate into politics. But one thing that you’ve been doing pieces on for many years now is the rising way in which partisanship shapes perceptions of the economy. Tell me a bit about that and how it might be playing into this period.

ANNIE LOWREY: So there’s something called the Partisan Economic Expectations Gap. And basically, what this shows is that if you are a Democrat and there’s a Republican in the White house, you’re much more likely to think that the economy is bad. And that’s true, even holding economic conditions constant.

And the flip is also true. This happens for both sides. It’s not an asymmetric thing. If you’re a Republican and Joe Biden is in the White House, you’re like, this is a terrible economy. We need that guy Donald Trump back.

And this had the effect of somewhat divorcing folks opinions about the state of economy from the real state of the economy because it’s become so political. It has also narrowed the band of consumer expectations because people are not changing their minds about anything anymore. You just have way more strong Democrats who say, economy is good right now, and way more strong Republicans who say that it’s bad. This is happening at the same time that we have growing evidence that real economic data might be less predictive in elections than it used to.

EZRA KLEIN: But one thing happening in Joe Biden right now is that you do see this huge partisan economic expectations gap. But also, Democratic views on the economy are not as positive as you might think if you were taking that model from a couple of years ago.

ANNIE LOWREY: Totally.

EZRA KLEIN: There’s something weird happening among the Democrats. They’re not giving Joe Biden the economic pass that you might expect from what we’ve seen in that data before. Why do you think that is?

ANNIE LOWREY: There’s two answers, and I don’t know which one it is. One is that they don’t really like him. Joe Biden is a somewhat less compelling politician for Democratic partisans than some other folks are in terms of his ability to stir the electorate and increase things like turnout. I think he’s a somewhat less vigorous campaigner than we’ve seen. And I think that he has somewhat lower favorability ratings and higher unfavorability ratings among his own partisans than we’ve seen in the past.

The second is that inflation is hitting them, and they’re just subject to the same forces that everybody else is in the economy. So Democrats are somewhat clustered more in the Northeast than on the Western coast, where you’ve seen really large increases in specifically, housing costs. But then you’ve seen urban housing costs go up everywhere. And so to the extent that we have all of these blue islands, that’s exactly where the prices have gone up, and it’s been really, really, really pretty bad.

That said, I do think that over the past, call it 10 years, you’ve started to see the housing crisis spread to communities that we would never think of as having won before. Rural areas, you’ve seen really dramatic increases in housing costs. Ex-urban areas, you’ve seen dramatic increases in housing costs. It’s everywhere now.

I would note that the mediating influence of the news media probably matters here quite a bit. So we know that holding economic conditions constant, media coverage of the economy has gotten more negative. And it’s especially more negative in social media where a lot of folks are now getting their news.

And I don’t think that that’s entirely the fault of journalists. People seek out bad stories, that’s what people want to read. So these are all headlines that have come out recently about household financial health and consumer spending — Americans keep on spending, but big retailers doubt it’ll last, Slump in big purchases clashes with government’s strong consumer data, Americans are still spending like there’s no tomorrow, Americans plan vacations even as they sour on the economy. These are all great stories. I’m not picking. These are all great. They’re really, really sensitive and really well-reported.

EZRA KLEIN: Does this media explanation actually feel true to you? Because here’s what I have experienced, as a person who writes about the economy, is married to a person who writes about the economy, and works in a place full of people who write about the economy, what I noticed happening was there was all this very sunny coverage of the economy, and everybody doing it was getting yelled at.

ANNIE LOWREY: Yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: You write something about how the economy is actually looking really strong or we’re avoiding that recession or something. And people just got slammed by their audiences. They got slammed as out of touch. I don’t want to blow up your spot here, but you’ve written some pieces saying like, this economy’s actually pretty good. My sense is the reader feedback on that can be spicy, sometimes.

ANNIE LOWREY: Yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: And I feel like the media got whipped by its audience a little bit into taking at least, some portion of the audience’s economic experience more seriously, which I’m not saying is a good or a bad thing, I think it’s a complicated thing. But it isn’t my impression that the economics reporting profession wanted to be negative on the economy. It’s that when they started covering the economy positively, what they heard from their readers or viewers or whatever, and then what they saw in the polling data, how people actually felt about the economy, was that people were not experiencing the economy positively at all.

I’ve seen the media in periods when we want to cover the economy negatively because the data is really negative. And that has not been what I’ve noticed happening here. In fact, I see a lot of stories about why aren’t people happier, given all this good economic data? And then all these people yelling at the author of those stories, explaining why it is that they’re not happy.

ANNIE LOWREY: I think that people’s understanding of inflation is not economists’ understanding of inflation, which is something you were just trying to. I think it is real that people feel extraordinarily taxed by high prices. And the fact that the prices have only gone up 3 percent, they just went up 10 percent. I really credit that because I think that people are experts in their own experience. And I think what people are experiencing is really, really important.

Nevertheless, it feels to me important to point out that inequality dropping, that’s amazing. Declines in child poverty, that’s amazing. This is going to sound, perhaps, simplistic, but we have a gigantic economy. We’re not like Germany, where the entirety of the E.U. And so there’s just always a lot happening. And it can be hard when you’re doing these big gestural stories about the big headline statistics. You’re constantly missing things that are happening in this really vast, really, really, really diverse, really politically diverse, racially diverse, ethnically diverse country in which there’s really, really big problems.

People are allowed to be mad at stories. And I think you just have to hew to the complicated economic truth of any situation. It’s why I actually think that a lot of those headlines are correct. But I think that that leaves a lot of space for people to read in their partisan priors or read in their view of things.

EZRA KLEIN: I want to go back to another explanation you offered a second ago, which is the question of whether Democrats like Joe Biden enough to look at the economy through their feelings about Joe Biden. So I’ve been thinking a lot about 2012 and going back and looking a lot at the 2012 data. And I think just inarguably, the economy was just much worse in 2012. I mean, unemployment in May of 2012 was 8.2 percent.

ANNIE LOWREY: Awful.

EZRA KLEIN: 8.2 percent, really bad.

ANNIE LOWREY: Miserable.

EZRA KLEIN: I remember covering the monthly jobs report in 2012, and just I assure you that economic coverage in the media was much more negative then. And Barack Obama was leading Mitt Romney by two points in the real clear polling average. So you have a much worse economy and you have the Democratic incumbent leading.

And the way that the economy figures in to politics is not a one to one like, I like the economy, so I like the incumbent. That’s not how people think about it. You often have incumbents governing in an economy that is recovering from something bad happening to it. That was Reagan in 1984. There had been this big recession, the Volcker recession in ’81. Reagan and Republicans have a really bad midterm election in 1982. But by ’84, things are kind of getting better. I mean, they’re worse than they are now — unemployment is higher, inflation is higher, the interest rate is higher, but Reagan makes a morning in America argument. And people credit him with a comeback that they feel is happening.

In 2012, the economy is quite bad, but Obama is making this argument, it’s made very aggressively at the convention that year, that the entirety of the financial crisis wasn’t on him, obviously. And he’s a smart, thoughtful guy who cares about people like you. And he’s got the best economic people around him. And Mitt Romney’s a plutocrat. And you should trust Obama to manage a comeback. And that’s ultimately a winning economic message.

And the thing you’ve been seeing this year, I think, is people not, as of yet, at least, being willing to extend that trust to Joe Biden. When you ask them, they say, they trust Donald Trump on the economy more. But just in general, I don’t think that the argument the administration or Biden himself has been able to make, at least, in enough forums that people are seeing or hearing it, is giving people a sense like, yeah, this guy has it under control. I’m not even sure liking or disliking is the right way to think about it, it’s the has it under control dynamic.

Donald Trump’s pitch is, the economy is good when I was president until the pandemic hit, and I’m a strong man who will jawbone the prices down and cut good deals for you and something, something, something. And Joe Biden’s pitch, I think, has been a little bit more complicated, but also, just the impression he gives off due to age and maybe the way they’re campaigning is a little less energetic. And that feels to me like it is mattering here.

ANNIE LOWREY: Obama wins at a time that you have a housing crisis that creates a global financial crisis. And I think that we, sometimes, forget that the first domino, the first big thing that happens is you have these dramatically elevated property seizures between 2007 and 2010.

EZRA KLEIN: Yeah. So you’re saying he wins in ’08 this way.

ANNIE LOWREY: Yeah. Exactly. 10 million families lose their home. 10 million families. He comes in. And George W. Bush and his administration own that. Obviously, the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act is way too small. There’s some questions about whether he should have pivoted to the A.C.A. or not, and I don’t know about the counterfactual there. But by 2012, things are getting better pretty significantly.

And Mitt Romney, notably, he’s like a fancy finance guy at a time that inequality is really, really high, and inequality is the problem, and rich families are rebounding and low income families aren’t. And so Obama is able to make this pretty compelling case. Do you want the bain guy who laid a bunch of you off? Do you want him running the White House? And that economic argument makes sense.

I think that personalities matter here a lot, right? Obama was like a once in a generation political talent who was extraordinarily good at campaigning. For folks who didn’t get to see him, he was magnetic up there. And Joe Biden right now is just a less vigorous campaigner. Donald Trump, I think, just has he’s unusual in running to unseat an incumbent in the sense that he was president himself. It’s just a strange election in that way. And he’s also pretty good on TV. He’s a celebrity. And I think that he’s been capable of making this argument of, yeah, it was better back then, even though I’m not even sure that it was.

EZRA KLEIN: So Biden gave an interview to CNN a couple of weeks, a month ago, something like that. And it was very much an economics interview. So why don’t we play the way he’s messaging this?

^ARCHIVED RECORDING (ERIN BURNETT)^: Economic growth last week, far short of expectations. Consumer confidence, may be no surprise, is near a two-year low. With less than six months to go to election day, are you worried that you’re running out of time to turn that around?

^ARCHIVED RECORDING (JOE BIDEN)^: We’ve already turned it around. Look at the Michigan survey. 65 percent of the American people think they’re in good shape economically. They think the nation’s not in good shape, but they’re personally in good shape.

The polling data has been wrong all along. How many of you guys do a poll with CNN? How many folks you have to call to get one response? The idea that we’re in a situation where things are so bad, the folks — I mean, we’ve created more jobs. We’ve made — we’re in a situation where people have access to good paying jobs. And the last I saw, the combination of the cost of inflation, all of the things, that’s really worrisome to people, with good reason. That’s why I’m working very hard to bring the cost of Reynolds down, to increase the number of homes that are available.

But let me say it this way, when I started this administration, people were saying there’s going to be a collapse in the economy. We have the strongest economy in the world. Let me say it again, in the world.

EZRA KLEIN: What do you think of that?

ANNIE LOWREY: As a reporter, I don’t argue with people’s perceptions of how things are. But I think it’s a political problem that he and other Democrats have run into. They feel like they’re being gaslit, if you say, well, you’re coming out ahead. That’s just not how people feel.

I am not a person who thinks a lot about political messaging, but I’m not sure that the Biden campaign has hit on the economic message about how it’s going to be better tomorrow. That is really resonating with folks.

EZRA KLEIN: I was struck when I saw that interview because that interview took place in an economic setting, I forgot, it’s like a factory or something. So they clearly had set it up to be an economic interview. And the question that Erin Burnett asks there is extremely obvious, right? Put anybody in that interview chair, you’re going to get a question like that about the economy.

And I don’t want to say Biden didn’t seem ready for it, but he didn’t seem to have an answer ready. There are a couple different answers happening in that answer, and he’s not really settled on one. There’s the — actually, we have the strongest economy in the world, which is true. I mean, in a lot of ways, you look at America compared to other countries right now, and we look great. We look way better than China, which is not true for a while. We look way better than the countries in the European Union. We look way better than the UK.

There’s also the, actually, this has all turned around and you all just haven’t felt it yet, very, very complicated case to make. He goes on to make some points about trying to crack down on junk fees, that kind of thing. What I heard there was, they haven’t decided how to message this.

The other thing is that they don’t really have a big policy package here. It’s a weird thing. You can imagine a world where the Inflation Reduction Act was actually an Inflation Reduction Act. They just renamed something else, the Inflation Reduction Act. And the stuff that got cut out of it by the guy who helped, I think, rename it that, Joe Manchin, was all the stuff that actually might have brought prices down for people, all the stuff that focused on things like child care.

And so if you ask like, what is their big package? What is their headline policy on affordability? There are certain things they are touting that they’ve already done, like Medicare prescription drug pricing, which actually did bring down the price some people pay for some drugs, junk fees.

ANNIE LOWREY: The insulin price cap, really, really important.

EZRA KLEIN: Really, really important. So they — it’s not an accident, I think, that the couple of policies they have that actually brought down the price of something for someone are very central to the reelection campaign. But I don’t think they have had a very clear set of, here are the big things we intend to do on that in term two. If you’re not happy with how things have turned out, you don’t just have to wait. What you need to do is give us the House again. This is the big project here. And here’s what I’m going to do to achieve it.

ANNIE LOWREY: Absolutely. So it’s pretty hard for them to get prices down. You’re just going to have to have subdued inflation for a while for people to feel good in the grocery store again, feel good going out to target or wherever they’re shopping. There’s a lot of room to really improve the fundamentals of the economy for people by attacking the cost of living crisis.

Health care costs could go down quite a bit. It’s really hard. It’s really, really, really tough. But I think if you made an effort to get premiums and out-of-pocket costs down by instituting price controls, allowing the government to negotiate for prescription drugs, there’s a million different ideas for how to do this. That could be super powerful.

Getting rents down, increasing housing supply, that is going to have a lot of benefits for the economy. Again, it’s going to mean more construction, which is going to be inflationary. There’s tremendous space on child care. It’s really popular when states and cities do 3K and 4K, which a number of places have done now. If you had a comprehensive zero to five plan that had the government come in and basically say, you don’t have to start at five, we’re going to help you starting at six months, that would be great.

And they’ve already had a lot of traction with student loan debt. And I know that there are concerns about the distributional effects of that, but it is quite popular because I think people see the whole system as being screwed up.

EZRA KLEIN: Although, polling doesn’t do that well.

ANNIE LOWREY: Yeah. I mean, it’s popular for the people who do it. And I think that it was polling that led them to do so much on student debt, right? And again, I think people’s perceptions of things are kind of wishy washy, but I think that that can advantage politicians. Whether you can pass any of that through congress, I don’t know. It’s really, really hard. A lot of what we’re talking about would be expensive, but there’s definitely space there.

EZRA KLEIN: How about Donald Trump? So I’ve watched some of his rallies around this. And he talks a lot about how expensive everything is, talks a lot about how much it all costs. I wouldn’t say, he’s got an articulated agenda that will bring price decreases, but to the extent you understand what the Donald Trump second term economic agenda is, is it inflationary? Is it deflationary? What are the big ticket items? How would you say he is saying he would handle this?

ANNIE LOWREY: It’s pretty inflationary. So tariffs are inflationary. If you wanted to lower costs, you would just eliminate tariffs. But tariffs are a big part of his economic package. Immigration is not necessarily an issue that I think people think of economically, but in a world where we have more folks who have immigrated here, and wages are still going up, and you don’t have that sense of low wages being a function of people who got here and didn’t stand in line like they should have taking money away, I don’t know.

I think agricultural communities have also stressed the importance of immigrants to our agricultural workforce.

EZRA KLEIN: Mass deportation would be hugely price increasing.

ANNIE LOWREY: Yes. We’ve had agricultural communities, we’ve had construction companies note that absent labor provided by immigrant workers, they wouldn’t be able to do what they’re doing. Costs would go up. And we would throttle production there. I don’t think it’s the most important thing, but this would be inflationary. The cost of food is going to go up a lot if you’re having tomatoes and berries dying on the vine in California because there’s nobody there to pick it. Disrupting those parts of the economy would be really, really damaging. And again, I think it’s important to note that that is, in my mind, less important than the emotional and moral cost of trying to do something like this.

EZRA KLEIN: I think, sometimes, the response you get from Republicans on this, or you did, at least a couple of years ago, is, well then, they’ll just pay American workers more.

ANNIE LOWREY: Unemployment rate is below 4 percent? What workers are you going to get to do agricultural work? This is why we have so many folks from other countries doing agricultural work here to begin with.

Same thing with construction. Construction is really hard work and it takes a lot of skill. You’re not going to snap your fingers and have millions of Americans start doing roofing work in Florida and Texas in the sun.

EZRA KLEIN: Well, you just said about tariffs being inflation, I think, is important. And it struck me that Biden just unveiled a huge set of new anti-China tariffs. We’re not going to allow these cheaper Chinese electric vehicles in here. But his tariffs on a bunch of Chinese goods, which, on the one hand, I get the politics of, you want to take an issue away from Donald Trump. They do have genuine economic and national security concerns about rebuilding certain kinds of supply chains and manufacturing capacities in the U.S..

But at a time when you have a lot of focus on prices on the one hand and climate change on the other, jacking up the price on Chinese-made electric vehicles and solar panels and things like that, from a policy perspective, you are making things more expensive, which struck me as surprising at the moment.

ANNIE LOWREY: I think that the issue here that I see is not even really exactly an economic one. It has to do with their own energy goals. If we are going to have a transition to green energy, it’s going to be tough to do that with policies like these.

In terms of increasing American manufacturing capacity, I think there’s now a widespread understanding that it’s good to make some things here, and that not making them here leaves us really, really vulnerable. So in terms of the supply of some critical drugs, we had some really bad issues with formula and formula importation. So I think that that is true. And again, manufacturing jobs have this nice spillover.

But with China, yeah, it’s tough. And I think that this is happening for national security reasons, perhaps, more so than economic reasons. And I think the real question there is about how that would fit in with a broader energy policy.

EZRA KLEIN: But isn’t there some way in which if people could start buying whatever these are, $15,000, $20,000 Chinese-made electric vehicles that are popular in the rest of the world here, they would experience that as nice, right? I mean, it would be nice to be able to get a good electric car for a lot less money than you can currently get an electric car.

I take some of the set of affordability crisis and price crisis problems as the revenge of neoliberalism. I mean, the neoliberal trade was you kept prices really low. I mean, neoliberalism in many ways is a dominant economic orthodoxy emerges out of the inflationary crisis of the ’70s. And you keep prices low. And it turns out, that also kept wages pretty low, which is a real problem with it.

The Biden administration has been extremely clear that they are the end of neoliberalism. They are the Democratic administration making a turn on neoliberalism. It’s really the break between them and the Obama administration economically. And so what are you getting? You’re getting the other side of that bargain. You are getting higher wages, but you’re also getting significant higher prices.

And I mean, on one level, I just don’t think they figured out the politics of that. I don’t think they were prepared, not that their policies are the main thing that raised prices, but they definitely don’t have an economic story of like, why paying higher prices is a good thing in some of these areas?

And on things like the Chinese electric vehicles, I mean, I’m very uncomfortable with that policy. I understand the reasons you might want to have a domestic electric vehicle manufacturing chain. I agree with them, in many ways, but you can pull in Chinese manufacturing here. But if you want this E.V. transition to happen quickly and you don’t want people to hate you for it, you need really cheap electric vehicles. And China knows how to make them, and frankly, we don’t.

And you listen to Donald Trump at a rally, and he is going directly at this. He’s like, you’re going to hate these electric vehicles. They’re too expensive. He sees this as like a coming problem. And I don’t know, I think Democrats are about to get caught really flat footed here because on the one hand, they’re cranking up the regulations on electric vehicles, and on the other hand, here’s China willing to sell us a bunch of cheap ones. And we’re like, no, no, no, no, no. We’ll take the expensive ones.

And I’m not saying I don’t hear the rationale, I do, but they’re acting like there aren’t trade offs here. And I think the trade off is going to be politics. I don’t think the policy is going to be popular.

ANNIE LOWREY: I would isolate cars for a second. And I would think about the neoliberal trade that you are describing, more in terms of domestic labor costs. So for a long time, the cost of fast food and Walmart stuff, part of the reason that prices were so low was that wages were so low. And now, we’ve seen this shift to more European style pricing, where the prices are up a little bit, but the wages are pretty good. And you can start to see families getting by with these jobs.

And I would note that the wages are still way too low for a lot of these jobs. I really worry about delivery drivers, folks who are doing Uber Eats and that kind of thing. But I think it is fundamentally a trade that would be better if big block prices were higher, but all of the wages were higher. And again, we’ve seen really significant wage growth in those jobs. And I think that that’s good.

I think people might not like it fundamentally, but I think that that would be, overall, a good trade. On the electric vehicles issue, cars are expensive. People don’t buy them that often. The differential in cost between what we have here in the United States right now and between what China is producing is really, really significant. And so I would almost see it as its own little special issue. And I feel like I just don’t understand the foreign policy implications and the national security implications enough, because it seems to me, again, that those are somewhat predominant.

EZRA KLEIN: The reason I do connect these a bit is it feels to me like they reflect an unformed politics of prices, that the Democratic and Republican coalitions knew how to talk about the problems of demand, of jobs, of wages. They knew what their policies were. Republicans wanted to handle all this through tax cuts. Democrats want to do more stimulus. They want to do minimum wage increases, et cetera. And I think neither side is very clear on what they want to do about affordability. It’s harder. It splits your coalitions in weird ways. It has all these cross-cutting elements with other things, like the energy transition.

And the reason I think the Chinese tariffs and E.V. issue is tricky for the Democrats is that on the one hand, it shows the way some of their goals, like, don’t let manufacturing communities in the Midwest be hollowed out, don’t be too reliant on China, conflicts with other goals, which is like, you need to have something to say to people about how you’re going to get them cheap things again.

And Donald Trump and the Republicans are not better. It’s word salad. I think you see some governors who do, like Jared Polis in Colorado. You listen to that guy talk, it is just cost of living, cost of living, cost of living, cost of living. But I do think something you just really hear on both sides is that the economic problem they are facing and that is salient to the public has changed faster than they have changed. They’ve left a lot of this up to the Fed, frankly.

And in terms of really having a message on what we are going to do, and we are laser-focused on this, and we have 50 ideas for what to do here, you don’t hear that kind of talk. It’s not being treated as a kind of policy-amenable problem in the way that low demand was 15 years ago.

ANNIE LOWREY: I think that you are going to see mean reversion on prices and consumer sentiment. I think that with inflation below 3 and \xC2 percent where it is right now, things will normalize. Supply chains have readjusted. Wage growth has come down to a level that I think is more normal. And so if I were a political consultant, I would worry about fighting the last war a little bit.

I’m not sure that you need to do too much on consumer prices, given that the supply chain disruptions and everything else has evened out. I think there’s tremendous space to do a lot on the cost of living crisis. And I think it would be pretty popular. And I think that you could focus on child care, health care, housing.

Right now, we really do not have a national housing policy. And in part, that’s because housing policy is mostly left to state and local governments. HUD is teeny tiny. It’s teeny tiny. And it hasn’t gotten bigger as we’ve had this housing crisis.

EZRA KLEIN: HUD being the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

ANNIE LOWREY: Housing and Urban Development. They do very little housing and very little urban development. It’s almost exclusively the purview of state and local governments. But we’re really just starting to think about how the federal government could start increasing housing supply.

So I think that in the longer term, all of these things — these are still going to be problems for folks 5 years, 10 years from now. And I actually think that the fact that you’ve had this bending in the health care cost curve, there’s space for, yeah, let’s start getting drug prices down. Doctors and nurses, cover your ears. Let’s allow more of them in and allow more competition so that in the long term, you can have lower wages for them. It’s very, very, very unpopular, but that would probably be good.

Let’s increase health care supply, but let’s just get the prices down for all of these things. Let’s rationalize this completely irrational system. Is that good on a bumper sticker? Does that win elections? I’m not sure about that, but it’s good policy.

EZRA KLEIN: I try to take your point about mean reversion, but I do think there’s a thing in politics. This is what people are worried about now. And they all have to run this year. And there’s something about being caught trying and being caught worrying.

ANNIE LOWREY: Yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: You want people to feel like you were upset about the thing they are upset about. And if you’re the person in charge, you’re working really hard on the thing they’re upset about. I have this slightly strange view on the politics of Israel-Gaza, which is that I think the main way it is going to damage Joe Biden is not a revolt from the left on Gaza, but just a generalized sense among voters who actually don’t care about it that much. If you look at like a list of issues they think are important, like Israel and Gaza are extremely far down there, is that the feeling that Biden and the Democrats are paying all this attention to wars over there and not doing anything about the cost of groceries over here.

And to some degree, I think this is one of Trump’s stronger veins of political attack, which he’s leveraging a isolationism. We just shouldn’t be involved in Ukraine. If it were me, like Hamas would have never done this, and we wouldn’t be thinking about it. He doesn’t seem like he is interested. He’s arguing all these things are a distraction.

Now, he also doesn’t have a policy agenda, but I think that the way these things are hurting Biden is a perception that the focus is on these conflicts that most Americans just find to be like an unwinnable morass. And they’re not seeing the action and the progress on the thing that they’re really worried about.

ANNIE LOWREY: So in surveys, when pollsters are asking voters what they care about the most, they say the economy. And I recognize that I said that you have to take people at their word. I think there’s some chance that the economy is not going to be the decisive issue here. I think Joe Biden and Donald Trump personally, what people personally think about them and how they see them personally campaigning is going to matter quite a bit.

In 2022, we saw Dobbs and we saw immigration as really important and motivating issues for partisans on both sides. And so I think you need a strong economic message. But I think that there’s this way in which we had some elections recently that were absolutely dominated by economic issues. But in 2016, that wasn’t an economic election. 2020, it wasn’t really an economic election exactly, it was very unusual because of where we were in Covid at that point. 2024, I’m not sure that this is an election where the economy is going to be the dominant issue.

And I think that what happens with gas prices and with price competition from retailers is going to matter a lot in terms of folks inflation perceptions and how they feel about their own capacity to spend. And so right now, I would say that those trends are going more positively. And we’ve seen some consumer sentiment numbers that have gone up, which is exactly what you would expect. But we have the summer travel period, and commodity prices are increasing in some cases. So I don’t know how long that will hold.

EZRA KLEIN: Then always our final question. What are three books you’d recommend to the audience?

ANNIE LOWREY: I was trying to think about books about inflation and consumer prices that might be compelling for the audience.

EZRA KLEIN: That feels like a small category.

ANNIE LOWREY: Yeah, it’s a little bit tough, right?

However, there’s a really great book that came out a few years ago called “Franchise: The Golden Arches in Black America” by Marcia Chatelain. And it’s about McDonald’s and franchising, specifically about the growth of McDonald’s and its role in Black communities and with Black consumers. It’s such a compelling book. It’s so wonderful. I learned so much from it.

I recently read the best political book that I’ve ever read, which is called “A Place Of Greater Safety.” It is a novelization of the French revolution. You’re smirking at me.

EZRA KLEIN: I’ve never been recommended a book as often in my own household as this book. [LAUGHS]

ANNIE LOWREY: We were supposed to go out to see friends for drinks, and I was like, I cannot come out because we are in the critical year of 1790. And I need to know what’s happening. It’s like an 800-page historical novel by Hilary Mantel.

Price increases, price instability is a really important part of the French revolution. I didn’t know that much about the French revolution. I knew that it had happened. I knew that you have the French Republic. I knew that you execute a king and a queen, and eventually, you have this dramatic political transformation. It is so unbelievably good and so compelling.

And then I was thinking about, of the best books about the neoliberal economic deal that we make for a really long time in America that I think that we are just starting to upset and grow past, the best book I think about it, and it’s a classic, is “Nickel and Dimed” by Barbara Ehrenreich, which is a book about women in the workforce. It’s about low wages. It’s about tipping. It’s about a million things and it’s just fantastic.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

EZRA KLEIN: Annie Lowrey, thank you very much.

ANNIE LOWREY: Thank you.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

EZRA KLEIN: This episode of “The Ezra Klein Show” is produced by Rollin Hu. Fact checking by Michelle Harris with Mary Marge Locker and Kate Sinclair. Our senior engineer is Jeff Geld, with additional mixing by Aman Sahota. Our senior editor is Claire Gordon.

The show’s production team also includes Annie Galvin, Elias Isquith and Kristin Lin. Original music by Isaac Jones and Aman Sahota. Audience strategy by Kristina Samulewski and Shannon Busta. The executive producer of New York Times Opinion Audio is Annie-Rose Strasser. And special thanks to Sonia Herrero.

All right. We did it. We solved the economy.

**Load-Date:** June 7, 2024

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[***The Freethinking Bloc That Can Make or Break Haley***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B4N-8171-DXY4-X0R6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 19, 2024 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 9

**Length:** 1751 words

**Byline:** By Jonathan Weisman, Katie Glueck and Nick Corasaniti

**Body**

Her chance to beat Donald J. Trump in New Hampshire depends on her ability to win over its famously freethinking voters. Her challenge is that they come in all stripes.

Nikki Haley's presidential aspirations may hang on a victory in the New Hampshire primary election on Tuesday, powered by her sway with people who do not belong to a political party. It's not a bad bet in a state where about 40 percent of voters call themselves independents.

The problem with her plan: Those voters come in all shapes and stripes, and many of them aren't open to her.

Ms. Haley, the former governor of South Carolina, has won over plenty of voters in the middle in New Hampshire. They include moderate, conservative-leaning independents chased from the Republican Party by former President Donald J. Trump. And about 4,000 Democrats have re-registered as Republicans or independents to vote in the G.O.P. primary, in some cases to thwart Mr. Trump's steady march to the nomination.

But New Hampshire's potentially crucial primary will also include many other types of voters who have chosen to keep their distance from both parties:

Independents on the left who are loyal to their next-door senator, Bernie Sanders.

Independents on the right who plan to vote in the Democratic primary against President Biden.

True swing voters who are up for grabs in every election.

And ***working-class*** Trump supporters who don't want to belong to a Republican Party long associated with the rich -- but who are very much in the former president's camp.

''Our country was thriving when he was in last time, so I'm going to go with what I know,'' said Stacy Kolofoles of Laconia, who is a longtime independent but nonetheless ''can't see myself ever voting for a Democrat.''

Two dozen interviews with New Hampshire independents revealed stark challenges as well as ample opportunities for Ms. Haley as she courts the state's largest political constituency. A new poll from Saint Anselm College spelled it out: Mr. Trump led Ms. Haley by 65 percent to 25 percent among likely Republican voters in the state, while she edged him among unaffiliated voters by a considerably narrower margin, 52 percent to 37 percent.

That 37 percent of independents for Mr. Trump may be decisive, however. Among all voters, he had a substantial advantage, 52 percent to 38 percent, and Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida trailed far behind with 6 percent.

But the political quirkiness of the state's independent voters means that it remains unpredictable how they will affect Tuesday's results -- and ultimately whether New Hampshire will slow or speed up Mr. Trump in the sprint to the nomination.

Reluctant Haley backers

New Hampshire has one of the highest percentages of independent voter registration in the country, up there with Washington, Iowa and Colorado, according to an analysis of polling data by The New York Times. As of late December, 343,192 New Hampshire voters had registered as undeclared, while 262,262 were Democrats and 267,905 were Republicans.

And a large number of those independents are college-educated moderate voters, the kind who have gravitated to Ms. Haley, especially since former Gov. Chris Christie of New Jersey left the presidential race

Colin Carberry, 52, of Dover, is one of them. Mr. Carberry, who works in finance and lives in what he described as an affluent suburban neighborhood, voted for Mr. Trump in 2016, ''and I'm not ashamed to admit my mistake.''

He will not do that again.

''He only cares about his own ego, empowering himself and his family at the expense of the country,'' Mr. Carberry said.

He expects to vote for Ms. Haley but isn't thrilled about it. He recalled being ''taken aback'' when she stumbled through an answer about the cause of the Civil War, neglecting to mention slavery, and he would have preferred that she shut down speculation that she might serve as Mr. Trump's running mate.

His Dover neighbor, Joe Merullo, 68, who retired after 43 years with Sears to play bass in classic rock and party bands, has never registered with a political party. But, he said, he has also never voted for a Democrat for president, starting when he cast his ballot for Gerald Ford in 1976. He really wanted Mr. Christie, but without him in the race, Mr. Merullo said, he would vote for Ms. Haley with little enthusiasm.

A Trump-Biden general election would be even worse, he said.

''I don't know what I'll do, and it looks like I'll be faced with that choice,'' he said.

The anti-Trump vote

A lack of passion for Ms. Haley also surfaced in polls before Iowa's caucuses.

The final Iowa Poll from The Des Moines Register, NBC News and Mediacom found that only 9 percent of her supporters said they were extremely enthusiastic to support her. The poll pointed to a narrow second-place finish for her, if she could rally her hesitant voters.

She didn't, and fell to third place on Monday.

Such apprehension was evident in interviews with New Hampshire independents who were considering Ms. Haley.

David Fournier, 78, of Nashua, considers himself a lifelong Democrat and said he volunteered for the campaigns of Bill Clinton and Howard Dean. But he is not registered with a political party, he said, so he can keep the flexibility to vote in either party's primary depending on the contest.

He is leaning toward casting a ballot for Ms. Haley, though he said he would ''under no circumstances'' support her in November should she win the nomination.

''It's not a pro-Haley vote, it's a negative-Trump vote,'' Mr. Fournier said, adding, ''Anything to put a ding on his belt.''

Several efforts are underway to engage undeclared voters in the primary. A new super PAC called Independents Moving the Needle on Wednesday began running two ads in New Hampshire featuring independent voters speaking directly to camera about their support for Ms. Haley. The group has booked more than $200,000 in airtime through Primary Day, according to AdImpact, a media tracking firm.

''This is about preserving our democracy, and there's a man who is a threat to democracy,'' said Robert Schwartz, who is leading another initiative to encourage voters -- in particular, undeclared voters who participated in the 2020 Democratic primary -- to vote in the Republican race this year against Mr. Trump.

A desire to 'move to Canada'

If anything, the interviews were perhaps more heartening for Mr. Biden than for Ms. Haley.

New Hampshire has voted for Democratic presidential candidates since George W. Bush won the state in 2000.

But the state is still purple, with an all-Democratic congressional delegation but Republican control of the state legislature and governorship, thanks to independent voters like Kathleen Grindle Mack, 64, of Plainfield.

She has never voted for a Republican for president but has done so for governor, and she plans to back Ms. Haley next week, calling her the ''least objectionable'' option.

The prospect of a Biden-Trump rematch makes her want to ''move to Canada,'' she said, but she would probably vote for Mr. Biden, unless Ms. Haley won the Republican nomination.

''Trump scares me; Trump terrifies me,'' she said. ''When I was at the university, I studied European fascism, and he could have written the book on it.''

Bob Terrell, 82, a lifelong independent living in Goffstown, near the Uncanoonuc Mountains, voted for Mr. Trump in 2016. Now, he said, he thinks ''Trump is a wacko.''

Then again, there are undeclared voters like Denyce Wallace, 57, of Concord. She supported Mr. Trump in 2020 and plans to do so again, saying she saw him as a man of action.

''I wish there were different candidates to choose from, maybe, but I'd rather have somebody who's going to say something and then do it,'' she said.

DeSantis and Biden in the mix

Of course, not all New Hampshire independents are deciding between Mr. Trump and Ms. Haley.

Joseph Lombardo, 73, of Windham, near the Massachusetts state line, considers himself independent, though he could not remember how he is registered. He was deciding this week between Mr. Trump and Mr. DeSantis.

''It doesn't appear that he's going to do anything different than what Trump did, so why not vote for the original?'' he said of Mr. DeSantis.

Richard Bogart, 71, from Tamworth, voted for Mr. Trump in 2016 because, he said, the Democratic Party had not looked out for the ''poor guy and the union guy.''

Mr. Biden won him back in 2020, and if Mr. Bogart votes in the primary on Tuesday, he will write in the president's name, even though Mr. Biden will not be on the ballot, since New Hampshire Democrats did not abide by the party's new primary order.

Mr. Bogart cited a hefty cost-of-living adjustment in Social Security benefits amid high inflation, and his fears that Republicans could roll back the program.

''Social Security, they're always talking about doing away with it, and he gave me a raise,'' he said of Mr. Biden. ''That's the best thing a president ever did for me personally.''

The Haley faithful

Ms. Haley clearly has many potential voters in the vast sea of independents, as evidenced by her rise in the polls to become more competitive with Mr. Trump.

''One thing I loved about Nikki Haley, she stood and said, 'I'm not a lawyer, I'm an accountant,''' said Thomas Gross, a lifelong independent and retired Air Force officer who lives near Portsmouth. ''Even though I'm in favor of many of the more liberal social issues, I realized that we need a good economy to provide funding for those issues, like pay for families with dependent children.''

Ms. Haley has to hope that the middle holds over the coming days, including people like Brian Smith, a 68-year-old engineer from Nashua who takes a dim view of both political parties or, as he called them, ''the two political corporations.''

In 2020, he said, he wrote in ''the most moderate person I could think of.'' (He declined to share the name.) In 2024, he would write in a candidate again, perhaps Ms. Haley, if Mr. Trump and Mr. Biden were the two nominees.

But he had high hopes for Ms. Haley, who has his vote on Tuesday.

''Her stint in the United Nations has made her a lot more intelligent than I am in the political ramifications of world politics,'' he said. ''She did pretty well in her own state when she was there.''

He concluded, ''She is not acting as extremist as the other people running in her party.''

Neil Vigdor and Ruth Igielnik contributed reporting.Neil Vigdor and Ruth Igielnik contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/18/us/politics/nikki-haley-nh-independents.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/18/us/politics/nikki-haley-nh-independents.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Colin Carberry of Dover, N.H., who regrets voting for Donald J. Trump in 2016, expects to support Ms. Haley in the primary but isn't thrilled about it.

David Fournier, an independent voter in Nashua, N.H., said he was leaning toward Nikki Haley next week but would not back her in a general election.

Kathleen Grindle Mack of Plainfield, N.H., plans to support Ms. Haley, calling her the ''least objectionable'' option. ''Trump terrifies me,'' she said.

Thomas Gross, who lives near Portsmouth, N.H., said he liked Ms. Haley ''even though I'm in favor of many of the more liberal social issues.'' (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOE BUGLEWICZ FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Ms. Haley was leading Mr. Trump among the state's unaffiliated voters, but he had a bigger edge with Republicans. (PHOTOGRAPH BY SOPHIE PARK FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A9.

**Load-Date:** January 19, 2024

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[***Ella Fitzgerald, a Voice That Set the American Standard; Nonfiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69SV-XVG1-DXY4-X00M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 4, 2023 Monday 17:27 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 1401 words

**Highlight:** A new biography sheds light on her humble beginnings and prolific, genre-defining career.

**Body**

A new biography sheds light on her humble beginnings and prolific, genre-defining career.

BECOMING ELLA FITZGERALD: The Jazz Singer Who Transformed American Song, by Judith Tick

Ella Fitzgerald was born in 1917 in Newport News, Va., but spent most of her childhood in a poor section of Yonkers, N.Y. Her father, a longshoreman, left the family when she was young. Her mother did domestic work, and toiled in a commercial laundry.

Ella didn’t make it past junior high. She worked briefly as a lookout for a brothel, and was arrested for truancy. She spent time in an institution for troubled youth. She later told a relative she had been molested as a girl. She thought she might become a dancer.

Her break came when she was 17, at an amateur night at the Apollo Theater. She got over a bad case of stage fright and sang a Hoagy Carmichael song, “Judy.” A young Benny Carter was the musical director that night. Among those taken with her in the shows to come was the band leader Chick Webb, whose music had a hot, powerful style. He hired her.

“Big-band girl singers were fresh bait in those days,” Margo Jefferson has written, “dangled in front of audiences to soothe their souls and stir their hormones.” Some thought Fitzgerald was too plain-looking for the role. But her multi-octave voice and high spirits removed all doubts. Her first hit was “A-Tisket A-Tasket,” which teased jazz out of a nursery rhyme.

In “Becoming Ella Fitzgerald: The Jazz Singer Who Transformed American Song,” Judith Tick recounts, almost concert by concert, how Fitzgerald was thrown straight into the deep end. In 1938, at the Savoy Ballroom, Count Basie’s band faced off against Webb’s in a battle of the bands. Billie Holiday was singing with Basie, so it was a battle of vocalists as well. Louis Armstrong and Benny Goodman were in the audience.

In his novel “The Interrogative Mood” (2009), the one in which every sentence is a question, Padgett Powell asks, “Have you decided yet what historical moment you would have most like to have witnessed with your own eyes and ears?” That night at the Savoy would surely be high on many lists.

A slew of recording sessions and a lot of travel followed. Goodman tried to poach Fitzgerald from Webb. After Webb died of tuberculosis in 1939, at 34, Fitzgerald briefly led his band.

Before long, she was recording with Armstrong, whom she learned to lovingly imitate, and touring with Dizzy Gillespie. She performed in the all-star concert series Jazz at the Philharmonic. Oscar Peterson played with her, and in his memoir he recounted her “imperturbable musical confidence.” She was fronting the greatest jazz musicians alive, but she was unfazed:

On the finale each night, she courageously took on the front line horns, regardless of who they were … Ella traded fours, eights, sixteens or whatever they wanted with them and never got hurt. As a matter of fact, on various nights when some of the horns got a smidgen careless, Fitz would run up over them and keep right on going.

Fitzgerald stared down the jazz critics, too, who felt that vocalists (especially female vocalists) cheapened jazz, diluted it and stole attention from the playing.

Tick is a professor emerita of music history at Northeastern University whose books include a biography Ruth Crawford Seeger, the modernist composer who also happened to be Pete Seeger’s stepmother. She chronicles the slights and insults Fitzgerald faced as a Black woman on tour, especially in the South. During the civil rights era, some wished Fitzgerald had been more outspoken. She felt she spoke more clearly through her work.

Tick’s biography builds toward, and finds its sweet spot in, Fitzgerald’s eight initial “Song Book” albums for Verve, recorded between 1956 and 1964. She had impeccable taste. She revisited and modernized songs by Cole Porter, Rodgers and Hart, Duke Ellington, Irving Berlin, George and Ira Gershwin, Harold Arlen, Jerome Kern and Johnny Mercer. In the process, Tick writes, “she laid the foundational stones for what would soon be known as the Great American Songbook.”

Fitzgerald has proved to be a difficult subject for biographers. She could be remote in person, and withholding in interviews. A previous biography, by Stuart Nicholson in 1994, devolved in its second half into a blur of concert dates. Tick’s book delivers the same blur. It’s as if a Bob Dylan archivist were dryly printing every set list on his Never Ending Tour. Like Dylan, Fitzgerald was a hardened road warrior, as if performing nonstop would keep depression, and even death, at bay. There are decades of television appearances, on every talk and variety show from Glen Campbell’s to Flip Wilson’s, to chronicle as well. None of this takes us closer to her.

Academic language creeps like mold into this biography. (Aretha Franklin’s song “Respect” is an “intersectional anthem.”) Elsewhere the verbiage is as impersonal as a rental car agreement: “Black variety entertainment flourished in a separate cultural milieu through entrepreneurial adaptation and new social relationships.” Tick clearly reveres Fitzgerald’s music, but her prose is buttoned-up. She can’t quite transmit her enthusiasms or make her distinctions stick.

Many listeners, then and now, find Fitzgerald’s recordings to be aloof and impersonal. In her introduction to a 2016 book on Billie Holiday, Zadie Smith, channeling Holiday, writes: “All respect to Ella, all respect to Sarah, but when those gals open their mouths to sing, well, to you it’s like someone just opened a brand-new Frigidaire. A chill comes over you.”

It doesn’t matter that Tick doesn’t use Smith’s comment. But there is a sense of easy layups missed. There are relatively few female voices in this book, which makes one miss Margo Jefferson’s devastatingly fine writing on Fitzgerald. Jefferson has described being embarrassed to watch Fitzgerald on television when she was a teenager, because Fitzgerald would sweat onstage. The perspiration threatened to “drag her back into the maw of ***working-class*** Black female labor.”

In a book short on humanizing detail, I was surprised to find a single sentence devoted to Fitzgerald’s cookbook collection. Tick doesn’t describe this collection, nor tell you that the 300 or so titles are housed at Radcliffe’s Schlesinger Library. Apparently, Fitzgerald didn’t cook from these books, but simply loved to read them, which makes her a kindred spirit to me. It’s poignant to note that she had diabetes, so she surely could not always have eaten what she longed to.

She annotated her cookbooks in the margins. Who would not want to know, in two or three paragraphs, what she put there? Tick doesn’t say. Nor does she note that Fitzgerald was said to have floor-to-ceiling bookshelves in every room in her house, and that she kept letters and other things inside her books.

It’s poor sportsmanship, perhaps, to write about what isn’t in a book as opposed to what is. But even browsing a Sotheby’s catalog of Fitzgerald memorabilia auctioned in 1997 gives you a deeper sense of her personal style than Tick manages to convey. According to The Chicago Tribune, a pair of her fake eyelashes sold for $900.

Nor does Tick describe Fitzgerald’s Beverly Hills house, though there are many photos online — it looks a bit like Larry David’s place on “Curb Your Enthusiasm” — or her rare and elegant cars. (She didn’t drive, but enjoyed being chauffeured.) Unanalyzed too is what catnip Fitzgerald was to many of the last century’s most incisive photographers, including Lee Friedlander and Annie Leibovitz. Her supposedly plain looks were a blank canvas, of a sort, into which others read volumes.

Tick’s book warms again as she approaches the end of Fitzgerald’s life, in 1996. When she was in failing health, she liked to listen to her old records and try to remember everything. On one of her last days, her son hired a trio of excellent musicians to play for her. They were downstairs, she was upstairs, and the beautiful sound traveled up to find her.

BECOMING ELLA FITZGERALD: The Jazz Singer Who Transformed American Song | By Judith Tick | Norton | 560 pp. | $40

Dwight Garner has been a book critic for The Times since 2008. His latest book is “The Upstairs Delicatessen: On Eating, Reading, Reading About Eating, and Eating While Reading.”

PHOTO: Ella Fitzgerald in 1954. (PHOTOGRAPH BY LARRY C. MORRIS/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page BR14.

**Load-Date:** December 19, 2023

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[***A Dispatch From the Muslim Girl Scouts of Astoria***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69HC-FH11-DXY4-X028-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 30, 2023 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 22; MARA GAY

**Length:** 1114 words

**Byline:** By Mara Gay

**Body**

In her short 17 years on earth, Amira Ismail had never been called a baby killer.

That's what happened one Friday this month, Amira said, on New York City's Q58 bus, which runs through central Queens.

''This lady looked at me, and she was like: 'You're disgusting. You're a baby killer. You're an antisemite,''' Amira told me. When she talked about this incident, her signature spunk faded. ''I just kept saying, 'That's not true,''' she said. ''I was just on my way to school. I was just wearing my hijab.''

Amira was born in Queens in the years after the Sept. 11 attacks. She remembers participating as a child in demonstrations at City Hall as part of a successful movement to make Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha school holidays in New York City.

But since the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas, in which an estimated 1,400 Israelis were killed and some 200 others were kidnapped, Amira, who is Palestinian American, said she has experienced for the first time the full fury of Islamophobia and racism that her older relatives and friends have told stories about all her life. Throughout the city, in fact, there has been an increase in both anti-Muslim and antisemitic attacks.

In heavily Muslim parts of Queens, she said, police officers are suddenly everywhere, asking for identification and stopping and frisking Muslim men. (New York City has stepped up its police presence around both Muslim and Jewish neighborhoods and sites within the five boroughs.) Most painful though, she said, is the sense that she and her peers are getting that Palestinian lives do not matter, as they watch the United States staunchly back Israel as it heads into war.

''It can't go unrecognized, the thousands of Palestinians that have been murdered in the past two weeks and even more the past 75 years,'' Amira said. ''There's no way you can erase that.'' That does not mean she is antisemitic, she said. ''How can I denounce one system of oppression without denouncing another?'' she asked me. The pain in her usually buoyant voice cut through me. I had no answer for her.

Many New York City kids have a worldliness about them, a certain telltale moxie. Amira, a joyful, sneaker-wearing, self-described ''Queens kid,'' can seem unstoppable.

When she was just 15, Amira helped topple a major mayoral campaign in America's largest city, writing a letter accusing the ultraprogressive candidate Dianne Morales of having violated child labor laws while purporting to champion the ***working class*** in New York.

''My life and my extremely bright future as a 15-year-old activist will not be defined by the failures and harm enabled by Dianne Morales,'' Amira wrote in the 2021 letter, which went viral and helped end Ms. Morales's campaign. ''I wrote my college essay about that,'' Amira told me with a slightly mischievous smile.

In the past two years, Amira has become a veteran organizer. Last weekend, she joined an antiwar protest. First, though, she'll have to work on earning her latest Girl Scout badge, this one for photography. That will mean satisfying her mother, Abier Rayan, who happens to be Troop 4179's leader. ''She's tough,'' Amira assured me.

At a meeting of the Muslim Girl Scouts of Astoria last week, a young woman bounded into the room, asking whether her fellow scouts had secured tickets to an Olivia Rodrigo concert. ''She's the Taylor Swift of our generation,'' the scout turned to me to explain.

A group of younger girls recited the Girl Scout Law:

''I will do my best to be honest and fair, friendly and helpful, considerate and caring, courageous and strong, and responsible for what I say and do, and to respect myself and others, respect authority, use resources wisely, make the world a better place and be a sister to every Girl Scout.''

Amira's mother carefully inspected the work of some of the younger scouts; she wore a blue Girl Scouts U.S.A. vest, filled with colorful badges, and a hot-pink hijab. ''It's no conflict at all,'' Ms. Rayan told me of Islam and the Girl Scouts. ''You want a strong Muslim American girl.''

At the Girl Scouts meeting, Amira and her friends discussed their plans to protest the war in Gaza. ''Protests are where you let go of your anger,'' Amira told me.

Amira's mother was born in Egypt. In 1948, Ms. Rayan told me, her grandfather lost his home and land in Jaffa to the state of Israel. At the Girl Scout meeting, Ms. Rayan was still waiting for word that relatives in Gaza were safe.

''There's been no communication,'' she said. When I asked about Amira, Ms. Rayan's eyes brightened. ''I'm really proud of her,'' she said. ''You have to be strong. You don't know where you're going to be tomorrow.''

By Monday, word had reached Ms. Rayan that her relatives had been killed as Israel bombed Gaza City. When I asked whom she had lost, Ms. Rayan replied: ''All of them. There's no one left.'' Thousands of Palestinians are estimated to have been killed by Israeli airstrikes in Gaza in recent weeks. A death toll is kept by the Gaza Health Ministry, run by Hamas, and cannot be independently verified. Ms. Rayan said those killed in her family included six cousins and their children, who were as young as 2. Other relatives living abroad told her the cousins died beneath the rubble of their home.

As Ms. Rayan spoke, I saw Amira's young face. I wondered how long this bright, spirited Queens kid could keep her fire for what I believe John Lewis would have called ''good trouble'' in a world that seems hellbent on snuffing it out. I worried about how she would finish her college applications.

''I have a lot of angry emotions at the ones in charge,'' Amira told me days ago, speaking for so many human beings around the world in this dark time.

I thought about what I had seen over that weekend in Brooklyn, where thousands gathered in the Bay Ridge neighborhood, the home of many Arab Americans, to protest the war. In this part of the city, people of many backgrounds carried Palestinian flags through the street. Large groups of police officers gathered on every corner, watching them go by.

The crowd was large but quiet when Amira waded in, picked up her megaphone and called for Palestinian liberation. In an instant, thousands of New Yorkers repeated after her, filling the Brooklyn street with their voices. My prayer is that Amira's generation of leaders will leave a better world than the one it has been given.

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**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A22.

**Load-Date:** October 30, 2023

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[***Living in Limbo***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:691S-6WY1-JBG3-602R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 27, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 12; FICTION

**Length:** 867 words

**Byline:** By Hamilton Cain

**Body**

Like ''Nobody's Fool'' and ''Everybody's Fool,'' ''Somebody's Fool'' is set in a fictional town with lots of problems.

SOMEBODY'S FOOL, by Richard Russo

Welcome back to North Bath, scrappy sibling to the larger, wealthier Schuyler Springs, down the road in woodsy upstate New York. While Schuyler Springs is famous for wine bars, pricey restaurants and a racetrack, North Bath (or ''Bath'') prides itself on a rustic vibe, greasy spoons and scrapyards and grand Victorian fixer-uppers. Here everyone knows your name. Burgers and pitchers of beer are just a stroll away, and bed-hopping is a town sport.

Except that North Bath has been annexed by Schuyler Springs -- and this is the narrative linchpin to Richard Russo's sumptuous, spirited ''Somebody's Fool,'' the final installment in a trilogy that maps the life and legacy of one Donald ''Sully'' Sullivan, an Everyman with a passel of troubles and a knack for making them worse.

Set over three days in February 2010, the novel opens with a bleak snapshot: The recession has wreaked havoc on local businesses and families. Sully's been gone a decade, felled by a heart attack, but his survivors -- his professor son, Peter; his paramour, Ruth, and her volatile daughter and granddaughter; his awkward friend, Rub -- conjure the ghost of the figure they adored and resented. Russo reprises the cast from ''Nobody's Fool'' (1993) and ''Everybody's Fool'' (2016), framing their foibles as social comedy in the mode of Charles Portis or Charles Dickens. (There's an allusion to ''Great Expectations.'') As with both authors, tumult brews beneath sunny surfaces.

Russo's characters are caught in limbo. Scratch their psychic scabs -- which he does, again and again -- and rage and sorrow spill out. They give neighbors the ''stink eye.'' They betray partners through sex and grifts, rebounding with a shrug. They sneer at the local newspaper, the ''Schuyler Democrat, which people in Bath referred to as the Dumb-o-crat because of its left-leaning opinion pages.''

This is Trump country, pre-Trump. Doug Raymer, Bath's misfit police chief, boxes up his office only to find he's now reporting to Schuyler Springs' chief, Charice Bond, his former crackerjack administrator and part-time lover. An interracial couple -- he's 52, white and dumpy; she's Black, younger and acerbic -- they're a magnet for latent (and not-so-latent) racism. Birdie, the proprietor of the White Horse Tavern, which is more ''Cheers'' bar than literary watering hole, struggles to make ends meet. The same goes for Janey, who runs a popular restaurant.

No small-town drama is complete without a corpse. Doug and Charice investigate a suspicious death at the boarded-up Sans Souci hotel, under contract to new owners with big plans. Doug has thoughts about how this person's life ended. Stories whorl around one another, then merge. Russo cycles through an array of techniques and perspectives, including expert use of third person and even a young man's profanity-laced letters; the flow is smooth, like ''a shot of Jack ... like velvet.''

Neglected by Sully in his youth, Peter had established a relationship with his father later, when Sully bonded with Peter's oldest son, Will. Peter, too, yearns for a future away from Bath, but then discovers his estranged middle son, Thomas, on his porch, throwing a wrench into his plans. From here, Russo amplifies signature themes, including the emotional baggage carried by parent and child and the level of education as a marker of status and worth.

There are scattered potholes in Russo's plot, which he patches with back story; we need not consult the other ''Fool'' volumes. Some chapters feel burdened with detail, and a few flashbacks are confusing, with scenes planted uneasily within scenes. And yet these characters' interlocking fates move confidently toward resolution.

Ruth seeks to get over her adulterous romance with Sully. Peter's cool reserve thaws, nudging the door to intimacy. Doug is the novel's moral compass; Russo digs deep into the cop's ''seemingly congenital inability to surrender hope.'' He and Charice pause their relationship while she maneuvers through fresh duties and animosity in her force. He does his utmost to support her, but fails to grasp the challenges she faces each day. He clings to the possibility they can settle down and become a family.

In Russo's hands these intentions -- and the expectations and forgiveness of others -- are fine brushes and a palette. He paints a shining fresco of a ***working-class*** community, warts and all, a 30-year project come to fruition in this last, best book. What happens in North Bath doesn't stay in North Bath. And the trilogy's true protagonist still inspires loved ones from beyond the grave. When Rub finds himself in a pickle, he summons Sully's voice -- and the dead man answers: ''Untroubled by self-doubt, unafraid to be wrong and immune to after-the-fact criticism, Sully was Rub's polar opposite and exactly what his present circumstances called for.''

Hamilton Cain is a book critic and the author of ''This Boy's Faith: Notes From a Southern Baptist Upbringing.''

SOMEBODY'S FOOL | By Richard Russo | 464 pp. | Alfred A. Knopf | $29

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/23/books/review/somebodys-fool-richard-russo.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/23/books/review/somebodys-fool-richard-russo.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY TRISTAN SPINSKI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page BR12.

**Load-Date:** August 27, 2023

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[***The Glories Of America's Wilderness***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:691S-6WY1-JBG3-604V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 27, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section SR; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 2; NICHOLAS KRISTOF

**Length:** 832 words

**Byline:** By Nicholas Kristof

**Body**

One of the paradoxes of urban America is that millions of people speak reverently about wilderness but are much less eager to venture into it and risk real bites from actual mosquitoes.

I've been musing about this while backpacking with family on the Pacific Northwest Trail, sometimes known as ''America's wildest trail,'' on the Canada-U.S. border in Washington State. It's stunning, mountainous country, right at timberline in the Pasayten Wilderness -- yet we have it pretty much to ourselves (along with the bears, lynxes and mountain goats).

Perhaps I'm running away from home, for this is a dispiriting time in America: A former president has not only been indicted four times but may actually also be re-elected, our life expectancy is among the worst in the rich world and large majorities of adults polled say our country is on the wrong track.

Yet there's something still spectacularly right about the United States: our wild spaces. Some 40 percent of America is public land -- a credit to our forebears -- and we haven't screwed that up yet (although climate-change-related fires endanger it).

I'm hiking with my daughter and her boyfriend, and it's cathartic: We get up in the morning with the sun, drink from creeks, rest on logs, eat from our packs when hungry, and at dusk we find some flat ground, roll out a ground sheet, unfurl pads and sleeping bags and then fall asleep under the stars to the melody of owl hoots.

For me, wilderness backpacking is a profoundly healing experience. It restores my soul.

If much of modern life is exemplified by what we do on our screens -- firing off intemperate and shallow salvos on the platform X, what we used to call Twitter -- then wilderness offers an antidote. It is deep. It is enduring. It is soothing. The antonym of X is wilderness.

The best parenting I ever did was on the trails. Beginning when she was 14, my daughter and I hiked the entire 2,650-mile Pacific Crest Trail from Mexico to Canada, over six years. In that brief window in which she was strong enough and I was not yet decrepit, together we sweated, bathed in rivers, lost toenails, dodged 14 rattlesnakes and a cougar, and were drenched in freezing rains. No better way to share companionship!

It's a spiritual experience to hike through the cathedral of wilderness, whether alone or with a family member or friend; the mountains and rivers generate a quasi-religious awe and put us humans in our place. I understand Spinoza best not in the library but in the mountains.

That is not to diminish the significance of humans; on the contrary, wilderness is an example of the importance of public policy. The architects of our land policies were leaders like Theodore Roosevelt and his friend Gifford Pinchot (the first head of the U.S. Forest Service), who were personally wealthy and could afford their own country estates but deeply believed that ***working-class*** Americans should also have access to nature. Hence the drive for public lands.

When Congress rebelled at their conservation efforts and in 1907 made it harder to create new national forests, Roosevelt and Pinchot hurriedly preserved an additional 16 million acres -- so-called midnight forests, because they were created just before the deadline.

We're all beneficiaries of their vision, for wild places provide a rare zone of equality in an unequal nation. There are few places in America where a billionaire and a welder are on equal footing, but a wilderness trail is one; no one can pull rank on you, except a large bear.

As I see it, the purpose of our extraordinary American inheritance of public lands is to go out in them, to experience that healing power of nature. Yet perhaps three-quarters of Americans don't set foot on national forest trails at all.

Many children in particular seem to suffer from what the writer Richard Louv has called ''nature-deficit disorder.'' That's the alienation from the natural world that arises when kids no longer tramp through the mud chasing tadpoles and garter snakes.

Perhaps we parents are overprotective, fearing that mud might be quicksand or that garter snakes might be rattlesnakes. And modern life feels increasingly sedentary and pampered: On a baking summer day, kids no longer cool off in a swimming hole, but rather stay inside air-conditioned rooms playing video games, oblivious to their deprivation.

When young Americans don't interact with the outdoors, something is lost for all of us -- including a visceral appreciation of what wilderness is. In our dreams, it may be romantic and Disney-like; in reality, you're always too hot or too cold, all trails are mostly uphill, and that brown lump you just kicked is a wasp nest. All true, but that reality is bewitching.

So, my advice: Go take a hike, and bring the kids.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/26/opinion/hiking-wilderness-urban-america.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/26/opinion/hiking-wilderness-urban-america.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page SR2.

**Load-Date:** August 27, 2023

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[***Times Reporters Got a Rare Glimpse of Gaza’s Largest Hospital***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69N9-H531-JBG3-62J2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 17, 2023 Friday 17:42 EST

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1301 words

**Byline:** Matthew Cullen

**Highlight:** Also, OpenAI pushed out its high-profile C.E.O. Here’s the latest at the end of Friday.

**Body**

Also, OpenAI pushed out its high-profile C.E.O. Here’s the latest at the end of Friday.

Early this morning, three of my colleagues visited Al-Shifa Hospital, Gaza’s largest medical complex, which has become [*central to the war between Israel and Hamas*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/17/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-tunnel-hamas.html).

There, the Israeli military escorted them to a stone-and-concrete shaft with a staircase descending into the earth. It was evidence, Israeli officials asserted, of a Hamas military facility under the hospital. But a commander said that the forces, fearing booby traps, had not ventured down the shaft.

The controlled visit did not settle the question of whether Hamas had been using Al-Shifa to hide weapons and command centers, as Israel has said. But it did offer my colleagues a rare opportunity to witness the wartime conditions inside Gaza City.

Our Jerusalem bureau chief, Patrick Kingsley, [*described houses flattened like playing cards*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/17/world/middleeast/northern-gaza-israel-hamas-war-ruins.html), and a city utterly disfigured. They drove into a neighborhood Patrick had visited a dozen times over the past three years, yet he could hardly recognize it.

“I could not find the fish market,” Patrick wrote. “The apartment blocks, I now realized, had been wrecked by shelling or strikes. The road had vanished, churned into a sandy, rutted track by the hundreds of Israeli tanks and armored vehicles that have fanned out across the territory.”

As troops searched Al-Shifa for a third day, Israel announced that it would allow limited shipments of fuel to the enclave to avoid “epidemics” amid the wreckage of the territory.

OpenAI pushed out Sam Altman, its high-profile C.E.O.

Sam Altman, the chief executive of OpenAI who became the face of the tech industry’s artificial intelligence boom, was [*pushed out by the company’s board of directors*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/17/technology/openai-sam-altman-ousted.html), OpenAI said.

It was not immediately clear what had led to the decision, but the company said that if followed a review process, “which concluded that he was not consistently candid in his communications with the board, hindering its ability to exercise its responsibilities.”

A Latin American leader adopts Trump’s playbook

In Argentina’s runoff presidential election on Sunday, Sergio Massa, the center-left economy minister, is running against Javier Milei, a far-right libertarian economist who has [*embraced comparisons to Donald Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/16/world/americas/argentina-javier-milei-election-fraud.html). Like Trump, Milei has repeatedly warned that if he loses, it may be because the election was stolen — undermining many of his supporters’ faith in the nation’s electoral system.

Economic despair pervades on social media

Look at economic data and you might think that young people would be riding high. Unemployment is low, job opportunities are plentiful and inequality is down. But if you spend some time on TikTok, you could get a very different impression.

On the app and other social media sites, economic despair dominates. Users, most of them young, express a deep-seated angst about the economy [*and fret about the cost of living*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/17/business/economy/tiktok-biden-economy.html).

More top news

* Politics: The Republican chairman of the House Ethics Committee [*introduced a resolution*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/17/nyregion/santos-expel-house-election.html) to expel Representative George Santos from Congress.

1. Football: A new study found that players in their teens and 20s are developing C.T.E., [*the degenerative brain disease linked to repeated hits to the head*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/11/16/us/cte-youth-football.html).
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3. Childbirth: Research shows that waiting at least two minutes after a birth to clamp the umbilical cord can [*improve survival rates for premature infants*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/17/health/premature-babies-umbilical-cord-clamping.html).
4. Baseball: With baseball owners approving the Athletics’ move to Las Vegas, [*some see the transition as the death of the* ***working-class*** *sports fan*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/17/us/oakland-athletics-move-las-vegas.html).
5. Rosalynn Carter: The former first lady, who recently announced that she had dementia, [*entered hospice care at her home in Georgia*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/17/us/politics/rosalynn-carter-hospice-care.html).

TIME TO UNWIND

This weekend, prepare for Thanksgiving

While the big day may be not be until next week, many hosts and cooks will use this weekend to get a head start on Thanksgiving preparations. To help readers of this newsletter have the smoothest holiday possible, we’ve gathered some of our best advice and ideas for the run up to the meal.

Know when to start the turkey: We asked our food columnist Melissa Clark for her No. 1 tip, and she told us it was important to make sure to leave enough time to defrost the turkey.

“Even if you think you ordered a fresh one, it might be frozen on the inside,” she said. “As soon as you get your turkey, unwrap it and put it in the fridge to let it thaw. A 12-pound bird will take three days, a 16-pound bird four days.”

While it’s thawing, you can dry-brine it, Melissa said. She suggested rubbing the turkey inside and out with salt mixed with any seasoning you like, including herbs, pepper, spices, grated garlic or lemon zest.

Shop for groceries: After writing out your Thanksgiving menu, divide your grocery list into perishables and nonperishables, and try to buy those nonperishables this weekend.

And you’ll need space in the fridge for all those ingredients. Use J. Kenji López-Alt’s [*guide to food expiration dates*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/expiration-dates.html) to help clean it out.

Map out sides and dessert: This [*classic cranberry sauce*](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1024798-cranberry-sauce-with-orange-and-golden-raisins) by Claire Saffitz is an ideal Thanksgiving accompaniment that can be made days ahead of time. Pie crusts can also be prepared in advance. Melissa’s [*all-butter pie crust recipe*](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/448-pie-crust) keeps in the freezer for three months; you just need to defrost it in the fridge overnight before you bake it.

But as my colleagues in Cooking say, it doesn’t really matter what sides you make — what matters is how they taste: Aim to have something creamy, something crispy, something green and something tangy.

Still looking for ideas? Our [*Ultimate Thanksgiving Guide*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/11/14/dining/how-to-plan-thanksgiving-dinner.html) will help you come up with an ideal menu, step-by-step.

Dinner table topics

* Mall schools: Downtowns are full of empty buildings. [*Universities are moving in*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/17/arts/design/00johns-hopkins-bloomberg-center-review.html).

1. Gen Z content creators: Young women are more feminist than ever, but what happened to [*the online community that blogs and zines once offered*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/17/business/feminism-gen-z.html)
2. Extreme D.I.Y.: A South Korean ceramist taught himself design and construction, creating a collection of small buildings [*as impressive as his artwork*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/17/realestate/south-korea-ceramist-studio-design.html).
3. Fall fashion in Tokyo: Our fashion photographer documents [*transitional style in the Japanese capital*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/17/style/fall-fashion-in-tokyo.html).

WHAT TO DO THIS WEEKEND

Cook: Slow-cooker corn pudding is [*like a spoon bread crossed with a quick bread*](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1022597-slow-cooker-corn-pudding).

Watch: This weekend, our TV critic recommends [*dancing dogs, Shakespeare scholars and an animated adaptation*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/16/arts/television/invincible.html).

Read: In [*new collections of short stories*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/17/books/review/yiyun-li-wednesdays-child-claire-keegan-so-late-in-the-day-alexandra-chang-tomb-sweeping-lore-segal-ladies-lunch.html), interpersonal bonds are created and destroyed.

Listen: Our chief pop music critic has [*a playlist from down-ballot Grammy nominees*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/17/podcasts/culture-desk-new-music-mixtape.html).

Tip: Here’s how to deal with [*the many requests for gratuity*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/17/your-money/tipping-self-checkout-inflation.html).

Gaze: Watch the Leonids meteor shower [*reach its peak tonight*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/17/science/meteor-shower-leonids-how-to-watch.html).

Gift: Experts say focusing on sentiment over cost [*is more likely to bring holiday cheer*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/17/style/holiday-christmas-gifts-no-cost.html).

Compete: Did you follow the news this week? Take our quiz [*to see how you stack up with other Times readers*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/11/17/briefing/israel-government-shutdown-andre-3000-news-quiz.html).

Play: Here are today’s [*Spelling Bee*](https://www.nytimes.com/puzzles/spelling-bee), [*Wordle*](https://www.nytimes.com/games/wordle/index.html) and [*Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/crosswords/game/mini). Find [*all our games here*](https://www.nytimes.com/games).

ONE LAST THING

The rise of remote-work weddings

Remote work has become so popular in the U.S. that it has begun to alter some long-held norms. Weekend weddings, for example, are now more often stretching into the workweek, capitalizing on guests who can [*work poolside during the day and celebrate the bride at night*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/17/travel/wedding-weekends-remote-work.html).

Hotels have taken notice, upgrading their internet and advertising their work spaces. One hotel in the Catskills said that 20 percent of wedding guests now arrived between Tuesday and Thursday, many of whom are still on the clock.

Have a playful weekend.

Thanks for reading. I’ll be back on Monday. — Matthew

We welcome your feedback. Write to us at [*evening@nytimes.com*](mailto:evening@nytimes.com).

PHOTO: Israeli soldiers escorted journalists to the grounds of Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Daniel Berehulak/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** November 17, 2023

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[***Liz Cheney and the Twilight of the Old G.O.P. Elite***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6660-74C1-JBG3-61PW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 18, 2022 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 19; GUEST ESSAY

**Length:** 2001 words

**Byline:** By Stephanie Muravchik and Jon A. Shields

**Body**

If Liz Cheney's loss to Harriet Hageman in Wyoming's primary election on Tuesday seems like a bad dream to many of Ms. Cheney's Democratic admirers, that's because it is: For a generation, progressives have imagined the moment when the white ***working class*** would finally turn against an insular and privileged Republican establishment. That day has arrived. But it isn't what Democrats dreamed.

Apparently uninterested in everyday governing, the new insurgents who elected Ms. Hageman are consumed with demonstrating that they are authentic conservative Republicans. And in that sense, they are succumbing to the same impulses they associate with their liberal opponents: a shrill hostility to different viewpoints, an obsession with virtue signaling and a willingness to purge their own ranks. The older tradition of Republican politics -- the one that cradled Ms. Cheney from girlhood and shaped her in office -- is still alive, though embattled, even in Wyoming. Progressives who realize that this privileged Republican establishment was a linchpin of our democracy all along may start rooting for a counterrevolution from above rather than a revolution from below.

In the not very distant past, Wyoming's G.O.P. was focused on governing the state by addressing everyday challenges, like distributing a limited number of liquor licenses and funding its public schools. Politics was ''frankly boring,'' recalled Tim Stubson, a partisan of the old school.

The Cheneys exemplified Wyoming's establishment: They are quiet and diligent legislators, even a little bland. They are also highly educated and wealthy, splitting their time between Washington and Wyoming's Teton County, one of the wealthiest counties in the United States.

Wyoming politics began to change beneath their feet, slowly at first, as the Tea Party rose to power, and then rapidly during the Trump years, as a new guard waged war with the establishment, making politics less about ordinary governance than about identity.

We've spent the last year traveling Wyoming, from Cheyenne in the south to Sheridan in the north, from Evanston in the west to Wheatland in the east, talking to local political activists and leaders. This obsession with identity left a mark everywhere, but nowhere more obviously than at the recent Republican state conventions. Just a decade ago, few delegates would have attended party meetings with guns strapped to their hips. Now many do. That wasn't enough for one delegate at the last convention: He reportedly strutted about with a gun fully cocked. In another departure from old norms, many delegates have taken to wearing their cowboy hats inside the convention center. ''That's not a Wyoming thing,'' noted JoAnn True, a patron of the old party. This is mostly because there is no need to wear a cowboy hat indoors -- unless your goal is to sport a costume that signals a conservative social identity.

Virtue signaling is also on the rise. One convention delegate argued that Wyoming schoolchildren should not be required to say the Pledge of Allegiance, since the word ''indivisible'' suggests that states can't secede from the union. Another Republican Party figure was criticized for allegedly failing to adopt an appropriately respectful posture during the pledge.

Acting the part of a true Wyoming conservative is a delicate art. It's not only about signaling that you belong to a rugged, rural ***working class***, but also about highlighting your conservative bona fides, which often means exiling anyone who doesn't toe the line. Now a conservative cancel culture as unforgiving as its progressive rival is sweeping over the Wyoming G.O.P.

Ms. Cheney, of course, is the most prominent victim of that cancel culture: She has been censured twice by the party, and now has been voted out of office. But she is just the tip of an iceberg that mostly lies beneath the media's radar. Other members of the old type have been censured as well. Their crimes are varied, ranging from supporting Medicaid expansion to founding a nonpartisan PAC to fund female candidates.

Websites have emerged that help the new censors identify politically incorrect Republicans. WyoRINO, for example, exposes legislators ''who falsely claim to be Republicans'' by scrutinizing their voting records for the slightest signs of apostasy. According to the site's index, nearly a two-thirds majority of Wyoming's Republican legislators are faking it.

Those who are formally censured, though, usually have something else in common: They are from the upper class. In recent years the party has censured a wealthy activist, a state senator with a doctorate and a physician. Joe McGinley, the physician -- a prominent party leader of the old style -- was censured for reasons that are still a bit mysterious. But as a Stanford-trained doctor, he was a perfect symbol of an inauthentic conservative. Joey Correnti IV, a pistol-packing delegate, mocks his supposed haughtiness, claiming that he introduces himself as ''Doctor Joe McGinley.''

Plenty of the new insurgents are themselves comfortable members of the professional class pretending to be ''one of the people.'' Some, like Ms. Hageman, simply seem opportunistic, while others sincerely share cultural affinities with Wyoming's ***working class***. But to its credit, the new identity politics has also done something rare in this gilded age of American politics: It has elevated genuinely ***working-class*** citizens into positions of power. For example, Tom James, elected to the State Senate in 2018, grew up in a foster home and campaigned for office as he delivered pizzas. Meanwhile, Frank Eathorne, the current chairman of the state party, previously worked as a Terminix pest exterminator. As Tim Stubson of the old establishment acknowledged, ''It's a much more blue-collar party.''

These candidates are starting to reshape the G.O.P. beyond Wyoming as well. Representative Lauren Boebert of Colorado earned a G.E.D., having left high school after she got pregnant. Meanwhile, in New Jersey, a truck driver won a State Senate seat on a shoestring budget. And in Arizona, Rusty Bowers -- who resisted pressure from Donald Trump to overturn his state's election results -- was just badly defeated by David Farnsworth, a small businessman and former crane operator with an A.A. degree.

For decades, progressives have hoped that the white ***working class*** would turn against the affluent bankers, doctors and oil magnates who control the Republican Party. Well, it did. Class warfare of a kind did finally break out. It's just not the sort of war progressives imagined, much less hoped for.

That's true partly because progressive longings for class war rested on a falsehood. Influential books like Thomas Frank's ''What's the Matter With Kansas'' insisted that the Republican elite was rapaciously consumed with padding its wealth and exploiting its ***working-class*** supporters. Like other myths, that critique contained a kernel of truth. Wyoming's establishment was too insular at times -- and it practiced self-dealing on occasion.

But whatever its sins, it was also public spirited. It cared about the general welfare of the state and worked hard on its behalf, laboring away for a pittance in a legislature that begins its sessions in the dead of Wyoming's punishing winter, when driving is treacherous. The new identitarians infiltrating the State Legislature seem less interested in seeking remedies to real problems than in signaling to their base.

Thus, they perform small symbolic acts, like pushing a bill that requires local law enforcement officials to ignore federal law that violates the Second Amendment, or sponsoring a bill that prohibited the teaching of critical race theory in Wyoming public schools. It failed because enough traditional conservatives don't believe it's a real problem. Tom Walters, a state representative of the old school, observed, ''They speak of it as though it's there, and yet they know all their teachers and they know their teachers aren't teaching it.''

Addressing these phantoms swallows up time, leaving larger issues neglected. Cathy Connolly, the Democratic minority leader in the State House, told us: ''We have one of the highest suicide rates in the nation. We now have the highest workplace fatality rate. We've got Covid issues. We've got hospitals closing. We're not looking at these issues because we have these stupid bills,'' she said, adding an expletive.

The right's new identity craze wasn't engineered by Donald Trump. It simply created an opportunity that he exploited. But Mr. Trump has rendered identity politics more dangerous than its progressive rival by wedding it to a cult of personality and a campaign to steal an election. Those changes have only widened the party's class divide: While a substantial majority of white Republican primary voters without a college degree say they would prefer to vote for him in 2024, those with college degrees generally want someone else, according to a July New York Times/Siena College poll.

Ms. Cheney's fall highlights the cultish character of the right's evolving politics of identity. During her first two terms, she supported Mr. Trump's positions 93 percent of the time, according to FiveThirtyEight (almost as often as Kevin McCarthy and more often than Elise Stefanik). Yet Ms. Cheney is not only considered to be a ''Republican in Name Only'' by many Wyoming Republicans -- she is the face of the RINOs. At the state convention, one attendee sported a T-shirt that said ''No More RINOs'' with Ms. Cheney's name circled and crossed out. To cross Mr. Trump is to become a fake conservative.

Sadly, the G.O.P. establishment was not strong enough to save Ms. Cheney. Happily, though, it isn't dead, even in Wyoming. In fact, it's far more entrenched than Ms. Cheney's defeat might suggest. The old guard still controls the State Legislature and Wyoming's two most populous counties, both of which pushed back forcefully on efforts to censure Ms. Cheney. And in some places the new insurgents have been outmaneuvered and beaten back. For example, in Campbell County, where support for Mr. Trump surpasses that of most Wyoming counties, the establishment wrestled the party away from the new identitarians.

Similar fights are playing out in state parties and legislatures from Colorado to Arizona, Idaho, Illinois and Texas, where the new identitarians are gaining momentum, chipping away at the old guard's power. But even if they continue to advance, their style of politics may also contain the seeds of its destruction. Any party that elevates symbolism over governing risks stirring mass revolt down the road. Some practitioners of identity politics on the left have already discovered that lesson the hard way. When some members of the San Francisco Board of Education busied themselves renaming schools instead of prioritizing reopening them after lengthy closures during the pandemic, they were recalled. Results matter even in the age of identity politics.

Though the outcome of the G.O.P.'s civil war is impossible to determine, one thing is clear: Both sides see the conflict in existential terms. As the traditionalist Dr. McGinley said of Ms. Cheney's race: ''The soul of the Republican Party is at stake.'' Ms. Cheney fought valiantly for the party's soul and was celebrated by traditional Republicans in Wyoming for doing so. They don't believe her cause is lost -- and neither should we.

Stephanie Muravchik (@stephaniemurav1) and Jon A. Shields are professors of government at Claremont McKenna College and the authors of ''Trump's Democrats.'' They are working on a new book about Liz Cheney's Wyoming and the future of the American right.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/16/opinion/liz-cheney-wyoming.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/16/opinion/liz-cheney-wyoming.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY JASON ANDREW FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** August 18, 2022

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[***How’s Mayor Adams Doing? Don’t Ask, Many New Yorkers Say.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B05-X9B1-DXY4-X3M4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 29, 2023 Friday 15:27 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1586 words

**Highlight:** Halfway through his term, Mr. Adams is fighting to overcome low poll numbers and questions about his management as he faces a federal corruption investigation.

**Body**

Halfway through his term, Mr. Adams is fighting to overcome low poll numbers and questions about his management as he faces a federal corruption investigation.

Four days before Christmas, Mayor Eric Adams of New York gathered his top aides on the stairs of City Hall’s rotunda for an end-of-year message.

As his walk-in music blared from the speakers, Mr. Adams gave a thumbs-up to his staff, positioning himself between two video screens. One showed the year, 2023; the other displayed the message, “Jobs Are Up. Crime Is Down.”

The news conference resembled a campaign event, full of applause and cheerleader-like encouragement for the mayor at the halfway mark of his first term. And by keeping a laserlike focus on trumpeting two key statistical achievements, Mr. Adams seemed intent on pushing a counternarrative to the growing perception that he is not up to the job.

The mayor faces the [*lowest approval rating*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/06/nyregion/nyc-eric-adams-poll.html) since Quinnipiac University began polling the popularity of New York City mayors in 1996. New Yorkers disapprove of almost every aspect of how Mr. Adams is handling his job and don’t believe he is trustworthy, the poll found.

He has made [*unpopular cuts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/16/nyregion/nyc-budget-cuts-schools-police-trash.html) to schools and libraries to close looming budget gaps, and recently returned from a trip to Washington with the news that the city should not expect help with an influx of migrants. He was accused in [*a legal claim filed last month*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/23/nyregion/eric-adams-sexual-assault-lawsuit.html) of committing sexual assault in 1993, a charge he has strongly denied.

On top of it all, the home of the mayor’s [*chief fund-raiser was raided by the F.B.I*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/06/nyregion/eric-adams-brianna-suggs-fundraiser-fbi.html). and Mr. Adams’s phones and tablet were seized as part of a [*federal investigation*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/02/nyregion/eric-adams-brianna-suggs-fbi-raid.html) into his [*campaign’s fund-raising*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/06/nyregion/eric-adams-brianna-suggs-fundraiser-fbi.html).

And when he tries to give voice to his side of the story, his choice of words often gets in the way.

When [*asked recently*](https://x.com/pix11news/status/1736376878703759375?s=61&amp;t=e_PKPD5mSSlAeNnsQP5ujA) to describe this past year in one word, the mayor replied, “Uh, New York. This is a place where everyday you wake up, you could experience everything from a plane crashing into our Trade Center to a person who is celebrating a new business that’s opened.”

He offered another head-scratcher at the City Hall news conference on jobs and crime, when he was asked what he would say to New Yorkers angry about the painful budget cuts that he had implemented.

“I wake up in the morning,” Mr. Adams said, “and sometimes I look at myself, and I give myself the finger.”

Hours after he made those remarks, a video of his comments was [*posted on social media*](https://twitter.com/RNCResearch/status/1737869762821030283) by the Republican National Committee’s rapid response account.

Some of the mayor’s policies have received broad praise: his plan to put trash in large containers instead of in bags on the street and to expand curbside composting; the city’s push to [*regain most of the jobs lost during the pandemic*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/24/nyregion/eric-adams-jobs-pandemic.html); efforts to stabilize public housing, address climate change, expand youth programs and boost the life sciences industry; and a [*proposal to build 100,000 homes*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/21/nyregion/nyc-housing-plan-adams.html).

But critics cite what they say are troubling trends: a [*rise in stop-and-frisk policing*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/09/nyregion/eric-adams-nypd.html); a slow trickle of new affordable housing with major projects many years from opening; a failure to create enough preschool seats for children with disabilities; a delay in providing basic benefits to the most vulnerable New Yorkers and a pattern of stymying major [*bus and bike lane*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/17/nyregion/eric-adams-buses-nyc.html) projects in response to opposition from political allies.

“Beyond the issues that are weighing on New York City voters, it appears there’s a lack of confidence in Mayor Adams,” said Mary Snow, an assistant director of the Quinnipiac University poll.

Mr. Adams has even alienated key allies like Henry Garrido, the leader of District Council 37, the city’s largest municipal employees’ union. The union is [*suing the Adams administration over the budget cuts*](https://www.politico.com/news/2023/12/13/citys-largest-public-union-sues-adams-admin-over-budget-cuts-00131547).

Mr. Garrido praised the mayor for settling 90 percent of outstanding union contracts but said it’s been a “mixed bag” because budget cuts are eliminating revenue-producing jobs such as environmental inspectors and are hurting struggling New Yorkers.

“Thirty thousand people [*waiting for food stamps*](https://gothamist.com/news/nyc-council-says-mayors-office-has-done-an-inadequate-job-aiding-food-stamp-applicants) is outrageous,” Mr. Garrido said.

It is far too soon to gauge where the federal investigation into the mayor’s fund-raising will lead; Mr. Adams has not been accused of any wrongdoing. But even if the mayor emerges unscathed, his bid for a second term in 2025 may be undermined by pocketbook issues, especially for middle- and ***working-class*** New Yorkers.

“His budget cuts will be just as politically harmful as any investigation,” said Monica Klein, a strategist who often advises progressive Democrats.

The United Federation of Teachers has [*filed suit*](https://www.nydailynews.com/2023/12/21/uft-sues-to-block-mayor-adams-nyc-education-budget-cuts/) against the Adams administration to block education funding cuts. And parents in particular have been upset about the painful budget cuts to schools, prekindergarten and libraries. Robert Desir, a lawyer who lives in Ditmas Park in Brooklyn, said that he is worried that his 2-year-old daughter won’t receive a free 3-K spot, which former Mayor Bill de Blasio pledged would be universal by now. If his family has to pay for preschool instead, they might consider leaving the city.

“The city is becoming increasingly expensive, and it’s difficult for people to thrive and plan for the future,” said Mr. Desir, who joined a group called New Yorkers United for Child Care that is [*circulating a petition to stop the cuts*](https://www.united4childcare.org/petition).

Mr. Adams has blamed the budget cuts on the cost of caring for asylum seekers, saying that he, like many New Yorkers, is “angry” that the federal government is not doing more.

At the same time, Mr. Adams’s cuts have come under increasing scrutiny, with fiscal experts suggesting that his administration has overstated the cost of the migrant crisis.

A [*report from the city comptroller*](https://comptroller.nyc.gov/newsroom/in-new-report-nyc-comptroller-lander-urges-stronger-management-to-address-city-budget-gaps/), Brad Lander, found that the migrant crisis’s cost will be $465 million less than budgeted this year and $1.61 billion less in fiscal year 2025. Mr. Lander urged “stronger management” to address the city’s “fiscal challenges,” such as real-time data to determine the cost of migrant spending and whether the budget cuts are achieving the expected savings.

It is also unclear whether Mr. Adams can take full credit for improvements on jobs and crime. Overall crime is down slightly compared with last year, according to Police Department [*statistics*](https://www.nyc.gov/assets/nypd/downloads/pdf/crime_statistics/cs-en-us-city.pdf), but crime is also dropping nationally.

And while there was job growth in New York City, it has slowed this year. The city still has not regained all the nearly 1 million jobs it lost at the outset of the pandemic in 2020, according to the state Labor Department. New York City is ending the year with an official unemployment rate of 5.3 percent, slightly higher than a year ago.

Bertha Lewis, a longtime organizer and president of the Black Institute, said she was disappointed that she had not seen one “big idea” from the mayor such as universal prekindergarten from Mr. de Blasio. And she questioned his management skills.

“He has to get a hold of the management of the city,” said Ms. Lewis. “You must manage how the machine is actually working. That’s what being mayor is all about.”

As Mr. Adams’s standing has deteriorated, so has his relationship with the City Council, which has [*already overridden a veto*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/13/nyregion/housing-vouchers-ny-council-eric-adams.html) from the mayor on housing vouchers and just passed [*bills banning solitary confinement*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/20/nyregion/solitary-confinement-jails-nyc.html) in the city’s jails and requiring reporting of police stops despite the mayor’s objections.

The mayor’s office is making “harmful and hysterical budget cuts that are intended to generate outrage,” said Lincoln Restler, a councilman who is a leader of the Progressive Caucus and has questioned Mr. Adams’s management for over a year.

“This is not a mayor who had a lot of juice in the City Council last year, and the combination of investigations, sagging poll numbers and deeply harmful budget cuts are not strengthening his hand,” Mr. Restler added.

The mayor has often criticized the news media for failing to focus on the successes of his administration and for paying too much attention to things flagged by the “sentence police,” even though he insisted he speaks “the way New Yorkers talk.” He has also suggested that he was being treated differently because of his race.

“Over the last month, there have been negative headlines about me that are so sensational that they are hard to believe,” Mr. Adams said on a call-in radio show on WBLS. “There’s a reason for that: They are not based on facts, they’re based on rumor; and yes, on many occasions, even lies.”

After a difficult Year 2, the mayor can turn things around by focusing on the important steps his administration is taking on rezonings and economic development, said Mitchell Moss, an urban policy professor at New York University and an Adams ally.

Mr. Adams should quit picking fights with the media [*and President Biden*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/19/nyregion/adams-biden-migrants.html), he said, and stop allowing his rhetoric to overshadow his agenda.

“The mayor should be bringing good news to the attention of New Yorkers,” he said, “not bad news.”

Patrick McGeehan and Dana Rubinstein contributed reporting.

Patrick McGeehan and Dana Rubinstein contributed reporting.

PHOTOS: Bill de Blasio, top left, the former mayor of New York, won plaudits for bringing universal prekindergarten to the city, a signature achievement of his administration. Mayor Eric Adams, right, halfway through his term, has the lowest approval rating since Quinnipiac University began polling the popularity of mayors in 1996. Left, Mr. Adams has linked budget cuts to the cost of housing migrants. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY SETH WENIG; KIRSTEN LUCE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; TODD HEISLER/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A14.

**Load-Date:** December 30, 2023

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[***Nikki Haley Is Chasing Independents. They Have a Mind of Their Own.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B4G-S4T1-JBG3-6018-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 18, 2024 Thursday 00:03 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1866 words

**Highlight:** Her chance to beat Donald J. Trump in New Hampshire depends on her ability to win over its famously freethinking voters. Her challenge is that they come in all stripes.

**Body**

Her chance to beat Donald J. Trump in New Hampshire depends on her ability to win over its famously freethinking voters. Her challenge is that they come in all stripes.

Nikki Haley’s presidential aspirations may hang on a victory in the New Hampshire primary election on Tuesday, [*powered by her sway with people*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/us/politics/haley-new-hampshire-independents-trump.html) who do not belong to a political party. It’s not a bad bet in a state where about 40 percent of voters call themselves independents.

The problem with her plan: Those voters come in all shapes and stripes, and many of them aren’t open to her.

Ms. Haley, the former governor of South Carolina, has won over plenty of voters in the middle in New Hampshire. They include moderate, conservative-leaning independents chased from the Republican Party by former President Donald J. Trump. And about [*4,000 Democrats*](https://newhampshirebulletin.com/briefs/ahead-of-primary-nearly-4000-democratic-voters-switch-affiliation-to-republican-or-undeclared/) have re-registered as Republicans or independents to vote in the G.O.P. primary, in some cases to thwart Mr. Trump’s steady march to the nomination.

But New Hampshire’s potentially crucial primary will also include many other types of voters who have chosen to keep their distance from both parties:

* Independents on the left who are loyal to their next-door senator, Bernie Sanders.

1. Independents on the right who plan to vote in the Democratic primary against President Biden.
2. True swing voters who are up for grabs in every election.
3. And ***working-class*** Trump supporters who don’t want to belong to a Republican Party long associated with the rich — but who are very much in the former president’s camp.

“Our country was thriving when he was in last time, so I’m going to go with what I know,” said Stacy Kolofoles of Laconia, who is a longtime independent but nonetheless “can’t see myself ever voting for a Democrat.”

Two dozen interviews with New Hampshire independents revealed stark challenges as well as ample opportunities for Ms. Haley as she courts the state’s [*largest political constituency*](https://www.wmur.com/article/new-hampshire-undeclared-republican-democrat-voter/46398747). A [*new poll from Saint Anselm College*](https://www.anselm.edu/about/anselmian-hub/news/new-poll-saint-anselm-college-survey-center-finds-trump-now-enjoys-majority-support-within-likely-nh-republican-presidential-primary-voters) spelled it out: Mr. Trump led Ms. Haley by 65 percent to 25 percent among likely Republican voters in the state, while she edged him among unaffiliated voters by a considerably narrower margin, 52 percent to 37 percent.

That 37 percent of independents for Mr. Trump may be decisive, however. Among all voters, he had a substantial advantage, 52 percent to 38 percent, and Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida trailed far behind with 6 percent.

But the political quirkiness of the state’s independent voters means that it remains unpredictable how they will affect Tuesday’s results — and ultimately whether New Hampshire will slow or speed up Mr. Trump in the sprint to the nomination.

Reluctant Haley backers

New Hampshire has one of the highest percentages of independent voter registration in the country, up there with Washington, Iowa and Colorado, according to an analysis of polling data by The New York Times. As of [*late December*](https://www.sos.nh.gov/party-registration-history-1970-2023), 343,192 New Hampshire voters had registered as undeclared, while 262,262 were Democrats and 267,905 were Republicans.

And a large number of those independents are college-educated moderate voters, the kind who have gravitated to Ms. Haley, especially since former Gov. [*Chris Christie of New Jersey left the presidential race*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/10/us/politics/chris-christie-drops-out.html)

Colin Carberry, 52, of Dover, is one of them. Mr. Carberry, who works in finance and lives in what he described as an affluent suburban neighborhood, voted for Mr. Trump in 2016, “and I’m not ashamed to admit my mistake.”

He will not do that again.

“He only cares about his own ego, empowering himself and his family at the expense of the country,” Mr. Carberry said.

He expects to vote for Ms. Haley but isn’t thrilled about it. He recalled being “taken aback” when she stumbled through [*an answer about the cause of the Civil War*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/27/us/haley-civil-war-slavery.html), neglecting to mention slavery, and he would have preferred that she shut down speculation that she might serve as Mr. Trump’s running mate.

His Dover neighbor, Joe Merullo, 68, who retired after 43 years with Sears to play bass in classic rock and party bands, has never registered with a political party. But, he said, he has also never voted for a Democrat for president, starting when he cast his ballot for Gerald Ford in 1976. He really wanted Mr. Christie, but without him in the race, Mr. Merullo said, he would vote for Ms. Haley with little enthusiasm.

A Trump-Biden general election would be even worse, he said.

“I don’t know what I’ll do, and it looks like I’ll be faced with that choice,” he said.

The anti-Trump vote

A [*lack of passion for Ms. Haley*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/us/politics/haley-new-hampshire-iowa.html) also surfaced in polls before Iowa’s caucuses.

The final [*Iowa Poll*](https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/politics/iowa-poll/caucus/2024/01/13/iowa-poll-nikki-haley-leads-ron-desantis-ahead-of-republican-caucus-night-big-lead-for-donald-trump/72216523007/) from The Des Moines Register, NBC News and Mediacom found that only 9 percent of her supporters said they were extremely enthusiastic to support her. The poll pointed to a narrow second-place finish for her, if she could rally her hesitant voters.

She didn’t, and [*fell to third place*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/01/15/us/iowa-caucus-election-news) on Monday.

Such apprehension was evident in interviews with New Hampshire independents who were considering Ms. Haley.

David Fournier, 78, of Nashua, considers himself a lifelong Democrat and said he volunteered for the campaigns of Bill Clinton and Howard Dean. But he is not registered with a political party, he said, so he can keep the flexibility to vote in either party’s primary depending on the contest.

He is leaning toward casting a ballot for Ms. Haley, though he said he would “under no circumstances” support her in November should she win the nomination.

“It’s not a pro-Haley vote, it’s a negative-Trump vote,” Mr. Fournier said, adding, “Anything to put a ding on his belt.”

Several efforts are underway to engage undeclared voters in the primary. A new super PAC called Independents Moving the Needle on Wednesday began running [*two*](https://adm0.page.link/SjZZ) [*ads*](https://adm0.page.link/svez) in New Hampshire featuring independent voters speaking directly to camera about their support for Ms. Haley. The group has booked more than $200,000 in airtime through Primary Day, according to AdImpact, a media tracking firm.

“This is about preserving our democracy, and there’s a man who is a threat to democracy,” said Robert Schwartz, who is leading [*another initiative*](https://www.bostonglobe.com/2023/09/18/metro/primarypivot-super-pac-independent-voters-gop-primary-donald-trump/) to encourage voters — in particular, undeclared voters who participated in the 2020 Democratic primary — to vote in the Republican race this year against Mr. Trump.

A desire to ‘move to Canada’

If anything, the interviews were perhaps more heartening for Mr. Biden than for Ms. Haley.

New Hampshire has voted for Democratic presidential candidates since [*George W. Bush won the state in 2000*](https://www.270towin.com/states/New_Hampshire).

But the state is still purple, with an all-Democratic congressional delegation but Republican control of the state legislature and governorship, thanks to independent voters like Kathleen Grindle Mack, 64, of Plainfield.

She has never voted for a Republican for president but has done so for governor, and she plans to back Ms. Haley next week, calling her the “least objectionable” option.

The prospect of a Biden-Trump rematch makes her want to “move to Canada,” she said, but she would probably vote for Mr. Biden, unless Ms. Haley won the Republican nomination.

“Trump scares me; Trump terrifies me,” she said. “When I was at the university, I studied European fascism, and he could have written the book on it.”

Bob Terrell, 82, a lifelong independent living in Goffstown, near the Uncanoonuc Mountains, voted for Mr. Trump in 2016. Now, he said, he thinks “Trump is a wacko.”

Then again, there are undeclared voters like Denyce Wallace, 57, of Concord. She supported Mr. Trump in 2020 and plans to do so again, saying she saw him as a man of action.

“I wish there were different candidates to choose from, maybe, but I’d rather have somebody who’s going to say something and then do it,” she said.

DeSantis and Biden in the mix

Of course, not all New Hampshire independents are deciding between Mr. Trump and Ms. Haley.

Joseph Lombardo, 73, of Windham, near the Massachusetts state line, considers himself independent, though he could not remember how he is registered. He was deciding this week between Mr. Trump and Mr. DeSantis.

“It doesn’t appear that he’s going to do anything different than what Trump did, so why not vote for the original?” he said of Mr. DeSantis.

Richard Bogart, 71, from Tamworth, voted for Mr. Trump in 2016 because, he said, the Democratic Party had not looked out for the “poor guy and the union guy.”

Mr. Biden won him back in 2020, and if Mr. Bogart votes in the primary on Tuesday, he will [*write in the president’s name*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/11/us/politics/biden-new-hampshire-primary-2024.html), even though Mr. Biden will not be on the ballot, since New Hampshire Democrats did not abide by the party’s new primary order.

Mr. Bogart cited a hefty [*cost-of-living adjustment*](https://apnews.com/article/social-security-cola-increase-8778d4aa9da4102edc79762ea622196f) in Social Security benefits amid high inflation, and his fears that Republicans could roll back the program.

“Social Security, they’re always talking about doing away with it, and he gave me a raise,” he said of Mr. Biden. “That’s the best thing a president ever did for me personally.”

The Haley faithful

Ms. Haley clearly has many potential voters in the vast sea of independents, as evidenced by her [*rise in the polls*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/polls/president-primary-r/2024/new-hampshire/) to become more competitive with Mr. Trump.

“One thing I loved about Nikki Haley, she stood and said, ‘I’m not a lawyer, I’m an accountant,’” said Thomas Gross, a lifelong independent and retired Air Force officer who lives near Portsmouth. “Even though I’m in favor of many of the more liberal social issues, I realized that we need a good economy to provide funding for those issues, like pay for families with dependent children.”

Ms. Haley has to hope that the middle holds over the coming days, including people like Brian Smith, a 68-year-old engineer from Nashua who takes a dim view of both political parties or, as he called them, “the two political corporations.”

In 2020, he said, he wrote in “the most moderate person I could think of.” (He declined to share the name.) In 2024, he would write in a candidate again, perhaps Ms. Haley, if Mr. Trump and Mr. Biden were the two nominees.

But he had high hopes for Ms. Haley, who has his vote on Tuesday.

“Her stint in the United Nations has made her a lot more intelligent than I am in the political ramifications of world politics,” he said. “She did pretty well in her own state when she was there.”

He concluded, “She is not acting as extremist as the other people running in her party.”

Neil Vigdor and Ruth Igielnik contributed reporting.

Neil Vigdor and Ruth Igielnik contributed reporting.

PHOTOS: Colin Carberry of Dover, N.H., who regrets voting for Donald J. Trump in 2016, expects to support Ms. Haley in the primary but isn’t thrilled about it.; David Fournier, an independent voter in Nashua, N.H., said he was leaning toward Nikki Haley next week but would not back her in a general election.; Kathleen Grindle Mack of Plainfield, N.H., plans to support Ms. Haley, calling her the “least objectionable” option. “Trump terrifies me,” she said.; Thomas Gross, who lives near Portsmouth, N.H., said he liked Ms. Haley “even though I’m in favor of many of the more liberal social issues.” (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOE BUGLEWICZ FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Ms. Haley was leading Mr. Trump among the state’s unaffiliated voters, but he had a bigger edge with Republicans. (PHOTOGRAPH BY SOPHIE PARK FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A9.

**Load-Date:** January 19, 2024

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[***Hungry Mosquitoes, Irritable Bears and the Glories of Wilderness; Nicholas Kristof***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:691J-0YC1-JBG3-602G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 26, 2023 Saturday 16:59 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 832 words

**Byline:** Nicholas Kristof

**Highlight:** The best thing about America may be our wild places. So why don’t we venture into them more often?

**Body**

One of the paradoxes of urban America is that millions of people speak reverently about wilderness but are much less eager to venture into it and risk real bites from actual mosquitoes.

I’ve been musing about this while backpacking with family on the Pacific Northwest Trail, sometimes known as “[*America’s wildest trail*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N3VuiUARSfg),” on the Canada-U.S. border in Washington State. It’s stunning, mountainous country, right at timberline in the [*Pasayten Wilderness*](https://www.pnt.org/pnta/know-before-you-go/pasayten-wilderness/) — yet we have it pretty much to ourselves (along with the bears, lynxes and mountain goats).

Perhaps I’m running away from home, for this is a dispiriting time in America: A former president has not only been indicted four times but may actually also be re-elected, our life expectancy is [*among the worst*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/16/opinion/health-care-life-expectancy-poverty.html) in the rich world, and large majorities of adults polled [*say*](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/23858265-230169-nbc-june-2023-poll_625-first-release) our country is on the wrong track.

Yet there’s something still spectacularly right about the United States: our wild spaces. Some 40 percent of America is public land — a credit to our forebears — and we haven’t screwed that up yet (although climate-change-related fires endanger it).

I’m hiking with my daughter and her boyfriend, and it’s cathartic: We get up in the morning with the sun, drink from creeks, rest on logs, eat from our packs when hungry, and at dusk we find some flat ground, roll out a ground sheet, unfurl pads and sleeping bags and then fall asleep under the stars to the melody of owl hoots.

For me, wilderness backpacking is a profoundly healing experience. It restores my soul.

If much of modern life is exemplified by what we do on our screens — firing off intemperate and shallow salvos on the platform X, what we used to call Twitter — then wilderness offers an antidote. It is deep. It is enduring. It is soothing. The antonym of X is wilderness.

The best parenting I ever did was on the trails. Beginning when she was 14, [*my daughter and I hiked*](https://www.backpacker.com/stories/thru-hikes/trail-stories/growing-up-on-the-pct-nicholas-kristof/) the entire 2,650-mile Pacific Crest Trail from Mexico to Canada, [*over six years*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/31/opinion/pacific-crest-trail.html). In that brief window in which she was strong enough and I was not yet decrepit, together we sweated, bathed in rivers, lost toenails, dodged 14 rattlesnakes and a cougar, and were drenched in freezing rains. No better way to share companionship!

It’s a spiritual experience to hike through the cathedral of wilderness, whether alone or with a family member or friend; the mountains and rivers generate a quasi-religious awe and put us humans in our place. I understand Spinoza best not in the library but in the mountains.

That is not to diminish the significance of humans; on the contrary, wilderness is an example of the importance of public policy. The architects of our land policies were leaders like Theodore Roosevelt and his friend Gifford Pinchot (the first head of the U.S. Forest Service), who were personally wealthy and could afford their own country estates but deeply believed that ***working-class*** Americans should also have access to nature. Hence the drive for public lands.

When Congress rebelled at their conservation efforts and in 1907 made it harder to create new national forests, Roosevelt and Pinchot hurriedly preserved an additional 16 million acres — so-called midnight forests, because they were created just before the deadline.

We’re all beneficiaries of their vision, for wild places provide a rare zone of equality in an unequal nation. There are few places in America where a billionaire and a welder are on equal footing, but a wilderness trail is one; no one can pull rank on you, except a large bear.

As I see it, the purpose of our extraordinary American inheritance of public lands is to go out in them, to experience that healing power of nature. Yet perhaps [*three-quarters*](https://www.fs.usda.gov/news/releases/usda-secretary-announces-infrastructure-improvements-forest-system-trails) of Americans don’t set foot on national forest trails at all.

Many children in particular seem to suffer from what the writer Richard Louv has called “[*nature-deficit disorder*](https://richardlouv.com/blog/what-is-nature-deficit-disorder/).” That’s the alienation from the natural world that arises when kids no longer tramp through the mud chasing tadpoles and garter snakes.

Perhaps we parents are overprotective, fearing that mud might be quicksand or that garter snakes might be rattlesnakes. And modern life feels increasingly sedentary and pampered: On a baking summer day, kids no longer cool off in a swimming hole, but rather stay inside air-conditioned rooms playing video games, oblivious to their deprivation.

When young Americans don’t interact with the outdoors, something is lost for all of us — including a visceral appreciation of what wilderness is. In our dreams, it may be romantic and Disney-like; in reality, you’re always too hot or too cold, all trails are mostly uphill, and that brown lump you just kicked is a wasp nest. All true, but that reality is bewitching.

So, my advice: Go take a hike, and bring the kids.

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This article appeared in print on page SR2.

**Load-Date:** August 28, 2023

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[***Thigh Masters***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:694R-TB71-DXY4-X05V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 10, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section M2; Column 0; T: Men's Fashion Magazine; Pg. 44; NOTES ON THE CULTURE

**Length:** 940 words

**Byline:** By Nick Haramis

**Body**

Stockings appeared on a slew of male models this season, once again affirming that their practical, provocative appeal transcends the gender binary.

AFTER SATIRIZING EVERYTHING from the western to the Stone Age, Mel Brooks in 1993 released the movie ''Robin Hood: Men in Tights,'' a sendup of ''Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves,'' which had come out two years earlier. Although Brooks's parody was uniformly idiotic -- Maid Marian wears an Everlast chastity belt; Blinkin, a blind servant, gropes a Braille edition of Playboy -- many of the laughs were at the expense of so-called feygeles, a Yiddish slur for gay men. During a musical number with a cancan interlude, the heroic outlaw assures the audience he's not one. ''We may look like pansies,'' he and his Merry Men sing, ''but don't get us wrong or else we'll put out your lights. We're men. We're men in tights.''

The joke would have confused William Shakespeare: In the Elizabethan era, noblemen customarily wore trunk hose (baglike silk breeches described by Richard Thompson Ford in his 2021 book, ''Dress Codes,'' as the ''parachute pants of their day'') over canions, fitted tubes of fabric that anticipated women's leg warmers of the 1980s. The ostentatious style of the time -- often accompanied by powdered wigs and high-heeled shoes trimmed with rosettes -- was meant to telegraph wealth and status while also drawing the eye to a man's calves, then symbols of virility. To protect the social order, sumptuary laws were passed that discouraged commoners from dressing above their class.

During the French Revolution, bourgeois radicals -- known as the sans-culottes -- traded their sheathlike breeches and silk stockings for the looser, more practical trousers of the proletariat. For centuries hence, wearing the pants has been a metaphor for wielding power. Although tights have occasionally made appearances on men's runways (Jean-Paul Gaultier styled them under feathered skirts in 1986; Riccardo Tisci paired them with black skorts and thorny gold necklaces for his ecclesiastical fall 2010 collection for Givenchy), brosiery, as it became regrettably known, was mostly a costume for superheroes and a uniform for wrestlers or ballet dancers.

THEN CAME THE athleisure boom of the 2010s. With off-court endorsements from musicians such as Pharrell and ASAP Rocky, men's leggings, worn with basketball or running shorts as streetwear, weren't just about improving performance and hastening recovery. Tights were once again stylish -- and if not exactly butch, at least somewhat practical. Such was the balance struck this past February at MSGM's fall 2023 show, where the Italian designer Massimo Giorgetti, summoning the fraternal spirit of one of his favorite films, ''Dead Poets Society'' (1989), dressed models in collegiate hoodies with white leggings worn under striped cotton boxers. For his third collection as Ferrari's creative director, also presented in February, Rocco Iannone offered brightly patterned knitwear that hugged the body like the aerodynamic shell of a racecar.

Of course, function only accounts for part of the garment's appeal: As fashion continues to experiment beyond the gender binary, there's no better laboratory than the site of countless projections and fetishes. ''Women can wear trousers and a jacket,'' said the London-based creative director Naeem Anthony, founder of the label Helen Anthony. ''Why can't men wear tights?'' For the brand's fall 2023 presentation, titled Structural Liberation, Anthony sent out men in sharply tailored jackets or coats with dark hose instead of pants -- perhaps a cheeky reversal of Yves Saint Laurent's groundbreaking 1966 suit for women, Le Smoking. The Chinese designer Feng Chen Wang, who splits her time between London and Shanghai, endeavored to translate Helmut Newton's striking images of 1990s supermodels into more recent conversations about gender expression, or what Wang calls ''the union of yin and yang.'' Many of her models that season, some of whom walked in asymmetrical denim jackets, pink boxer briefs and sheer stockings, identify as nonbinary or trans.

Since the early days of his own line, Charles Jeffrey Loverboy, which debuted in 2015, the Glaswegian maximalist Charles Jeffrey has embraced not only sheer or colored hoses but fishnets, a look popularized by the female flappers of the 1920s and later deconstructed by the punks of the 1970s. (This season, Walter Van Beirendonck and Maison Margiela's John Galliano also included fishnets in their collections.) ''I think there's something theatrical and flamboyant yet also quite chic and sexy about it,'' said Jeffrey, who enacted a queer interpretation of ''The Slab Boys Trilogy,'' John Byrne's set of plays from the late 1970s and early '80s about ***working-class*** toughs in 1950s Scotland, for his fall 2023 Milan show in January. Some models emerged carrying paraffin lamps or wearing knitwear embedded with stones from the Thames riverbed, while one wore a black leather jacket and matching skirt with an electric blue lightning bolt motif and gauzy over-the-calf stockings held up with black garters. The collection wasn't just about remembrance -- it was about imagining an alternate history where a Teddy boy could also be a gay man and where subverting long-held beliefs about gender didn't require a big statement.

''Supposedly, all the legs in tights adverts are men's legs,'' said Jeffrey. And while that's not strictly true, the American football player Joe Namath did wear Beauty Mist pantyhose in a 1974 TV commercial. ''I could try to intellectualize that but, to be honest, I just think it's really fit.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/06/t-magazine/tights-mens-fashion-runways.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/06/t-magazine/tights-mens-fashion-runways.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Clockwise from top left: fall runway looks by MSGM, Feng Chen Wang, Helen Anthony, Maison Margiela, Charles Jeffrey Loverboy and Walter Van Beirendonck. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAUNCHMETRICS/SPOTLIGHT (6)) This article appeared in print on page M244.

**Load-Date:** September 10, 2023

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[***Liz Cheney and the Twilight of the Old Republican Elite; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:665R-JBW1-DXY4-X2D7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 16, 2022 Tuesday 22:12 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1996 words

**Byline:** Stephanie Muravchik and Jon A. Shields

**Highlight:** A conservative cancel culture as unforgiving as its progressive rival is sweeping over the Wyoming G.O.P.

**Body**

If Liz Cheney’s loss to Harriet Hageman in Wyoming’s primary election on Tuesday seems like a bad dream to many of Ms. Cheney’s Democratic admirers, that’s because it is: For a generation, progressives have imagined the moment when the white ***working class*** would finally turn against an insular and privileged Republican establishment. That day has arrived. But it isn’t what Democrats dreamed.

Apparently uninterested in everyday governing, the new insurgents who elected Ms. Hageman are consumed with demonstrating that they are authentic conservative Republicans. And in that sense, they are succumbing to the same impulses they associate with their liberal opponents: a shrill hostility to different viewpoints, an obsession with virtue signaling and a willingness to purge their own ranks. The older tradition of Republican politics — the one that cradled Ms. Cheney from girlhood and shaped her in office — is still alive, though embattled, even in Wyoming. Progressives who realize that this privileged Republican establishment was a linchpin of our democracy all along may start rooting for a counterrevolution from above rather than a revolution from below.

In the not very distant past, Wyoming’s G.O.P. was focused on governing the state by addressing everyday challenges, like distributing a limited number of liquor licenses and funding its public schools. Politics was “frankly boring,” recalled Tim Stubson, a partisan of the old school.

The Cheneys exemplified Wyoming’s establishment: They are quiet and diligent legislators, even a little bland. They are also highly educated and wealthy, splitting their time between Washington and Wyoming’s Teton County, one of the wealthiest counties in the United States.

Wyoming politics began to change beneath their feet, slowly at first, as the Tea Party rose to power, and then rapidly during the Trump years, as a new guard waged war with the establishment, making politics less about ordinary governance than about identity.

We’ve spent the last year traveling Wyoming, from Cheyenne in the south to Sheridan in the north, from Evanston in the west to Wheatland in the east, talking to local political activists and leaders. This obsession with identity left a mark everywhere, but nowhere more obviously than at the recent Republican state conventions. Just a decade ago, few delegates would have attended party meetings with guns strapped to their hips. Now many do. That wasn’t enough for one delegate at the last convention: He reportedly strutted about with a gun fully cocked. In another departure from old norms, many delegates have taken to wearing their cowboy hats inside the convention center. “That’s not a Wyoming thing,” noted JoAnn True, a patron of the old party. This is mostly because there is no need to wear a cowboy hat indoors — unless your goal is to sport a costume that signals a conservative social identity.

Virtue signaling is also on the rise. One convention delegate argued that Wyoming schoolchildren should not be required to say the Pledge of Allegiance, since the word “indivisible” suggests that states can’t secede from the union. Another Republican Party figure was criticized for allegedly failing to adopt an appropriately respectful posture during the pledge.

Acting the part of a true Wyoming conservative is a delicate art. It’s not only about signaling that you belong to a rugged, rural ***working class***, but also about highlighting your conservative bona fides, which often means exiling anyone who doesn’t toe the line. Now a conservative cancel culture as unforgiving as its progressive rival is sweeping over the Wyoming G.O.P.

Ms. Cheney, of course, is the most prominent victim of that cancel culture: She has [*been censured twice by the party*](https://www.npr.org/2021/11/15/1056025589/wyoming-gop-votes-to-stop-recognizing-cheney-as-a-republican), and now has been voted out of office. But she is just the tip of an iceberg that mostly lies beneath the media’s radar. Other members of the old type have been censured as well. Their crimes are varied, ranging from supporting Medicaid expansion to founding a nonpartisan PAC to fund female candidates.

Websites have emerged that help the new censors identify politically incorrect Republicans. WyoRINO, for example, exposes legislators “who falsely claim to be Republicans” by scrutinizing their voting records for the slightest signs of apostasy. According to [*the site’s index*](https://wyorino.com/), nearly a two-thirds majority of Wyoming’s Republican legislators are faking it.

Those who are formally censured, though, usually have something else in common: They are from the upper class. In recent years the party has censured [*a wealthy activist*](https://trib.com/news/state-and-regional/govt-and-politics/natrona-county-gop-member-censured-by-state-party-for-supporting-womens-pac/article_fb93e28d-e5bd-5674-aa47-b650c3156c19.html), [*a state senator*](https://wyofile.com/sen-cale-case-latest-subject-of-gop-censure/) with a doctorate and [*a physician*](https://trib.com/news/state-and-regional/govt-and-politics/natrona-county-gop-chair-says-he-was-censured-by-state-party/article_782611e1-73ab-59f5-9f9d-dd134bcb2002.html). Joe McGinley, the physician — a prominent party leader of the old style — was censured for reasons that are still a bit mysterious. But as a Stanford-trained doctor, he was a perfect symbol of an inauthentic conservative. Joey Correnti IV, a pistol-packing delegate, mocks his supposed haughtiness, claiming that he introduces himself as “Doctor Joe McGinley.”

Plenty of the new insurgents are themselves comfortable members of the professional class pretending to be “one of the people.” Some, like Ms. Hageman, simply seem opportunistic, while others sincerely share cultural affinities with Wyoming’s ***working class***. But to its credit, the new identity politics has also done something rare in this gilded age of American politics: It has elevated genuinely ***working-class*** citizens into positions of power. For example, Tom James, elected to the State Senate in 2018, grew up in a foster home and campaigned for office as he delivered pizzas. Meanwhile, Frank Eathorne, the current chairman of the state party, [*previously worked*](https://wyofile.com/wyo-gop-chairman-quietly-assumed-power-as-party-fractured/) as a Terminix pest exterminator. As Tim Stubson of the old establishment acknowledged, “It’s a much more blue-collar party.”

These candidates are starting to reshape the G.O.P. beyond Wyoming as well. Representative Lauren Boebert of Colorado earned a G.E.D., [*having left high school after she got pregnant*](https://www.durangoherald.com/articles/lauren-boebert-defends-her-past-during-durango-visit/). Meanwhile, in New Jersey, [*a truck driver won a State Senate seat*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/04/nyregion/stephen-sweeney-durr-nj-election.html) on a shoestring budget. And in Arizona, Rusty Bowers — who resisted pressure from Donald Trump to overturn his state’s election results — was just badly defeated by David Farnsworth, [*a small businessman and former crane operator with an A.A. degree*](https://www.azleg.gov/senate-member/?legislature=54&amp;legislator=1932).

For decades, progressives have hoped that the white ***working class*** would turn against the affluent bankers, doctors and oil magnates who control the Republican Party. Well, it did. Class warfare of a kind did finally break out. It’s just not the sort of war progressives imagined, much less hoped for.

That’s true partly because progressive longings for class war rested on a falsehood. Influential books like Thomas Frank’s “What’s the Matter With Kansas” insisted that the Republican elite was rapaciously consumed with padding its wealth and exploiting its ***working-class*** supporters. Like other myths, that critique contained a kernel of truth. Wyoming’s establishment was too insular at times — and it practiced self-dealing on occasion.

But whatever its sins, it was also public spirited. It cared about the general welfare of the state and worked hard on its behalf, laboring away for a pittance in a legislature that begins its sessions in the dead of Wyoming’s punishing winter, when driving is treacherous. The new identitarians infiltrating the State Legislature seem less interested in seeking remedies to real problems than in signaling to their base.

Thus, they perform small symbolic acts, like pushing a bill that requires local law enforcement officials to ignore federal law that violates the Second Amendment, or [*sponsoring a bill*](https://www.wyoleg.gov/Legislation/2022/HB0097) that prohibited the teaching of critical race theory in Wyoming public schools. It failed because enough traditional conservatives don’t believe it’s a real problem. Tom Walters, a state representative of the old school, observed, “They speak of it as though it’s there, and yet they know all their teachers and they know their teachers aren’t teaching it.”

Addressing these phantoms swallows up time, leaving larger issues neglected. Cathy Connolly, the Democratic minority leader in the State House, told us: “We have one of the highest suicide rates in the nation. We now have the highest workplace fatality rate. We’ve got Covid issues. We’ve got hospitals closing. We’re not looking at these issues because we have these stupid bills,” she said, adding an expletive.

The right’s new identity craze wasn’t engineered by Donald Trump. It simply created an opportunity that he exploited. But Mr. Trump has rendered identity politics more dangerous than its progressive rival by wedding it to a cult of personality and a campaign to steal an election. Those changes have only widened the party’s class divide: While [*a substantial majority*](https://int.nyt.com/data/documenttools/us0722-crosstabs-nyt071222/0f9f399b059138f9/full.pdf) of white Republican primary voters without a college degree say they would prefer to vote for him in 2024, those with college degrees generally want someone else, according to a July New York Times/Siena College poll.

Ms. Cheney’s fall highlights the cultish character of the right’s evolving politics of identity. During her first two terms, she supported Mr. Trump’s positions 93 percent of the time, according to FiveThirtyEight (almost as often as Kevin McCarthy and more often than Elise Stefanik). Yet Ms. Cheney is not only considered to be a “Republican in Name Only” by many Wyoming Republicans — she is the face of the RINOs. At the state convention, one attendee [*sported a T-shirt*](https://trib.com/news/state-and-regional/govt-and-politics/watch-now-laramie-county-republicans-walk-out-after-losing-delegates-at-gop-convention/article_4de493b0-ce31-11ec-a3c5-6b7f2d93c1fa.html#_blank) that said “No More RINOs” with Ms. Cheney’s name circled and crossed out. To cross Mr. Trump is to become a fake conservative.

Sadly, the G.O.P. establishment was not strong enough to save Ms. Cheney. Happily, though, it isn’t dead, even in Wyoming. In fact, it’s far more entrenched than Ms. Cheney’s defeat might suggest. The old guard still controls the State Legislature and Wyoming’s two most populous counties, both of which pushed back forcefully on efforts to censure Ms. Cheney. And in some places the new insurgents have been outmaneuvered and beaten back. For example, in Campbell County, [*where support for Mr. Trump surpasses that of most Wyoming counties*](https://www.politico.com/2020-election/results/wyoming/), the establishment wrestled the party away from the new identitarians.

Similar fights are playing out in state parties and legislatures from [*Colorado*](https://coloradotimesrecorder.com/2022/07/there-is-an-open-civil-war-down-here-says-dave-williams-amid-el-paso-county-gop-infighting/47342/) to Arizona, [*Idaho*](https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2022/01/18/republican-infighting-idaho-527190), [*Illinois*](https://www.politico.com/newsletters/illinois-playbook/2022/07/26/illinois-gop-ignores-call-to-censure-kinzinger-00047875) and [*Texas*](https://www.texastribune.org/2022/06/18/republican-party-texas-convention-cornyn/), where the new identitarians are gaining momentum, chipping away at the old guard’s power. But even if they continue to advance, their style of politics may also contain the seeds of its destruction. Any party that elevates symbolism over governing risks stirring mass revolt down the road. Some practitioners of identity politics on the left have already discovered that lesson the hard way. When some members of the San Francisco Board of Education busied themselves renaming schools instead of prioritizing reopening them after lengthy closures during the pandemic, [*they were recalled*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/16/us/san-francisco-school-board-recall.html). Results matter even in the age of identity politics.

Though the outcome of the G.O.P.’s civil war is impossible to determine, one thing is clear: Both sides see the conflict in existential terms. As the traditionalist Dr. McGinley said of Ms. Cheney’s race: “The soul of the Republican Party is at stake.” Ms. Cheney fought valiantly for the party’s soul and was celebrated by traditional Republicans in Wyoming for doing so. They don’t believe her cause is lost — and neither should we.

Stephanie Muravchik ([*@stephaniemurav1*](https://twitter.com/stephaniemurav1)) and Jon A. Shields are professors of government at Claremont McKenna College and the authors of “Trump’s Democrats.” They are working on a new book about Liz Cheney’s Wyoming and the future of the American right.

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**Load-Date:** August 17, 2022

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[***Happily Ever After Is Beside the Point; Vows***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B48-XCR1-JBG3-605K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 17, 2024 Wednesday 02:14 EST

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**Section:** STYLE

**Length:** 1944 words

**Byline:** Valeriya Safronova

**Highlight:** Nadya Tolokonnikova, a founding member of Pussy Riot, and John Caldwell have always prioritized being “helpful,” he said, over being happy.

**Body**

Nadya Tolokonnikova, a founding member of Pussy Riot, and John Caldwell have always prioritized being “helpful,” he said, over being happy.

When Nadya Tolokonnikova, one of the founding members of the anti-establishment punk collective Pussy Riot, reached out to John Caldwell on Discord, an encrypted messaging app, he asked if she was a bot.

“She just said ‘haha,’” said Mr. Caldwell, who was already familiar with her work. “I was very suspicious.”

Ms. Tolokonnikova had developed [*an interest*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/30/style/nadya-tolokonnikova-pussy-riot-cryptocurrency.html) in cryptocurrency and blockchain and had heard about Mr. Caldwell, a partner at a financial services company who specialized in crypto, from a friend. “I was jumping on Zooms with random people with no romantic intentions, just learning about crypto,” she said.

They met for dinner a few days later, in mid-September 2021. “It ended horribly,” Mr. Caldwell said. “She faked a call to Europe and left.”

Ms. Tolokonnikova, an activist, musician and artist, described herself as a “super introverted person,” and said she normally spaces out meetings with new people. But at the time, she was in the process of crash educating herself on a new topic, and had therefore scheduled several meetings in one day, and the dinner with Mr. Caldwell was last.

“I was overwhelmed,” she said. So she left abruptly. But, she said, “it was not a reflection on John at all.” In fact, she had been intrigued by their conversation about reproductive rights and religion, and by Mr. Caldwell’s suggestion that she tap into the deep pockets of the crypto world to raise funds for causes she was interested in.

Despite Mr. Caldwell’s sense that the meeting had been a disaster, Ms. Tolokonnikova reached out again, and the two decided to work together on a new venture: [*UnicornDAO*](https://unicorndao.com/), a fund-raising and investment vehicle focused on female, nonbinary and L.G.B.T.Q. artists and creators.

Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, 34, was born in Norilsk, Russia, and studied philosophy at Moscow State University. At 22, before she could complete her degree, she was imprisoned for nearly two years for her role in “Punk Prayer,” a public performance piece that protested the Russian government’s close relationship with the Russian Orthodox Church (the protest was also [*the subject of an HBO documentary*](https://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/10/arts/television/pussy-riot-a-punk-prayer-in-hbo-documentary-series.html) in 2013). In 2014, she and another Pussy Riot member, Maria Alyokhina, founded an independent news outlet in Russia called [*Mediazona*](https://en.zona.media/). Ms. Tolokonnikova was married previously to Pyotr Verzilov. They split up in 2016.

Ms. Tolokonnikova’s continued outspokenness against President Vladimir V. Putin and his government landed her on Russia’s list of “foreign agents,” a label the authorities use to suppress opposition figures. Because of concerns for her safety, she does not disclose where she lives. In 2019, she received an honorary doctorate from the Rhode Island School of Design, fulfilling a personal dream. She is currently working on a memoir.

John Ferguson Caldwell, 40, was born in Providence, R.I., but grew up in the Pacific Palisades neighborhood of Los Angeles. Mr. Caldwell graduated from Pepperdine University in 2006 with a bachelor’s degree in art. He worked in surfing tourism in the Marshall Islands, managing a private island and organizing luxury yacht charters, until the pandemic began. After returning to the United States in March 2020, his interest in cryptocurrency and blockchain led him to join Wave, a financial services company. He is a founder of RFLXT, a company that is building a platform of artificial intelligence and crypto tools for creators.

After Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, Mr. Caldwell and Ms. Tolokonnikova led an effort to raise $7.1 million in cryptocurrency for Ukraine. The crypto wallet they used for the fund-raiser publicly listed Mr. Caldwell’s name. “All my friends were like, ‘The Russian government will put you on a list,’” Mr. Caldwell said. “I don’t think it’s a coincidence that was the moment Nadya got little hearts in her eyes.”

“That was a very clear moment for me,” Ms. Tolokonnikova said. “I really cherish kindness and bravery and consistency and high moral values in people.”

Mr. Caldwell, too, was full of admiration for Ms. Tolokonnikova. After she messaged him on Discord, he decided to learn more about her and watched [*the speech*](https://eng-pussy-riot.livejournal.com/4602.html) she gave at her trial in Russia in 2012, in which Ms. Tolokonnikova described herself and her fellow Pussy Riot activists as “freer than the people sitting opposite us and representing the prosecution because we can say everything we like, and we do.”

“It’s one of the most inspiring moments in humanity’s recent history,” Mr. Caldwell said. “And that’s just in the background. She’s funny and beautiful and smart and goth — and now vegan.” Mr. Caldwell has been vegan for more than two decades and succeeded in converting Ms. Tolokonnikova to the diet in the fall of 2022.

Now they enjoy eating at new vegan restaurants together. “John knows every single place for vegan food on planet earth, and it’s always the best,” Ms. Tolokonnikova said.

They also like to stage political actions together; in November, for example, they [*protested*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZaqGsBP1Aho) against restrictions on abortion rights in front of Indiana’s Supreme Court building. “We brought a giant inflatable vagina, and I came up with the contraption to inflate it, so I was holding it,” Mr. Caldwell said.

“His friends called him the Man Behind the Pussy,” Ms. Tolokonnikova said.

Both struggle with depression and other mental health issues and find comfort in helping others. “Most people, if one of the members of their partnership was put on a criminal wanted list in their country and exiled and couldn’t visit their home and their family and everything they knew, they would consider it a challenge,” Mr. Caldwell said. “But it’s just our reality. We’re not sitting around feeling sorry for ourselves. We just want to be helpful.”

He added that he does not prioritize happiness. Instead, he said, “I prioritize ideals and being useful and creative and being supportive of people around me.”

Ms. Tolokonnikova said she found Mr. Caldwell’s approach comforting. “I don’t even necessarily know what happiness is,” she said. “I spend most of my time on my art or my activism. I don’t spend much of my time on human activities, like going to a bar or just having fun.”

And so, fun was the top priority for Mr. Caldwell’s proposal. “Nadya has been through a lot,” he said. “I wanted to give her something cute and nice and kind of traditional.”

A few days before a trip to London, Mr. Caldwell commissioned Alligator Jesus, a jewelry designer and friend, to create an engagement ring for Ms. Tolokonnikova. Within 24 hours, Alligator Jesus delivered a black gold ring with diamonds and a pink sapphire. Mr. Caldwell also asked Gera Riot, Ms. Tolokonnikova’s 15-year-old daughter, for permission to propose, which she granted.

On Nov. 11, Mr. Caldwell and Ms. Tolokonnikova were joined by Marina Abramovic, a close friend who, Ms. Tolokonnikova said, “spiritually adopted” the couple, in central London. They were there to see a short art film, “[*Nadya Means Hope*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ggFOYwO5_4),” in which Ms. Tolokonnikova burns a candle in the shape of an eggplant emoji, play on an enormous screen in Piccadilly Circus. At the end of the video, a poem written by Mr. Caldwell appeared on the screen, followed by the words “Will You Marry Me?” in Russian and English. Mr. Caldwell got on his knee and took out the ring.

“I fell on the ground because I was so surprised,” Ms. Tolokonnikova said. Literally. And then she said, “Da!”

They were legally married on Jan. 12 at a courthouse in Los Angeles. Afterward, Nathan Monk, a priest who left the Russian Orthodox Church because he did not support its stance on gay marriage, led a short ceremony in their friend’s yard in front of about 200 guests.

“He spoke about Ukraine, about the fact that this love was brought together by challenges of the modern world, but also our common wish to make the world a little bit better, more just,” Ms. Tolokonnikova said.

Ms. Tolokonnikova’s daughter made the party’s playlist, which featured Soviet pop and contemporary Russian trap. For food, Ms. Tolokonnikova suggested serving pickles and vodka, but Mr. Caldwell insisted on something more robust.

He asked Wendell Hooper, a friend who is a chef, to cater. “He answered my call a week before,” Mr. Caldwell said. “He said, ‘This is normally planned six months in advance,’ and I said, ‘Welcome to Pussy Riot.’”

They served vegan meatballs, vegan charcuterie, vegan shrimp and eggplant caviar. Ms. Tolokonnikova baked a large vegan Napoleon cake, dyed it black and assembled it in the shape of a cross, a symbol she uses often in her artwork.

The dress code was “gopnik,” a word that encapsulates a style of dress, music and art reflecting the ***working class*** in the former Soviet states in the 1980s and 1990s. Mr. Caldwell asked Mark Hunter, [*a.k.a. the Cobrasnake*](https://www.thecut.com/2022/06/partying-with-cobrasnake-at-a-virginity-party.html), to serve as wedding photographer. “I like his pop-event club style.”

Guests showed up in tracksuits, house slippers, Adidas slides and newsboy caps, and one brought an accordion. Ms. Tolokonnikova wore a corset top from Adidas, a skirt from Depop with a petticoat over it, a faux leather jacket and velvet, high-platform Doc Martens.

She sewed three stripes — the Adidas trademark — along the arms of a suit jacket for Mr. Caldwell, using a skill she picked up in prison. “I thought I would never sew again,” she said. But for this occasion, she was happy to.

“Everybody was saying it was the most comfortable party they’ve been to,” Ms. Tolokonnikova said. “It was absurd and goofy at times, and the overall vibe was very cozy.”

[*Binge more Vows columns here*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/vows) and [*read all our wedding, relationship and divorce coverage here*](https://www.nytimes.com/section/fashion/weddings).

On This Day

When Jan. 12, 2024

Where Los Angeles

Breaking Bread A friend gave Ms. Tolokonnikova and Mr. Caldwell a loaf of dense rye bread, which they pulled from opposite sides until it broke. Per Russian tradition, whoever ends up with a bigger chunk will be in charge. “We did it exactly equal,” Ms. Tolokonnikova said. “Well, maybe mine was a little bit bigger.”

Bitter Cries At Russian weddings, when guests shout the word “gorko,” or “bitter,” the newly married couple should immediately kiss. But not all the guests at Ms. Tolokonnikova and Mr. Caldwell’s international wedding understood what the word meant. “They would scream at me and he’d be at the opposite side of the house,” Ms. Tolokonnikova said.

Master of Ceremonies A friend of the couple’s who is a translator and speaks Russian and English, Max Lawton, acted as the “tamada,” or toastmaster, in the Georgian tradition. Besides organizing the toasts, Mr. Lawton led the guests in playing games, like one in which people hold a balloon in their lap and others try to sit on it until it pops.

PHOTOS: The newlyweds Nadya Tolokonnikova and John Caldwell aim to help others. (ST1); Above, Nadya Tolokonnikova and John Caldwell, who were married this month, at a ceremony with Nathan Monk, a priest who left the Russian Orthodox Church. Second row from left: the musician Masha Mitkov playing a Balkan Roma wedding song for the couple; and Nastya Kreslina, holding the microphone, and Nick Kostylev, wearing a hood, of IC3PEAK performing at the ceremony. Third row from left: the couple’s friends Riley Reid, left, and Alligator Jesus, who designed Ms. Tolokonnikova’s engagement ring; and the visual artist Yulia Shur carrying a wedding gift. Above right, Ms. Tolokonnikova and Mr. Caldwell with a portrait by the artist Anna Leo Valerie. At left from top: the wedding cake; and the tearing of bread, a Russian tradition. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK HUNTER/THE COBRASNAKE) (ST4) This article appeared in print on page ST1, ST4.

**Load-Date:** January 20, 2024

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[***Haley's Strategy to Defeat Trump: Pull Some Punches***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69YY-WX21-JBG3-6554-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 28, 2023 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 13

**Length:** 1635 words

**Byline:** By Jazmine Ulloa

**Body**

Ms. Haley still trails far behind the former president in polls. Yet she is not deviating from the cautious approach that has led her this far.

At a packed community center in southwestern Iowa, Nikki Haley broke from her usual remarks this month to offer a warning to her top Republican presidential rivals, Donald J. Trump and Ron DeSantis, deploying a favorite line: ''If they punch me, I punch back -- and I punch back harder.''

But in that Dec. 18 appearance and over the next few days, Ms. Haley, the former governor of South Carolina, did not exactly pummel her opponents as promised. Her jabs were instead surgical, dry and policy-driven.

''He went into D.C. saying that he was going to stop the spending and instead, he voted to raise the debt limit,'' Ms. Haley said of Mr. DeSantis, a former congressman, in Treynor, near the Nebraska border. At that same stop, she also defended herself against his attack ads and criticized Mr. DeSantis, the Florida governor, over offshore drilling and fracking, and questioned his choice of a political surrogate in Iowa.

She was even more careful about going after Mr. Trump, continuing to draw only indirect contrasts and noting pointedly that his allied super PAC had begun running anti-Haley ads.

''He said two days ago I wasn't surging,'' she said, but now had ''attack ads going up against me.''

With under three weeks left until the Iowa caucuses, Ms. Haley is treading cautiously as she enters the crucial final stretch of her campaign to shake the Republican Party loose from the clutches of Mr. Trump. Even as the former president maintains a vast lead in polls, Ms. Haley has insistently played it safe, betting that an approach that has left her as the only non-Trump candidate with any sort of momentum can eventually prevail as primary season unfolds.

On the trail, she rarely takes questions from reporters. She hardly deviates from her stump speech. And she keeps walking a fine line on her greatest obstacle to the Republican nomination -- Mr. Trump.

''Anti-Trumpers don't think I hate him enough,'' she told reporters this month in New Hampshire, where she picked up the endorsement of Chris Sununu, the state's popular Republican governor. ''Pro-Trumpers don't think I love him enough.''

Ms. Haley's consistent strategy has enabled her team to build a reputation as lean and stable where other campaigns have faltered: As Mr. DeSantis's support has dipped and turmoil has overtaken his allied super PAC, even some of his advisers are privately signaling they believe hope is lost.

''I keep coming back to the word 'disciplined,''' said Jim Merrill, a Republican strategist in New Hampshire who served on Senator Marco Rubio's 2016 presidential campaign and Mitt Romney's 2008 and 2012 bids. ''She has run an extraordinarily disciplined campaign.''

That discipline slipped for a moment on Wednesday in New Hampshire, where an audience member pressed her on the cause of the Civil War and she avoided mentioning slavery. But while Democrats pounced on her comments, it was unclear whether they would come back to bite her in her attempt to defeat Mr. Trump.

The former president remains the heavy favorite for the nomination despite facing dozens of criminal charges, as well as legal challenges that aim to kick him off the ballot in several states.

Ms. Haley's apparent reluctance to attack her rival even in the face of what would seem to be political setbacks for him has raised questions from voters and other Republican competitors -- most notably, former Gov. Chris Christie of New Jersey -- about whether she can win while passing up crucial opportunities to derail her most significant opponent.

''A lot of the people in this field are running against Trump without doing very much to take him on,'' said Adolphus Belk, a political analyst and professor of political science at Winthrop University in Rock Hill, S.C., Ms. Haley's home state. ''If you are running to be president of the United States, it seems like it would be an imperative to take on the person who has the biggest lead.''

A recent poll from The New York Times and Siena College found Mr. Trump leading his Republican rivals by more than 50 percentage points nationally, a staggering margin.

The poll offered a sliver of hope for Ms. Haley: Nearly a quarter of Mr. Trump's supporters said he should not be the Republican nominee if he were found guilty of a crime. But 62 percent of Republicans said that if the former president won the primary, he should remain the nominee -- even if subsequently convicted.

The challenge for Ms. Haley is peeling away more of his support from the Republican Party's white, ***working-class*** base. The Times/Siena poll found that she garnered 28 percent support from white voters with a bachelor's degree or higher, but just 3 percent from those without a degree.

As she barnstorms through Iowa and New Hampshire, Ms. Haley has remained committed to a calibrated approach that aims to speak to all factions of the Republican Party.

Her stump speech highlights her background as the daughter of immigrants and her upbringing in a small and rural South Carolina town, but in generic terms. She nods to her status as the only woman in the Republican primary field and the potentially historic nature of her bid, but only in subtle ways.

Even as she has risen in the polls and consolidated significant anti-Trump support among donors and prominent Republicans, she has continued to cast herself as an underestimated underdog, with a message tightly focused on debt and spending, national security and the crisis at the border.

And she has not strayed from her broad calls for a ''consensus'' on abortion, even though some conservatives say she is not going far enough in backing new restrictions. At the same time, Democrats are looking to hit her from the other direction: The Democratic National Committee last week put up billboards in Davenport, Iowa, where she was campaigning, accusing her of wanting ''extreme abortion bans.''

Still, Ms. Haley has evolved on some fronts. In recent weeks, she has more aggressively made the case that she is the most electable Republican candidate -- an argument that polls show has some merit -- and ramped up her critiques of what she describes as a dysfunctional Washington.

This month, after Republicans blocked an emergency spending bill to fund support for Ukraine, demanding strict new border restrictions in return, she accused both President Biden and some Republicans of creating a false choice among those priorities, as well as aid to Israel, which the legislation also included.

''And now what are you hearing coming out of D.C. -- do we support Ukraine or do we support Israel?'' she said at an event in Burlington, Iowa. ''Do we support Israel or do we secure the border? Don't let them lie to you like that.''

She has ramped up her criticism of Mr. Trump on his tone, leadership style and what she describes as his lack of follow-through on policy, hitting him for increasing the national debt, proposing to raise the federal gasoline tax and ''praising dictators.''

But when confronted with tougher questions from voters over Mr. Trump's potential danger to the nation's democracy or why she indicated at the first debate that she would support him as the nominee even if he were convicted of criminal charges, she tends to fall back on a familiar response. She says she thinks that ''he was the right president for the right time'' but that ''rightly or wrongly, chaos follows him.''

''The thing is, normal people aren't obsessed with Trump like you guys are,'' she told Jonathan Karl of ABC News this month, taking a swipe at the news media when asked for her thoughts on how Mr. Trump is campaigning on the idea of ''retribution'' against his political enemies.

Such attempts to avoid alienating Trump supporters have helped generate interest, if not always commitment.

Before her event in Treynor, Iowa, Keith Denton, 77, a retired farmer and longtime Republican, said he stood with Mr. Trump ''100 percent,'' and had come to watch Ms. Haley only because his wife was debating whether to support her. But after Ms. Haley wrapped up, he tracked down a reporter to acknowledge that he was now seriously considering her.

''I have to eat my words,'' he said, adding that Ms. Haley had said ''some things that changed my mind.'' For one, he said, ''I thought she was more of a warmonger, but now I can see she is against war.''

But at an Osceola distilling company the next day, Jim Kimball, 84, a retired doctor, veteran and anti-Trump Republican, elicited nervous laughter from the audience when he asked Ms. Haley a couple of bold questions regarding the Capitol riot on Jan. 6, 2021: ''Did Mr. Trump trample or defend the Constitution? And is he running for president or emperor?''

As usual, Ms. Haley weighed her words. She said that the courts would ''decide whether President Trump did something wrong'' and that he had a right to defend himself against the legal charges he faces, but she expressed disappointment that when he had the chance to stop the Capitol attack, he did not.

''My goal is not to worry about him being president forever -- that is why I'm going to win,'' she finished to loud applause.

But afterward, Mr. Kimball said that he wished she would have said that Mr. Trump is unfit to be president and that he was still deliberating whether to caucus for her or for Mr. Christie.

''I wish she had the courage of Liz Cheney,'' he said, referring to the congresswoman pushed out of Republican leadership in Congress and then her Wyoming seat by pro-Trump forces in the party. ''But she doesn't want to end up like Liz Cheney, so you get the answer you get.''

Ruth Igielnik contributed reporting.Ruth Igielnik contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/27/us/politics/nikki-haley-trump.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/27/us/politics/nikki-haley-trump.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Nikki Haley walks a fine line with criticism of former President Donald J. Trump, trying to avoid alienating Trump supporters. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BRIAN SNYDER/REUTERS SCOTT OLSON/GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page A13.

**Load-Date:** December 28, 2023

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[***A Dispatch From the Muslim Girl Scouts of Astoria; Mara Gay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69H0-5JD1-DXY4-X0P5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 28, 2023 Saturday 23:36 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1106 words

**Byline:** Mara Gay

**Highlight:** A young activist in Queens supports Palestinian aspirations.

**Body**

In her short 17 years on earth, Amira Ismail had never been called a baby killer.

That’s what happened one Friday this month, Amira said, on New York City’s Q58 bus, which runs through central Queens.

“This lady looked at me, and she was like: ‘You’re disgusting. You’re a baby killer. You’re an antisemite,’” Amira told me. When she talked about this incident, her signature spunk faded. “I just kept saying, ‘That’s not true,’” she said. “I was just on my way to school. I was just wearing my hijab.”

Amira was born in Queens in the years after the Sept. 11 attacks. She remembers participating as a child in demonstrations at City Hall as part of a successful movement to make Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha [*school holidays*](https://www.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/147-15/transcript-mayor-de-blasio-chancellor-fari-a-designate-eid-al-fitr-eid-al-adha-official#/0) in New York City.

But since the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas, in which an estimated 1,400 Israelis were killed and some 200 others were kidnapped, Amira, who is Palestinian American, said she has experienced for the first time the full fury of Islamophobia and racism that her older relatives and friends have told stories about all her life. Throughout the city, in fact, [*there has been an increase*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/22/nyregion/israel-hamas-new-york-tensions.html) in both anti-Muslim and antisemitic attacks.

In heavily Muslim parts of Queens, she said, police officers are suddenly everywhere, asking for identification and stopping and frisking Muslim men. (New York City has [*stepped up its police presence*](https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-law-enforcement-steps-up-security-ahead-expected-mideast-protests-2023-10-13/) around both Muslim and Jewish neighborhoods and sites within the five boroughs.) Most painful though, she said, is the sense that she and her peers are getting that Palestinian lives do not matter, as they watch the United States staunchly back Israel as it heads into war.

“It can’t go unrecognized, the thousands of Palestinians that have been murdered in the past two weeks and even more the past 75 years,” Amira said. “There’s no way you can erase that.” That does not mean she is antisemitic, she said. “How can I denounce one system of oppression without denouncing another?” she asked me. The pain in her usually buoyant voice cut through me. I had no answer for her.

Many New York City kids have a worldliness about them, a certain telltale moxie. Amira, a joyful, sneaker-wearing, self-described “Queens kid,” can seem unstoppable.

When she was just 15, [*Amira helped topple*](https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2021/07/dianne-morales-nyc-mayoral-campaign-implosion.html) a major mayoral campaign in America’s largest city, writing [*a letter*](https://twitter.com/amiraelmasryah/status/1402980272249970688?s=46) accusing the ultraprogressive candidate Dianne Morales of having violated child labor laws while purporting to champion the ***working class*** in New York.

“My life and my extremely bright future as a 15-year-old activist will not be defined by the failures and harm enabled by Dianne Morales,” Amira wrote in the 2021 letter, which went viral and helped end Ms. Morales’s campaign. “I wrote my college essay about that,” Amira told me with a slightly mischievous smile.

In the past two years, Amira has become a veteran organizer. Last weekend, she joined an antiwar protest. First, though, she’ll have to work on earning her latest Girl Scout badge, this one for photography. That will mean satisfying her mother, Abier Rayan, who happens to be Troop 4179’s leader. “She’s tough,” Amira assured me.

At a meeting of the Muslim Girl Scouts of Astoria last week, a young woman bounded into the room, asking whether her fellow scouts had secured tickets to an Olivia Rodrigo concert. “She’s the Taylor Swift of our generation,” the scout turned to me to explain.

A group of younger girls recited the Girl Scout Law:

“I will do my best to be honest and fair, friendly and helpful, considerate and caring, courageous and strong, and responsible for what I say and do, and to respect myself and others, respect authority, use resources wisely, make the world a better place and be a sister to every Girl Scout.”

Amira’s mother carefully inspected the work of some of the younger scouts; she wore a blue Girl Scouts U.S.A. vest, filled with colorful badges, and a hot-pink hijab. “It’s no conflict at all,” Ms. Rayan told me of Islam and the Girl Scouts. “You want a strong Muslim American girl.”

At the Girl Scouts meeting, Amira and her friends discussed their plans to protest the war in Gaza. “Protests are where you let go of your anger,” Amira told me.

Amira’s mother was born in Egypt. In 1948, Ms. Rayan told me, her grandfather lost his home and land in Jaffa to the state of Israel. At the Girl Scout meeting, Ms. Rayan was still waiting for word that relatives in Gaza were safe.

“There’s been no communication,” she said. When I asked about Amira, Ms. Rayan’s eyes brightened. “I’m really proud of her,” she said. “You have to be strong. You don’t know where you’re going to be tomorrow.”

By Monday, word had reached Ms. Rayan that her relatives had been killed as Israel bombed Gaza City. When I asked whom she had lost, Ms. Rayan replied: “All of them. There’s no one left.” Thousands of Palestinians are estimated to have been killed by Israeli airstrikes in Gaza in recent weeks. A [*death toll*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/26/world/middleeast/gaza-death-toll-israel.html) is kept by the Gaza Health Ministry, run by Hamas, and cannot be independently verified. Ms. Rayan said those killed in her family included six cousins and their children, who were as young as 2. Other relatives living abroad told her the cousins died beneath the rubble of their home.

As Ms. Rayan spoke, I saw Amira’s young face. I wondered how long this bright, spirited Queens kid could keep her fire for what I believe John Lewis would have called “good trouble” in a world that seems hellbent on snuffing it out. I worried about how she would finish her college applications.

“I have a lot of angry emotions at the ones in charge,” Amira told me days ago, speaking for so many human beings around the world in this dark time.

I thought about what I had seen over that weekend in Brooklyn, where thousands [*gathered*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/22/nyregion/israel-hamas-new-york-tensions.html) in the Bay Ridge neighborhood, the home of many Arab Americans, to protest the war. In this part of the city, people of many backgrounds carried Palestinian flags through the street. Large groups of police officers gathered on every corner, watching them go by.

The crowd was large but quiet when Amira waded in, picked up her megaphone and called for Palestinian liberation. In an instant, thousands of New Yorkers repeated after her, filling the Brooklyn street with their voices. My prayer is that Amira’s generation of leaders will leave a better world than the one it has been given.

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This article appeared in print on page A22.

**Load-Date:** October 29, 2023

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[***Nikki Haley’s Bold Strategy to Beat Trump: Play It Safe***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69YS-9441-JBG3-646H-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 27, 2023 Wednesday 23:13 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1653 words

**Highlight:** Ms. Haley still trails far behind the former president in polls. Yet she is not deviating from the cautious approach that has led her this far.

**Body**

Ms. Haley still trails far behind the former president in polls. Yet she is not deviating from the cautious approach that has led her this far.

At a packed community center in southwestern Iowa, Nikki Haley broke from her usual remarks this month to offer a warning to her top Republican presidential rivals, Donald J. Trump and Ron DeSantis, deploying a favorite line: “If they punch me, I punch back — and I punch back harder.”

But in that Dec. 18 appearance and over the next few days, Ms. Haley, the former governor of South Carolina, did not exactly pummel her opponents as promised. Her jabs were instead surgical, dry and policy-driven.

“He went into D.C. saying that he was going to stop the spending and instead, he [*voted to raise the debt limit*](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/2024-gop-presidential-contenders-criticize-debt-ceiling-deal/),” Ms. Haley said of Mr. DeSantis, a former congressman, in Treynor, near the Nebraska border. At that same stop, she also defended herself against his attack ads and criticized Mr. DeSantis, the Florida governor, over offshore drilling and fracking, and questioned [*his choice of a political surrogate in Iowa*](https://www.tampabay.com/news/florida-politics/elections/2023/12/18/desantis-haley-iowa-massie-israel-hamas-antisemitism-campaign-2024/).

She was even more careful about going after Mr. Trump, continuing to draw only indirect contrasts and noting pointedly that [*his allied super PAC had begun running anti-Haley ads*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/18/us/politics/trump-haley-attack-ads.html).

“He said two days ago I wasn’t surging,” she said, but now had “attack ads going up against me.”

With under three weeks left until the Iowa caucuses, Ms. Haley is treading cautiously as she enters the crucial final stretch of her campaign to shake the Republican Party loose from the clutches of Mr. Trump. Even as the former president maintains [*a vast lead in polls*](https://www.realclearpolling.com/polls/president/republican-primary/2024/iowa-caucus), Ms. Haley has insistently played it safe, betting that an approach that has left her as the only non-Trump candidate with any sort of momentum can eventually prevail as primary season unfolds.

On the trail, she rarely takes questions from reporters. She hardly deviates from her stump speech. And she keeps walking a fine line on her greatest obstacle to the Republican nomination — Mr. Trump.

“Anti-Trumpers don’t think I hate him enough,” [*she told reporters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/12/us/politics/nikki-haley-chris-sununu-nh.html) this month in New Hampshire, where she picked up the endorsement of Chris Sununu, the state’s popular Republican governor. “Pro-Trumpers don’t think I love him enough.”

Ms. Haley’s consistent strategy has enabled her team to build a reputation as lean and stable where other campaigns have faltered: As Mr. DeSantis’s support has dipped and turmoil has overtaken his allied super PAC, even [*some of his advisers are privately signaling*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/24/us/politics/desantis.html) they believe hope is lost.

“I keep coming back to the word ‘disciplined,’” said Jim Merrill, a Republican strategist in New Hampshire who served on Senator Marco Rubio’s 2016 presidential campaign and Mitt Romney’s 2008 and 2012 bids. “She has run an extraordinarily disciplined campaign.”

That discipline slipped for a moment on Wednesday in New Hampshire, where an audience member pressed her on the cause of the Civil War and she [*avoided mentioning slavery*](https://www.politico.com/news/2023/12/27/haley-slavery-cause-of-civil-war-00133254). But while Democrats pounced on her comments, it was unclear whether they would come back to bite her in her attempt to defeat Mr. Trump.

The former president remains the heavy favorite for the nomination despite facing dozens of criminal charges, as well as legal challenges that aim to kick him off the ballot in several states.

Ms. Haley’s [*apparent reluctance to attack her rival*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/20/us/politics/trump-insurrection-rivals.html) even in the face of what would seem to be political setbacks for him has raised questions from voters and other Republican competitors — most notably, [*former Gov. Chris Christie of New Jersey*](https://thehill.com/homenews/campaign/4337065-christie-haley-trump-voldemort/) — about whether she can win while passing up crucial opportunities to derail her most significant opponent.

“A lot of the people in this field are running against Trump without doing very much to take him on,” said Adolphus Belk, a political analyst and professor of political science at Winthrop University in Rock Hill, S.C., Ms. Haley’s home state. “If you are running to be president of the United States, it seems like it would be an imperative to take on the person who has the biggest lead.”

A [*recent poll from The New York Times and Siena College*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/12/19/us/elections/times-siena-poll-registered-voter-crosstabs.html) found Mr. Trump leading his Republican rivals by [*more than 50 percentage points nationally*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/20/us/politics/trump-cases-poll-2024.html), a staggering margin.

The poll offered a sliver of hope for Ms. Haley: [*Nearly a quarter of Mr. Trump’s supporters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/20/us/politics/trump-poll-conviction-trials.html) said he should not be the Republican nominee if he were found guilty of a crime. But 62 percent of Republicans said that if the former president won the primary, he should remain the nominee — even if subsequently convicted.

The challenge for Ms. Haley is peeling away more of his support from the Republican Party’s white, ***working-class*** base. The Times/Siena poll found that she garnered 28 percent support from white voters with a bachelor’s degree or higher, but just 3 percent from those without a degree.

As she barnstorms through Iowa and New Hampshire, Ms. Haley has remained committed to a calibrated approach that aims to speak to [*all factions of the Republican Party*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/26/us/politics/haley-trump-issues-2024.html).

Her stump speech highlights her background [*as the daughter of immigrants*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/25/us/politics/haley-ramaswamy-indian-americans.html) and her upbringing in a small and rural South Carolina town, but in generic terms. She nods to her status as the only woman in the Republican primary field and the potentially historic nature of her bid, [*but only in subtle ways*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/21/us/politics/nikki-haley-woman-president-gender.html).

Even as she has risen in the polls and consolidated significant anti-Trump support among donors and prominent Republicans, she has continued to cast herself as an underestimated underdog, with a message tightly focused on debt and spending, national security and the crisis at the border.

And she has not strayed from her broad calls for a “consensus” on abortion, even though some conservatives say she is not going far enough in backing new restrictions. At the same time, Democrats are looking to hit her from the other direction: The Democratic National Committee last week put up [*billboards in Davenport*](https://x.com/ScooterCasterNY/status/1737596852768219301?s=20), Iowa, where she was campaigning, accusing her of wanting “[*extreme abortion bans*](https://thehill.com/homenews/campaign/4368547-dnc-billboards-iowa-attacking-haley-reproductive-rights/).”

Still, Ms. Haley has evolved on some fronts. In recent weeks, she has more aggressively made the case that she is the most electable Republican candidate — an argument that [*polls show has some merit*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/elections/trump-takes-2024-lead-as-biden-approval-hits-new-low-wsj-poll-finds-fb4fca0c) — and ramped up her critiques of what she describes as a dysfunctional Washington.

This month, after Republicans blocked [*an emergency spending bill*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/06/us/politics/senate-ukraine-aid-bill.html) to fund support for Ukraine, demanding strict new border restrictions in return, she accused both President Biden and some Republicans of creating a false choice among those priorities, as well as aid to Israel, which the legislation also included.

“And now what are you hearing coming out of D.C. — do we support Ukraine or do we support Israel?” she said at an event in Burlington, Iowa. “Do we support Israel or do we secure the border? Don’t let them lie to you like that.”

She has ramped up her criticism of Mr. Trump on his tone, leadership style and what she describes as his lack of follow-through on policy, hitting him for increasing the national debt, proposing to raise the federal gasoline tax and [*“praising dictators.”*](https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/elections/presidential/caucus/2023/12/19/nikki-haley-knocks-donald-trump-for-praising-dictators-at-iowa-campaign-stop-caucuses-2024/71965853007/)

But when confronted with tougher questions from voters over Mr. Trump’s [*potential danger to the nation’s democracy*](https://apnews.com/article/haley-trump-iowa-caucus-voters-2024-9f08b07c08e155eae6552694fb46654c) or why she [*indicated at the first debate*](https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/nikki-haley-vote-donald-trump-convicted/story?id=102524719) that she would support him as the nominee even if he were convicted of criminal charges, she tends to fall back on a familiar response. She says she thinks that “he was the right president for the right time” but that “rightly or wrongly, chaos follows him.”

“The thing is, normal people aren’t obsessed with Trump like you guys are,” she [*told Jonathan Karl of ABC News*](https://www.foxnews.com/politics/haley-responds-pressure-love-hate-trump-normal-people-arent-obsessed-with-him) this month, taking a swipe at the news media when asked for her thoughts on how Mr. Trump is campaigning on the idea of “retribution” against his political enemies.

Such attempts to avoid alienating Trump supporters have helped generate interest, if not always commitment.

Before her event in Treynor, Iowa, Keith Denton, 77, a retired farmer and longtime Republican, said he stood with Mr. Trump “100 percent,” and had come to watch Ms. Haley only because his wife was debating whether to support her. But after Ms. Haley wrapped up, he tracked down a reporter to acknowledge that he was now seriously considering her.

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As usual, Ms. Haley weighed her words. She said that the courts would “decide whether President Trump did something wrong” and that he had a right to defend himself against the legal charges he faces, but she expressed disappointment that when he had the chance to stop the Capitol attack, he did not.

“My goal is not to worry about him being president forever — that is why I’m going to win,” she finished to loud applause.

But afterward, Mr. Kimball said that he wished she would have said that Mr. Trump is unfit to be president and that he was still deliberating whether to caucus for her or for Mr. Christie.

“I wish she had the courage of Liz Cheney,” he said, referring to the congresswoman [*pushed out of Republican leadership in Congress*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/12/us/politics/liz-cheney-trump-republicans.html) and [*then her Wyoming seat*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/16/us/politics/harriet-hageman-liz-cheney-wyoming.html) by pro-Trump forces in the party. “But she doesn’t want to end up like Liz Cheney, so you get the answer you get.”

Ruth Igielnik contributed reporting.

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PHOTO: Nikki Haley walks a fine line with criticism of former President Donald J. Trump, trying to avoid alienating Trump supporters. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BRIAN SNYDER/REUTERS SCOTT OLSON/GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page A13.

**Load-Date:** December 27, 2023

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[***A Friendship Forged in Wartime Casts a Long Shadow; Fiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69GR-XCV1-JBG3-63K2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 27, 2023 Friday 23:05 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 1211 words

**Byline:** Jennifer Egan

**Highlight:** What happens when two American women attempt to help the people of Saigon? In Alice McDermott’s new novel, the answer is complicated.

**Body**

ABSOLUTION, by Alice McDermott

Alice McDermott is rightly celebrated for her granular, nuanced portraits of mid-20th-century life, with a particular focus on Irish Americans. Her fans may be startled, then, to find themselves plunged into 1963 Saigon at the start of her enveloping new novel, “Absolution,” whose lofty title belies its sensory, gritty humanity.

McDermott’s contextual leap is not as great as it might seem. The primary narrator of “Absolution,” Patricia Kelly, and her husband, Peter, a Navy intelligence officer, are Irish American New Yorkers who might easily be part of the same family tree as Billy Lynch from McDermott’s 1998 [*National Book Award winner*](https://www.nationalbook.org/books/charming-billy/), “[*Charming Billy*](https://www.nytimes.com/1998/01/13/books/books-of-the-times-the-ties-that-bind-and-the-regrets-that-strangle.html)”; Marie from “[*Someone*](https://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/08/books/review/someone-by-alice-mcdermott.html)”; the Daileys from “[*At Weddings and Wakes*](https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/books/98/01/11/home/mcdermott-weddings.html)”; or the Keanes from “[*After This*](https://www.nytimes.com/2006/09/10/books/review/gray.html),” my personal favorite. Indeed, Peter Kelly’s sense of mission in Vietnam is bound up with his Catholicism; President Kennedy, a Catholic, initially supported the Catholic president of South Vietnam, Ngo Dinh Diem, in part through the efforts of a Central Intelligence Agency that was jokingly referred to as the “Catholic Intelligence Agency.”

Although she opens with an epigraph from “[*The Quiet American*](https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/books/00/02/20/specials/greene-quiet.html?module=inline),” Graham Greene’s 1955 indictment of catastrophic American blundering in post-colonial Vietnam, McDermott asserts her revisionist focus in the novel’s third sentence: “You have no idea what it was like. For us. The women, I mean. The wives.” She then delves into the lives and activities of the blunderers’ wives during the last era in American life in which being a husband’s “helpmeet” was widely seen as a worthy fulfillment of feminine ambition.

Shortly after their arrival in Saigon, shy, 23-year-old Patricia, newly wed and in awe of Peter, meets Charlene, a WASP who is rich, potty-mouthed, pill-popping and lawbreaking — all things Patricia decidedly is not. A bossy insider and mother of three, Charlene masterminds a “cabal” of charitable military-industrial wives bent on helping poor and ailing Vietnamese. Their work consists of channeling black-market profits into buying trinkets and candy to distribute to hospitalized children (some of whom may be recovering from war wounds) and their impoverished families.

In passive Patricia (whom she immediately nicknames Tricia), the aggressive, polarizing Charlene finds a perfect foil for her escalating charitable schemes. Their alliance — more than a partnership and less than a friendship — results, first, in the marketing of “Saigon Barbies” outfitted in Vietnamese attire, and later, in orchestrating the tailoring of exquisite outfits for residents of a leper colony.

Patricia immediately recognizes Charlene as a type — rich and entitled — yet acknowledges, “It was another inborn talent of these privileged girls; they were irresistible, much as you hated them.” Charlene’s magnetism pulls in the reader thanks to McDermott’s eye for the contradictions and complexities that elevate anyone, living or literary, from a generic type (always a measure of our distance from them) into a specific individual. Though brimming with self-regard, Charlene also bites her nails to nubs and is plagued by night terrors. When Patricia, who is desperate for a child, miscarries, Charlene baptizes the embryo and ritualizes the loss in a way that honors its magnitude. Her wish to “do good,” dismissed by the men around her as the irrelevant scurrying of a “dynamo,” is genuine, even spiritual. Of her night terrors, Charlene says: “They’re telling me something. About myself, I suppose. … I mean to see what I was meant to see.”

The story is told in retrospect, from a distance of decades, in the form of letters between an older, widowed Patricia and Charlene’s daughter, Rainey, long after Charlene’s early death. Retrospect amplifies McDermott’s narrative approach; her work lives in its shimmering details (she’s especially good with smells and descriptions of light), and nostalgia imbues even simple observations with suggestiveness. When Patricia arrives at Charlene’s home for lunch, “the ladies were drinking manhattans. I’d never had one … would have preferred something cool and bubbly — maybe a tall Coke. Although the amber liquid in the small triangular glass looked elegant. The shadowy cherry.”

The shift in time allows Patricia to comment upon her young self, and the events of 1963, from a salty perspective informed by disillusioning history. At the luncheon, after detailing her husband’s meteoric rise, Patricia reflects: “I told Peter’s story, which was my own, and felt, what else to call it but patriotic pride. Saw that the three women felt it, too. Bright young men and their pretty little wives rising, rising, immigrant roots and ***working-class*** backgrounds be damned. Spine-straightening, tear-inducing, vaguely orgasmic — the manhattan had its effect (I hope you’re laughing) — patriotic pride in an American romance. God, what a country.”

The debacle of America’s involvement in Vietnam might easily have overdetermined McDermott’s story, and it is a measure of her skill that “Absolution” maintains an oblique relationship to the war. McDermott’s subject is not intervention per se but the altruistic impulse — particularly as practiced by those whose privilege lets them anoint themselves to heal what Charlene calls Vietnam’s “wretchedness.” She’s one of many characters who are trying to “do good,” and they range from the greedy and presumptuous to the genuinely selfless.

One of the latter, a young Catholic medic named Dominic who visits the leper colony with Charlene and Patricia, winds up living next door to Charlene’s middle-aged daughter, Rainey, without either of them realizing that they’re linked through Charlene — a coincidence likely to strain some readers’ credulity. The brief section of “Absolution” where Rainey details for Patricia the tragic events of her friendship with Dominic and his adopted son is less compelling; sinners make more engrossing reading than saints, and Charlene’s absence from the narrative leaves a vacuum. Rainey’s voice is hard to distinguish from Patricia’s (both use the word “sunstruck”); and because Rainey and Dominic play minor parts in the Saigon story, refocusing on them three-quarters of the way through the novel is a challenge.

It is satisfying, then, to return to Saigon for a final dispatch from Patricia to Rainey in which the callous wrongheadedness of Charlene’s interventions is decisively exposed. The chasm between Charlene and Patricia reasserts itself, and the reader is left with a sense of how unlikely, even otherworldly, their collaboration was. Yet as American wives overseas in 1963, they had a great deal in common: a near-total lack of agency or power; a choice between parroting their husbands’ opinions or operating independently in the margins, to limited and uncertain effect. What difference might it have made, for everyone, if those wives had been given a choice in the decision-making? Without posing this question directly, “Absolution” leaves the reader in its provocative shadow.

Jennifer Egan’s most recent novel is “The Candy House.”

ABSOLUTION | By Alice McDermott | Farrar, Straus &amp; Giroux | 336 pp. | $28

Jennifer Egan’s most recent novel is “The Candy House.”

This article appeared in print on page BR13.

**Load-Date:** November 8, 2023

**End of Document**



[***How Gerontocracy Explains the Matt Gaetz Clown Show; Ross Douthat***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:699V-K3W1-JBG3-61N8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 4, 2023 Wednesday 09:58 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1069 words

**Byline:** Ross Douthat

**Highlight:** Chaotic debates over fiscal policy are part of what you get when a democracy becomes a gerontocracy.

**Body**

You can analyze the circus in the House of Representatives in terms of personalities (the bland ambition of Kevin McCarthy colliding with the antic, made-for-television career of Matt Gaetz) or in terms of the nature of the Republican coalition (united only by anti-liberalism and rabble-rousing, and therefore held hostage to the most shameless rabble-rouser).

But the substance in the standoff, the posturing over what kind of spending cuts House Republicans should demand or accept, isn’t incidental either. Along with decrepit presidents and creepy deathwatches around senators and Supreme Court justices, chaotic clown-show debates over fiscal policy are part of what you get when a democracy becomes a gerontocracy.

The basic gerontocratic fiscal trap is easy to describe: As societies grow older, with longer life expectancies and fewer kids, their old-age commitments become steadily more costly as the share of voters who benefit from those commitments (and turn out to vote) increases. This makes it harder to fix fiscal problems, and it makes the path of least political resistance the protection of the old and the shortchanging of the young — who, thus shortchanged, start fewer families and deepen societal senescence.

But there is a further twist in American politics, which is that the party that would normally be the ideological vehicle for resisting the drift into gerontocratic stasis — the party of free markets and limited government — is also increasingly dependent on the votes of culturally conservative older voters. Which makes it especially politically challenging, even self-undermining, to undertake the kind of fiscal reforms that the right’s philosophy officially supports.

This kind of challenge isn’t unique to the United States; in Britain, for instance, it helps explain why Tory politicians can’t push through the big building campaigns they like to promise — because their prosperous and aging voters are invested in a low-growth but high-property-value status quo. But in America, the most important action (or inaction, rather) centers on Medicare and Social Security, and the transition from Paul Ryan’s G.O.P. to Donald Trump’s, and now Matt Gaetz’s, shows the working out of gerontocratic logic.

Ryan was a true limited-government man, devoted to blueprinting ambitious entitlement reforms and pushing his colleagues, against their natural inclinations, to endorse them. He was also an ambitious politician, and you could see him struggling to reconcile his fiscal vision with the interests and demands of his party’s base. This struggle never quite resolved itself, in part because his quest for a mandate (as Mitt Romney’s running mate) was defeated and in part because his careful positioning was overrun by Trump, who simply tossed all those blueprints away and promised profligacy instead.

The irony is that in that moment Trump was mostly right on the merits: Neither 2012 nor 2016 was an ideal time for fiscal retrenchment, given the sluggish comeback from the Great Recession and the resilience of low interest rates. But as a matter of practical politics, the Ryan version of the G.O.P., with its libertarian leadership and prosperous suburban supporters, was probably the last iteration equipped to at least attempt serious fiscal reform, entitlement reform especially. Whereas after Trump’s remaking of the party, the task looks nearly impossible: Gerontocracy is now too advanced, the Republican base is now more ***working class*** and therefore more likely to depend on retirement programs, and the Democrats have entrenched themselves further to the left.

And unfortunately now is when we actually need some kind of fiscal adjustment. Even if the inflation generated by Covid superspending and pandemic disruptions is gradually abating, higher interest rates have dramatically altered our spending trajectory. After a long period in which low interest rates enabled the government to borrow trillions without adding much in annual debt servicing, last week the interest rate on the 10-year Treasury bond reached 4.5 percent — threatening a future, according to the Manhattan Institute’s [*Brian Riedl*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/09/29/opinions/federal-debt-interest-rates-riedl/index.html), in which debt payments cost roughly the equivalent of a second Defense Department every year.

That’s a future that is likely to starve any priority apart from shoring up entitlements. Industrial policy? Family policy? Military spending in a multipolar world? Forget about it: The money won’t be there. Populists, socialists, defense hawks — they all could use a Ryan-like figure now or a Simpson-Bowles Commission or a replay of the Barack Obama-John Boehner deficit negotiations that gets to a grand bargain.

What they have instead is Matt Gaetz. Who is, in his way, telling the truth when he criticizes the can-kicking style in which McCarthy has tried to negotiate between his own members and the Democrats, or when he tells the reporters gathered for his performances that the leaders of both parties are custodians of American decline. But Gaetz has, of course, no politically plausible vision of his own — neither a means of selling his own party’s voters on entitlement reform nor a willingness to strike a difficult bargain with Democrats even if such a thing were possible. He’s just using our fiscal crisis as a ladder; the worse the problems, the easier the climb.

To grow in age is supposedly to grow in wisdom, and in theory one might imagine that what an aging society lacked in dynamism and innovation, it would make up for in the sobriety and seriousness of its leaders.

Instead in our would-be presidents we see the weaknesses of age — the debilitation of Joe Biden, the instability of Donald Trump, even the paranoia of their potential third-party challenger, Robert F. Kennedy Jr. (who if elected would be the second-oldest American to begin a first presidential term).

While in our younger leaders, instead of counteracting virtues, we have chaotic vices that threaten to make everything ungovernable — the Republican Party, the House of Representatives, the country as a whole.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/31/opinion/letters/letters-to-editor-new-york-times-women.html) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://help.nytimes.com/hc/en-us/articles/115014925288-How-to-submit-a-letter-to-the-editor). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](mailto:letters@nytimes.com).

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PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Haiyun Jiang for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** October 5, 2023

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[***Wednesday Briefing***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69MS-K1B1-JBG3-603B-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 14, 2023 Tuesday 23:56 EST

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1299 words

**Byline:** Natasha Frost

**Highlight:** An Israeli raid on Al-Shifa Hospital.

**Body**

An Israeli raid on Al-Shifa Hospital.

Israel says it is inside Gaza hospital

The Israeli military said early this morning that its [*troops were raiding Gaza’s Al-Shifa Hospital*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/11/14/world/israel-hamas-gaza-war-news), a complex of buildings where thousands of people have sheltered and conditions for patients have grown increasingly grim as supplies have dwindled. Fighting has been raging nearby for days, and the hospital was struck at least four times over the weekend.

In a statement posted on social media, the Israel Defense Forces said it had launched “a precise and targeted operation against Hamas in a specified area in the Shifa Hospital.” It remained unclear how many troops were involved in the assault or what their immediate objective was.

Israeli commanders say that Hamas fighters have built an underground operational hub and tunnels under the hospital. They have accused Hamas, the armed group that controls Gaza, of using patients, doctors and hospital workers as human shields for command centers and safe houses. Hamas and hospital officials deny the accusations.

Mass graves: Workers at Al-Shifa [*buried dozens of bodies*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/11/14/world/israel-hamas-gaza-war-news/workers-are-preparing-a-mass-grave-at-gaza-citys-largest-hospital-health-officials-say?smid=url-share) on the complex because the bodies had started to decompose and posed a health hazard, according to the medical authorities in Gaza.

In other news:

* At least four strikes hit Al-Shifa on Friday morning, and at least three of the projectiles appear to have been Israeli munitions, [*a Times analysis found*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/14/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-al-shifa-hospital.html).

1. At least 102 workers from the largest U.N. agency in Gaza [*have been killed*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/14/world/middleeast/unrwa-gaza-aid-struggles.html) in five weeks of heavy Israeli bombing.
2. A mission to [*rescue child cancer patients*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/14/us/politics/gaza-hospitals-cancer-israel.html) from the violence in Gaza has involved several countries and last-minute connections in the chaos of war.
3. Digital disinformation and restrictions on photojournalists have [*complicated decision-making in newsrooms*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/14/business/media/israel-hamas-media-photography.html) about how to chronicle the war visually.

Ukraine indicts officials linked to Russian spying

Ukrainian police officials and prosecutors [*have accused two politicians and a former prosecutor*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/14/world/europe/ukraine-biden-giuliani-trump.html) of colluding with a Russian intelligence agency in aiding an effort by Rudolph Giuliani several years ago to tie the Biden family to corruption in Ukraine.

Kostyantyn Kulyk, a former Ukrainian deputy prosecutor general; Oleksandr Dubinsky, a current member of Ukraine’s Parliament; and Andriy Derkach, a former member, were indicted on charges of treason and belonging to a criminal organization. The charges refer to “information-subversive activities” and focus on actions in 2019. They do not say if or when the activity stopped.

A high-profile reprieve: Vladimir Putin, the Russian president, has [*pardoned one of the convicted organizers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/14/world/europe/russia-pardon-anna-politkovskaya-ukraine.html) of the murder of the acclaimed human rights journalist Anna Politkovskaya. Putin’s move was in return for the man’s service in Ukraine, a lawyer for the man said.

Rishi Sunak’s gamble

A centrist pivot by Rishi Sunak, the British prime minister, has left some saying that [*his recent cabinet reshuffle*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/14/world/europe/uk-sunak-david-cameron.html) could fracture the coalition that delivered a landslide victory for the Conservative Party in 2019 and that it risked alienating ***working-class*** voters who once flocked to the Tory slogan “Get Brexit done.”

“Ending up with three moderates in the top four positions is not going to be great for his party politics,” said Jonathan Powell, who served as chief of staff to Tony Blair. “A centrist cabinet in a right-wing party is a dangerous combination for a prime minister.”

Sunak’s third makeover: When he replaced Liz Truss as prime minister 13 months ago, Sunak initially cast himself as a pragmatic technocrat before adopting divisive policies on climate change, immigration and crime to try to put the opposition Labour Party on the defensive.

THE LATEST NEWS

Around the World

* After years of Chinese anti-American propaganda, a [*friendlier depiction of relations*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/14/world/asia/china-xi-propaganda-america.html) with the U.S. has confused — or amused — some social media users.

1. Climate change continues to have [*a worsening effect on health and mortality*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/14/climate/climate-change-health-effects-lancet.html) internationally, according to a major new report.
2. The killing of Mexico’s first nonbinary magistrate [*has angered L.G.B.T.Q. advocates*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/14/us/mexicos-nonbinary-magistrate-dead.html) who are demanding a thorough investigation.
3. Israeli farms, core to the country’s national identity, for years employed Palestinian and Thai workers. The war has left growers [*scrambling to find replacement labor*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/14/world/middleeast/israel-farms-palestinians-thailand.html).
4. The death of a Zimbabwean activist is the latest in what civil and political leaders say has been [*a string of violent episodes*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/14/world/africa/political-activist-killed-zimbabwe.html) since elections in August.

From the U.S.

* Nearly every cherished aspect of American life [*is under growing threat from climate change*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/14/climate/biden-national-climate-assessment.html), according to a major government report.

1. A state judge in Michigan partly [*rejected an effort to disqualify*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/14/us/politics/trump-michigan-ballot-14th-amendment.html) Donald Trump from running for president in the state, saying that the issue “is not ripe for adjudication at this time.”

* Trump planned to refuse to leave the White House “[*under any circumstances*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/13/us/jenna-ellis-trump-georgia.html)” despite losing the 2020 election, his former lawyer told Georgia prosecutors.

1. The Federal Reserve’s battle against inflation appears to be working, possibly reducing [*the need for further rate increases*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/14/business/inflation-october-cpi.html).

What Else is Happening

* Despite the toll of global warming, countries aren’t doing nearly enough to [*rein in greenhouse gas emissions*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/14/climate/united-nations-ndc-report-card.html), according to a new U.N. report card.

1. The BBC said that it [*had received five complaints*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/14/arts/russell-brand-bbc-complaints.html) about the comedian Russell Brand during a period when he was working on its radio shows.
2. Airfares to many popular destinations have [*fallen to their lowest levels in months*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/14/business/air-fares-falling-deals.html).
3. Iceland is bracing for [*a possible volcanic eruption*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/14/world/europe/iceland-volcano-eruption.html).

A Morning Read

A trove of dozens of historic maps, some dating as far back as the 15th century, has been [*digitized as Oculi Mundi*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/14/style/map-makers-collectors-craftsmanship.html) (the Eyes of the World), an online archive.

The maps are artifacts of people’s efforts to pinpoint where they were and where they were going next, in the age before the emergence of GPS and phones that could tell us exactly where we are. And each has its own story.

SPORTS NEWS

Why soccer fears tramadol: The World Anti-Doping Agency’s decision to put the [*painkiller on its banned list*](https://theathletic.com/5056288/2023/11/14/tramadol-football-banned-drug-wada/) could have serious consequences for players.

Women’s soccer: Emma Hayes has been confirmed as [*the new head coach*](https://theathletic.com/5032454/2023/11/14/emma-hayes-uswnt-head-coach/) of the U.S. team, in a deal that makes her the highest-paid coach in the sport.

The return of David Cameron: Social media announcements about the Conservative Party’s cabinet reshuffle appeared to refer to a [*sports media celebrity*](https://theathletic.com/5060304/2023/11/14/government-reshuffle-fabrizio-romano/).

Success in Formula 1’s glitziest race: As the paddock travels to Nevada for the Las Vegas Grand Prix’s debut, [*many questions remain*](https://theathletic.com/5061550/2023/11/14/las-vegas-grand-prix-success/).

ARTS AND IDEAS

Staging the unthinkable

Manuel Oliver’s son Joaquin was one of 17 people killed in a mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., on Valentine’s Day of 2018. Known to his friends as Guac, he was a 17-year-old who loved bacon, buttery popcorn, Guns N’ Roses and the Miami Heat.

Since Joaquin was killed, Oliver, a painter, has used art and activism to push for stronger gun regulation. Most recently, he has been performing [*“Guac: The One Man Show,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/14/theater/parkland-school-shooting-show.html) a 90-minute show about his son’s life, around the U.S. He hopes to stage it again in New York in 2024, and to bring the show to Europe. “It makes me feel very connected to my son,” he said.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cook: Bookmark these [*classic deviled eggs*](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/6866-classic-deviled-eggs) for the upcoming holiday season.

Pack: Take [*these gadgets*](https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/lists/the-gadgets-we-bring-on-every-trip/) with you on a trip.

Exercise: Walking is good for you. [*Running is better*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/14/well/move/walking-running-health-benefits.html).

Nosh: The [*25 essential dishes to eat in Mexico City*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/14/t-magazine/mexico-city-restaurants-food.html).

Play the [*Spelling Bee*](https://www.nytimes.com/puzzles/spelling-bee). And here are [*today’s Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/crosswords/game/mini) and [*Wordle*](https://www.nytimes.com/games/wordle/index.html). [*You can find all our puzzles here*](https://www.nytimes.com/crosswords).

That’s it for today’s briefing. See you tomorrow. — Natasha

P.S. Do you know the fictional places in these popular novels? [*Take our quiz.*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/11/13/books/review/fictional-places-quiz.html)

You can reach Natasha and the team at [*briefing@nytimes.com*](mailto:briefing@nytimes.com?subject=Europe%20Morning%20Briefing%20Feedback).

PHOTO: Displaced Palestinians living at Al-Shifa hospital last week, amid the ongoing conflict. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Reuters FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** November 15, 2023

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[***Workers’ Movements or Tantrums Against Technology?; Nonfiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6972-YPW1-JBG3-609P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 21, 2023 Thursday 21:23 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 1018 words

**Byline:** Gavin Mueller

**Highlight:** Brian Merchant’s “Blood in the Machine” compares the labor struggles of the Industrial Revolution to today’s abusive gig economy.

**Body**

Brian Merchant’s “Blood in the Machine” compares the labor struggles of the Industrial Revolution to today’s abusive gig economy.

BLOOD IN THE MACHINE: The Origins of the Rebellion Against Big Tech, by Brian Merchant

Revolutions inevitably birth counterrevolutions. The Industrial Revolution was no exception. In the early 19th century, textile workers in the north of England, set on a course toward obsolescence by new machines, struck back. Under the banner of a mythical apprentice named “Ned Ludd,” they staged nightly factory raids, using massive hammers to smash machines and forcing the British government to place the entire region under military occupation. Ever since, the Luddite movement has spawned mythologies of its own, drawing in writers attracted to its doomed Romantic broadsides against modernity, and its status as a militant workers’ movement erupting at the dawn of industrial capitalism.

Brian Merchant is something of an oddity in this pantheon of writers, which includes the eminent historians [*Eric*](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/02/arts/eric-hobsbawm-british-historian-dies-at-95.html) [*Hobsbawm*](https://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/07/books/review/fractured-times-by-eric-hobsbawm.html) and [*E.P. Thompson*](https://www.nytimes.com/1993/08/30/obituaries/e-p-thompson-69-british-leftist-scholar.html) and the firebrand activist [*Kirkpatrick Sale*](https://www.nytimes.com/1990/10/07/books/debunking-columbus.html). Merchant is the tech columnist at The Los Angeles Times and the author of a history of the iPhone; and though the bulk of his new book, “Blood in the Machine,” is derived from an immense trove of archival materials and secondary historical sources, he brings a journalist’s touch to the Luddites’ travails, drawing connections between the conflicts and indignities of their epoch and our own.

The book is structured around the stories of the individuals, famous and otherwise, whose lives were violently unsettled by technological change in this auspicious time: the Prince Regent (the future King George IV), whose decadent revelries provided a foil to the weavers’ escalating privation; Lord Byron, the infamous Lothario whose populist defenses of the ***working class*** helped bring about his celebrity; Robert Blincoe, the orphan whose brutal experiences in a cotton factory from the age of 7 likely inspired Charles Dickens’s character Oliver Twist. Most central is the story of George Mellor, a brawny and charismatic cropper who leads Luddite cadres into increasingly daring actions, which culminate in the vengeful assassination of a notoriously cruel millowner and the subsequent unraveling of the movement.

Merchant capably situates the Luddite story within its historical context, but, like his forebears, he uses the past as a lens onto the present. Thompson’s Luddites entered debates on political consciousness in the 1960s; Sale deployed them to lend urgency to environmental politics in the de-radicalized 1990s. Today’s Luddish writers (myself included) invoke the Luddites to tarnish the shiny facades of Silicon Valley apps as they remake our world — particularly as they reconfigure decent jobs into hyper-surveilled and algorithmically managed gigs. Merchant memorably describes the typical such platform (Amazon, Uber, Instacart) as a “psychic factory” that “cyborgizes its workers for maximum productivity.”

To make the book’s political stakes even plainer, Merchant renders the early 19th century in current-day language. Factory owners are “entrepreneurs,” “the one percent,” even “tech titans” who are “disrupting” the textile industry — moving fast and breaking things, to borrow Facebook’s old slogan. Factory technologies spread “virally” and represent a form of “automation” (a term, as Merchant notes, that was not coined until the 1940s). The Luddites themselves are likened to decentralized movements such as Occupy Wall Street and Black Lives Matter. In the book’s final section, Merchant shifts back into a journalistic register, interviewing labor lawyers, analysts and workers struggling against the worst abuses of the gig economy. Chris Smalls, the magnetic warehouse employee who led [*the first successful unionization drive at Amazon*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/01/technology/amazon-union-staten-island.html) last year, emerges as our era’s nearest analogue to Mellor.

Luddite histories are not just political, but almost always corrective. Today the term “Luddite” is divorced from the context of labor struggle, and instead signifies an irrational technophobia or a stubborn adherence to older ways. You might be a Luddite if you prefer to pay in cash, or if you think smartphones have ushered in the downfall of society. As Merchant argues, this is a holdover from how the elites of the day depicted the weavers’ struggles, as tantrums against technology. In fact, machine breaking was not a raison d’être for the Luddites, but a last resort when appeals to law, custom and morality fell on the deaf ears of authorities. If smashing a stocking frame became the signature Luddite action, it was because it got the goods, so to speak: Many millowners submitted to Luddite demands on pay and working conditions rather than risk their machines — or their lives.

Merchant is keen to reframe the Luddites as proto-unionist reformers rather than violent revolutionaries. Mellor’s story ends with a letter from his prison cell, where he awaits his execution, requesting that his name be added to a petition calling for restrictions on machines. In Merchant’s account, gig economy workers and their advocates focus on regulation and fair treatment, never sabotage. It is not an unfair conclusion to draw: No American worker movements approach the militancy of the Luddites during their raids, and President Biden’s ear bends more readily than that of the Prince Regent. But if we truly want to break from the future that Jeff Bezos and Elon Musk have planned for us, with our blood in their machines, it could take more than legislation to do so. It might require a few hammers.

Gavin Mueller is an assistant professor of new media and digital culture at the University of Amsterdam, and the author of “Breaking Things at Work.”

BLOOD IN THE MACHINE: The Origins of the Rebellion Against Big Tech | By Brian Merchant | Illustrated | 465 pp. | Little, Brown &amp; Company | $30

Gavin Mueller is an Assistant Professor of New Media and Digital Culture at the University of Amsterdam and the author of “Breaking Things at Work.”

This article appeared in print on page BR8.

**Load-Date:** September 27, 2023

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[***Trump Plans to Skip Debate to Speak in Detroit***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:696V-M431-DXY4-X02X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 20, 2023 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 919 words

**Byline:** By Shane Goldmacher and Maggie Haberman

**Body**

Looking past the Republican primary, Donald Trump and his campaign are already gearing up for a possible rematch with President Biden.

Former President Donald J. Trump is planning to travel to Detroit on the day of the next Republican primary debate, according to two Trump advisers with knowledge of the plans, injecting himself into the labor dispute between striking autoworkers and the nation's leading auto manufacturers.

The trip, which will include a prime-time speech before current and former union members, is the second consecutive primary debate that Mr. Trump is skipping to instead hold his own counterprogramming. He sat for an interview with the former Fox News host Tucker Carlson that posted online during the first G.O.P. presidential debate in August.

The decision to go to Michigan just days after the United Auto Workers went on strike shows the extent to which Mr. Trump wants to be seen as looking past his primary rivals -- and the reality that both he and his political apparatus are already focused on the possibility of a rematch with President Biden.

So instead of attending the next G.O.P. debate -- on Sept. 27 in California at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum -- Mr. Trump intends to speak to over 500 workers, with his campaign planning to fill the room with plumbers, pipe-fitters, electricians, as well as autoworkers, according to one of the Trump advisers familiar with the planning. Mr. Trump has not directly addressed the wage demands of striking workers and has attacked the union leadership, but he has tried to more broadly cast himself on the side of autoworkers.

The campaign is also considering the possibility of having Mr. Trump make an appearance at the picket line, although the adviser said such a visit, which could involve difficult logistics given the former president's security protections, is unlikely.

The former president has long prided himself on his appeal to rank-and-file union workers -- even as most union leaders have remained hostile to him, and as Mr. Biden has called himself the most pro-union president in history. In the 2016 campaign, an adviser to Mr. Trump, Paul Manafort, sought to establish a back channel with organized labor in Michigan and Wisconsin in the hopes the A.F.L.-C.I.O. would scale back its efforts to help the Democratic nominee, Hillary Clinton. It did not appear to go anywhere, but underscored the areas that Mr. Trump considered vital in the general election.

Mr. Trump won Michigan in the 2016 election, one of the states in the so-called blue wall that crumbled for Democrats that year. But Mr. Biden carried Michigan by more than 150,000 votes in 2020, and it is seen as a critical state for Democrats in 2024.

The Trump campaign has produced a radio ad that will begin running on Tuesday in Detroit and Toledo, Ohio, trying to cast Mr. Trump as aligned with autoworkers. The same Trump adviser said the ad targeted union workers and men, and will air on sports and rock-themed stations.

''All they've ever wanted is to compete fairly worldwide and get their fair share of the American dream,'' the narrator says in the ad. ''Donald Trump calls them great Americans and has always had their backs.''

Mr. Trump has repeatedly criticized the transition to electric vehicles, and in a post on his social media site Truth Social over the weekend, he called it an ''Electric Car SCAM.'' The radio ad also uses the Biden administration's support for the transition to electric vehicles to attack Mr. Biden.

The ad does not specifically mention the strike, which began last week against all big three Detroit automakers, and in which the union is seeking a 40 percent wage increase over four years.

Ammar Moussa, a press officer for Mr. Biden's campaign, said in a statement, ''Donald Trump is going to Michigan next week to lie to Michigan workers and pretend he didn't spend his entire failed presidency selling them out at every turn.''

Mr. Biden has sided with the striking workers, sending two top aides to Detroit and saying at the White House hours after the strike began that ''workers deserve a fair share of the benefits they helped create.''

The United Auto Workers pointedly decided not to endorse Mr. Biden this spring ahead of the current labor clash, with the union's new president, Shawn Fain, expressing concern about the labor elements of the transition to electric vehicles. At the same time, in a memo, Mr. Fain said Mr. Trump would be a ''disaster'' if he returned to the White House.

In an interview with NBC's ''Meet the Press'' broadcast over the weekend, Mr. Trump was critical of Mr. Fain, saying workers had been ''sold down the river by their leadership.''

''I don't know the gentleman, but I know his name very well, and I think he's not doing a good job in representing his union,'' Mr. Trump said. ''Because he's not going to have a union in three years from now. Those jobs are all going to be gone, because all of those electric cars are going to be made in China.''

In a statement after The New York Times reported on Mr. Trump's Detroit plans, Mr. Fain said that ''every fiber of our union is being poured into fighting the billionaire class and an economy that enriches people like Donald Trump at the expense of workers.''

''We can't keep electing billionaires and millionaires that don't have any understanding what it is like to live paycheck to paycheck and struggle to get by and expecting them to solve the problems of the ***working class***,'' he said.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/18/us/politics/trump-detroit-debate.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/18/us/politics/trump-detroit-debate.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Former President Donald J. Trump has been at odds with union leaders, and he has been critical of the transition to electric vehicles. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A20.

**Load-Date:** September 20, 2023

**End of Document**



[***What's Chemistry Got to Do With It?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:690N-GNW1-DXY4-X468-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 22, 2023 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. 4; CRITIC'S PICK

**Length:** 832 words

**Byline:** By Houman Barekat

**Body**

In a revival of Lucy Prebble's play at the National Theater, in London, Paapa Essiedu and Taylor Russell are terrific as a couple who meet during a pharmaceutical trial.

Are you in love, or are you merely experiencing a giddy dopamine rush? Are those two states even meaningfully different? Is there a true, innermost ''you'' that is distinguishable from your neurochemistry?

These are some of the tricky questions explored by Lucy Prebble's thought-provoking play, ''The Effect,'' first staged in 2012 and now revived in a slick new production directed by Jamie Lloyd at the National Theater, in London, running through Oct. 7.

''The Effect'' revolves around two young people, Tristan and Connie, who take part in a trial for a dopamine-based psychiatric drug with powerful antidepressant properties. Initially, they seem to have little in common -- he's a ***working class*** lad from East London; she's a bougie psychology student from Canada -- but as the trial progresses, a tender rapport develops.

Throughout the study, the participants are monitored by two psychiatric doctors, Lorna and Toby, who debate their findings: Is the drug pulling their subjects together, or are their feelings organic? And if one of the trial participants was actually receiving a placebo the whole time, what then? Prebble keeps us guessing.

Paapa Essiedu -- best known for his role in the hit TV show, ''I May Destroy You'' -- is a delight as Tristan, whose roguish charm wins over the audience within minutes. Taylor Russell's Connie is equally engaging as she slides from steely indifference to caring devotion, almost in spite of herself.

Throughout, the pair's gradual transition from wary awkwardness to intense mutual magnetism is convincingly rendered, in large part thanks to the actors' terrific onstage chemistry.

Things get messy in the latter stages of the experiment, as both the doses and the emotional stakes increase, leading to a fraught and affecting denouement.

The stiltedly ambivalent friendship between the two middle-aged doctors provides an intriguing subplot. We learn that Lorna (Michele Austin) and Toby (Kobna Holdbrook-Smith) were once romantically involved, many years ago. Lorna is prone to bouts of depression, but refuses to take medication; Toby, on the other hand, is a true pharmaceutical believer.

Austin plays Lorna with a dry, matter-of-fact fatalism that, though somewhat gloomy, is altogether more sympathetic than Toby's myopic zealousness. Holdbrook-Smith approaches the role with a brooding aplomb, delivering his lines in a suave, sociopathic drawl.

For most of the production, the two doctors are seated at opposite ends of the stage -- a long strip, designed by Soutra Gilmour and sandwiched between tiered banks of audience seating -- while their two guinea pigs occupy the center. During Lorna and Toby's conversations, they are illuminated by square, pure-white spotlights and the center stage is plunged into darkness. Most of the time, though, it is the doctors who sit in darkness, while we focus on the trial participants in the center. (The lighting design is by Jon Clark.) Lighting alone marks the scene changes, which, along with the audience's perched vantage point, makes for a suitably clinical ambience.

''The Effect'' is healthily skeptical about scientifically deterministic approaches to emotional well-being, channeling a dissenting tradition that dates back to the anti-psychiatry movement of the 1960s; its moral sensibility recalls Ken Kesey's 1962 novel, ''One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest.'' The play's revival is particularly timely as a new generation of wellness gurus have, in recent years, latched onto the idea that much of human behavior can be explained away as neurotransmitters or hormones simply doing their thing.

Prebble invites us to ponder the implications of such thinking. Connie is initially uncomfortable with the notion that two people can fall in love just like that (''It takes work,'' she insists), and wary of her attraction to Tristan. He, in response, makes the case for mystery, and thus articulates the play's key message: That a world in which all feeling is viewed as a matter of chemistry would be a bleak one indeed.

The dialogue is deftly composed, and the ethical dilemmas teased out, rather than bludgeoned. This tautness of the writing, together with the strength of the actors' performances, and its impressive visual aesthetic, elevates this play above the ordinary rung of sociopolitical parables.

At its heart is a deep and fertile agnosticism about the true source of emotional connectedness -- a bracing antidote to the specious certainties peddled by the self-help industry and Big Pharma. Sure, everything is contingent, but when something feels real, it feels real.

At one point in the trial, Tristan declares: ''I feel almost holy, like life's paying attention to me.'' Who are we to contradict him?

The Effect

Through Oct. 7 at the National Theater, London; nationaltheatre.org.uk.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/21/theater/the-effect-review-national-theater-london.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/21/theater/the-effect-review-national-theater-london.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Taylor Russell, left, and Paapa Essiedu's characters meet in a psychiatric drug trial in ''The Effect'' at the National Theater in London. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MARC BRENNER) This article appeared in print on page C4.

**Load-Date:** August 22, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Outcry Follows True-Crime Deal For Wife of Gilgo Beach Suspect***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69RS-RPF1-JBG3-601M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 29, 2023 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1404 words

**Byline:** By Corey Kilgannon

**Body**

Rex Heuermann is accused of killing three women. Where some saw depravity, others saw a chance to make a show.

After Rex Heuermann was arrested in July and accused of slaughtering women found bound in burlap and buried along a desolate stretch of Gilgo Beach, his family was left reeling and destitute.

With their dilapidated Massapequa Park ranch house turned inside out by investigators, Mr. Heuermann's wife, Asa Ellerup, and their two grown children were left to sleep on mats and cook on a grill in the front yard in full view of news crews and true-crime gawkers. Things got so bad that the daughter of a West Coast serial killer created an online fund-raiser.

But where some saw evil, depravity and tragedy, media companies saw pay dirt, swooping in with lucrative bids to turn the whole thing into content.

Peacock, the streaming service owned by NBCUniversal, is paying the family to participate in a documentary series covering the family through Mr. Heuermann's trial, which is likely to begin next year.

The intense bidding for Ms. Ellerup's story and the payment caused an outcry from relatives of women whose remains were found in the Gilgo Beach area, including those of Shannan Gilbert, whose disappearance several miles from Gilgo in 2010 led to the recovery of the other victims.

''Disappointed, disgusted, flabbergasted, frustrated are a few words that come to mind right now,'' her sister Sherre Gilbert wrote in a social media post. ''The way that the media will buy stories to further re-victimize, re-traumatize, and exploit the families & victims of serial killers is evil!''

Peacock officials declined to comment on the planned documentary or disclose how much they were paying Ms. Ellerup. As long as none of the money flows to Mr. Heuermann, the arrangement would skirt New York laws that prohibit defendants from selling their stories to the media.

As Ms. Ellerup's financial fortunes have lifted, so has her profile. Recent weeks have seen her visiting Mr. Heuermann in jail for the first time and making her debut appearance at a court hearing with a Peacock film crew in tow, as it has been at her home. Ms. Ellerup herself appears more composed than the figure she cut upon returning to the house that overnight had become a notorious landmark.

Prosecutors say Mr. Heuermann, 60, a Manhattan architect and suburban father, killed three women he hired as escorts and wrapped them in burlap for burial at Gilgo Beach on Long Island's South Shore more than a dozen years ago. The grisly details shocked the public and reopened wounds for relatives of 11 people whose remains were found along the same stretch of oceanfront.

Ms. Ellerup, 59, had filed for divorce days after the arrest and distanced herself from Mr. Heuermann, avoiding his pretrial hearings and declining to visit him in jail.

She was not charged and investigators have said she was away on trips when the killings happened. Her lawyer, Robert Macedonio, said she knew nothing about the killings and that ''the only thing she knows about the charges is what's been reported by the media.''

''She wants to believe that the spouse she's been married to for 27 years wasn't capable of these crimes,'' he said. ''She wants to see and hear the evidence as it plays out in the courtroom.''

Many people do. True crime is a booming category of entertainment that encompasses documentaries, scripted series and audio. The genre makes up 24 percent of the nation's most popular podcasts, according to the Pew Research Center.

Serial killers constitute a popular subgenre of their own. The Gilgo Beach case alone has already inspired numerous television shows. ''Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story,'' a scripted series, surpassed a billion hours in viewing time and became one of the most watched series on Netflix last year. With a ravenous market to satisfy, huge payouts for exclusive interview deals have become common.

''It's driven by demand,'' said Ed Hersh, a former television executive and current industry consultant on true crime programming. ''Streaming is all about building buzz and keeping subscribers paying from one month to the next,'' he added, ''and since viewers are always looking for some details that move this story forward, a service like Peacock can potentially really promote this.''

While the Peacock deal helps Ms. Ellerup's finances, it poses some complications.

The commercialization of such a depraved case, combined with Ms. Ellerup's payday and her decision to tempt legal fate by going on camera before the trial, has rankled victims' families and law enforcement officials.

Rodney Harrison, Suffolk County's outgoing police commissioner -- who upon Mr. Heuermann's arrest called him ''a demon that walks among us'' -- said in an interview that the deal was ''a smack at the family members who lost a loved one.''

Prosecutors say Mr. Heuermann went to lengths to hide his activity from both his wife and the authorities by using disposable burner phones to contact escorts and access brutal pornography.

He has pleaded not guilty and is being held without bail at a Suffolk County jail, with his next pretrial court date in February. His lawyer did not return a request for comment.

Prosecutors continue to seek more evidence and investigate him as the prime suspect in the death of a fourth woman and possibly others found buried in the Gilgo area and elsewhere.

Ms. Ellerup, who could be called to testify in his trial, could play a crucial role in the case.

Last month, the police said, detectives interviewed a woman who claimed to have met Mr. Heuermann and Ms. Ellerup while visiting their Massapequa Park house in 1996 for a sex party along with a woman named Karen Vergata, who was working as an escort and disappeared around that time. Ms. Vergata's skull was found near Gilgo Beach in April 2011.

Investigators say that strands of Ms. Ellerup's hair, perhaps transferred inadvertently from their home, helped link her husband to the bodies in his case.

The Suffolk County district attorney, Ray Tierney, said in an interview that Ms. Ellerup's involvement with the documentary was ''going to affect her credibility.''

''She's trying to capitalize on her husband's notoriety and make herself marketable,'' he said. ''But the truth isn't always marketable and the money itself could be a motivation to lie.''

For Ms. Ellerup to speak about Mr. Heuermann to a film crew carries the inherent risk that ''what she says can be used against her criminally,'' said John Ray, a lawyer who represents relatives of Ms. Gilbert and of Jessica Taylor, whose remains were found in the Gilgo area.

''They are all walking on extremely thin legal ice,'' said Mr. Ray, who called it implausible that Ms. Ellerup knew nothing about her husband's deeds and said that she ''should be considered a suspect and investigated accordingly.''

''She's still within the circle of suspicion in this case, and so are the children,'' he said. ''Anything she says is very dangerous.''

Mr. Ray said the deal was a crass commercialization of a case in which coverage has fixated on the accused man and largely ignored the humanity of the victims, partly because they were working as escorts.

Ms. Ellerup's personality seems ripe for the camera. Like Mr. Heuermann, she grew up mostly in Massapequa Park, a ***working-class*** suburb, and can hold her own against pushy reporters and other interlopers. When she returned home two weeks after her husband's arrest, she greeted photographers with a lewd gesture and then settled into bantering from afar with reporters but ignoring substantive questions.

The size of Ms. Ellerup's payment for participating is unconfirmed. The NewsNation network reported that she would receive $1 million. It said Mr. Macedonio was getting $400,000 and a lawyer for the children, Vess Mitev, was getting $200,000. Neither would comment on the amounts.

Mr. Macedonio said the Peacock project would be developed partly by the rapper 50 Cent's production company, G-Unit, but declined to speak further about the deal.

Ultimately, Mr. Tierney said, the Peacock series would most likely be irrelevant to the case, partly because it was unlikely that Ms. Ellerup knew, or at least would divulge to cameras, culpable information about Mr. Heuermann.

''The decision will be made by the jury based on the facts of the case as presented in court, not on a documentary,'' he said.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/28/nyregion/gilgo-beach-wife-documentary.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/28/nyregion/gilgo-beach-wife-documentary.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Asa Ellerup, walking to a court hearing for her husband, has opened her life to Peacock's cameras. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ASSOCIATED PRESS)

John Ray, who represents the families of women found dead near Gilgo Beach, said the humanity of the victims was being ignored. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVE SANDERS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A18) This article appeared in print on page A1, A18.

**Load-Date:** November 29, 2023

**End of Document**



[***With a Powerful Howl, a Singer Still Inspires***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B3M-9661-DXY4-X065-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 14, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section AR; Column 0; Arts and Leisure Desk; Pg. 21

**Length:** 1848 words

**Byline:** By Mike Rubin

**Body**

Linda Sharrock, an avant-garde jazz musician who became aphasic after a 2009 stroke, has returned to the stage and inspired new generations.

Last April, the Vienna-based avant-garde jazz vocalist Linda Sharrock gave her first New York performance in over 40 years: a sold-out concert at BAM's Howard Gilman Opera House, as part of a series curated by Solange. Appearing between the poet Claudia Rankine and the saxophonist Archie Shepp, Sharrock guided eight musicians through a fully improvised set while she howled powerfully over the cacophonous squall of free jazz in a declamatory style that evoked the evening's program title, ''The Cry of My People.''

It wasn't until after she'd received multiple standing ovations that most of the audience realized the 76-year-old singer wasn't able to speak: Sharrock became aphasic after a 2009 stroke that paralyzed her right side; she now uses a wheelchair. A few weeks later at the Cambridge, Mass., home of the pianist Eric Zinman, who plays in her group the Linda Sharrock Network, Sharrock was unable to verbalize much more than ''yeah,'' ''no,'' ''OK'' and ''I don't know.''

Despite her limited dialogical abilities, Sharrock was cheerful, charming and quick to laughter. Much of the talking was done by her caregiver -- Mario Rechtern, an 81-year-old Austrian free jazz saxophonist who has, by his account, overseen her personal affairs and daily activities for the last 20 years. He not only plays in her band, he helps her dress, feeds her if necessary and carries her down the stairs.

''This work with Linda is consuming,'' Rechtern said, tugging at his woolly gray beard, ''and at the same time, I cannot give in to the consuming, because when I give in, she's lost. So it's challenging.''

Sharrock's return to the stage -- a manifestation of her stubborn refusal to be silenced -- is one of the most stirring comeback stories in recent memory. Over a career stretching six decades, Sharrock has been a resolutely singular figure; almost no peers share her uniquely unorthodox vocal delivery. Too ''out'' for jazz's in-crowd, she was relegated to relative obscurity. Yet her commitment to challenging her audience has ultimately made her a role model for experimental vocalists and Black female performers, providing a beacon of tantalizing possibilities.

[Video: Watch on YouTube.]

The poet and vocalist Camae Ayewa, who performs as Moor Mother, recalled hearing Sharrock's music for the first time and ''losing my mind,'' she said in an interview. ''I wrote a little poem about this because it was such urgency on my part to be like, 'What is going on here? This is where I want to go! This is what I want to sound like!' I hadn't heard anyone before that had inspired me this way besides Betty Carter. I just started to be obsessed about it.''

Sharrock's vocal exclamations have become deeper and more guttural moans than the high-pitched shrieks of her early work with her then-husband, the musician Sonny Sharrock. In the late 1960s, Sonny revolutionized jazz guitar through volume, distortion and feedback while playing with Pharoah Sanders, Don Cherry, Wayne Shorter and Miles Davis. Linda's approach was no less radical: On three albums of collaborations with Sonny, beginning with their remarkable 1969 debut ''Black Woman,'' her wordless exhortations included psychedelic sighs, orgasmic yodels and blood-chilling screams, all delivered with an intensity that made ''Plastic Ono Band''-era Yoko Ono sound like Anne Murray in comparison.

''I've never listened to any kind of a female jazz singer for any kind of inspiration or anything like that,'' Sharrock said in a 1973 WKCR radio interview. ''I was influenced by horn players,'' she explained, citing incendiary saxophonists like Sanders and Albert Ayler.

''The thing that killed me about her singing was that she was, if not the first, one of the few jazz singers who improvise,'' Sonny said in the same WKCR conversation. ''That's one of the reasons she doesn't use words: because it hinders your improvisation.''

Sharrock was born Linda Chambers in Philadelphia, and lived with her grandmother and her younger brother, Pablo, in the ***working class*** Germantown neighborhood, according to Jacquelyn Bullock, a longtime friend and former neighbor. In an interview, she said that despite Sharrock's confrontational vocal approach, offstage ''she was quiet and demure,'' with an interest in fashion and a distinctive sense of style. ''She's a gracious woman. Like most women, she likes nice things, and she has a great sense of humor.''

Sharrock moved to New York after graduating from high school in 1965 with the intention to study painting, but soon became immersed in the Lower East Side's jazz scene, where her inaugural professional gig was singing with Sanders. When she first began performing, she shaved off her eyebrows and kept her hair close-cropped, she told The New York Times Magazine in 1975. ''It was the strangest look I could conceive of,'' she said. ''My life had taken such a drastic change, I wanted to present it physically.''

She met Sonny through Sanders, and they married in 1967. Earnings for most free jazz musicians were lean, but that year, Sonny got the opportunity to work with the commercially successful jazz-funk flutist Herbie Mann, and spent most of the next seven years playing in his group. Linda went on tour with them and eventually joined the band, usually performing two of the couple's compositions each night, ''Black Woman'' and ''Portrait of Linda in Three Colors, All Black.''

[Video: Watch on YouTube.]

The Sharrocks lived in an apartment at 77 East 3rd Street in the East Village; the pianist Dave Burrell was a neighbor and hosted rehearsals for the 1969 ''Black Woman'' album in his tiny living room. Burrell recalled in an interview that hearing Sharrock sing for the first time, ''I felt a bolt of excitement,'' he said. ''I thought of her as a vocalist who could throw herself into the 'Black is beautiful' moment and movement, and that made her one of the boys, so having her around was cool.''

Another ''Black Woman'' musician, the trumpeter Ted Daniel, was a childhood friend of Sonny's from Ossining, N.Y. ''She was one of a kind,'' Daniel said in an interview. ''I haven't heard anybody sing with the raw passion and just that kind of freedom that she approached in her singing with Sonny in that band.''

Released on the Vortex subsidiary of Atlantic Records, the trailblazing ''Black Woman'' failed to find a larger audience. A few years later, the couple put together the Savages, a working band that could play out regularly. The group included steel drums and Latin percussion and gigged at downtown venues like the Tin Palace and lofts like Studio Rivbea, said Abe Speller, the band's drummer. The Savages recorded a soundtrack to Sedat Pakay's 1973 short documentary ''James Baldwin: From Another Place'' and performed a live set in 1974 on WKCR, which are the only surviving souvenirs of their existence. Speller recalled the band holing up to rehearse before entering a studio in December 1977 to record a four-song demo tape, but the group failed to score a label deal and eventually fizzled out.

After Linda and Sonny divorced, she moved to Turkey and then Vienna, where she met her second husband, the Austrian saxophonist Wolfgang Puschnig, a few years later. (Sonny died in 1994 at 53.) Initially they were just musical collaborators, Puschnig said in a video call from his home in southern Austria, but a relationship blossomed and they were married in 1987 while in Mozambique for a gig.

Under their own names and in groups like the Pat Brothers, AM4 and Red Sun, Puschnig and Sharrock recorded more than 20 albums together on European and South Korean labels from 1986 to 2007, but her vocal approach had changed markedly. Puschnig said that she moved away from singing in her free style after consulting a former Ziegfeld girl turned palm reader, who told her, ''I see you're a singer, but you don't use words, but you should because you have a talent to use words.''

''So that's how she started to do lyrics,'' he said.

The jazz fusion bassist Jamaaladeen Tacuma performed with them for years, and produced ''On Holiday,'' Sharrock's 1990 album of Billie Holiday covers, complete with new jack swing beats and a rapper. ''She was pushing the ball,'' Tacuma said in an interview, ''thinking outside of the box, in terms of music, creativity, and improvisation, and trying to bring something about musically with her voice that had not been done before.''

Puschnig said Sharrock's health started to deteriorate in the mid-1990s, and though their romantic relationship ended around 1996, they continued working together as late as 2007. Around 2004, Rechtern -- who had first met Sharrock in 1979 -- began caring for her, and was granted power of attorney in 2007. ''She was really falling into the nothingness,'' Rechtern said. ''If I wouldn't have taken her she would be in a home.''

During surgery for an intestinal blockage in 2009, Sharrock suffered her stroke, and spent the following two years in and out of the hospital. In 2012 she was visited in Austria by the jazz bassist Henry Grimes. ''She was sitting on the couch while he played,'' Rechtern recalled, ''and I heard her very softly singing into the music.''

Intrigued, Rechtern began gradually coaxing Sharrock to perform again. ''She started to develop first this growl sound, this cry, because she couldn't articulate,'' he said. ''Out of the blues and this typical sound, she found this explosion.''

Beginning with ''No Is No'' in 2014, Sharrock has released five recordings in Europe since her stroke. Her recent music is more in the spirit of the free jazz she made with Sonny than her somewhat more conventional work with Puschnig, though her vocal range is understandably not the same.

Sharrock responded affirmatively when asked if she had needed to sing and perform again, and when asked if she felt better while onstage, she cracked up laughing.

''This music is healing for her,'' Rechtern replied. ''There's no doubt.''

Sharrock's work and perseverance has inspired a new generation of artists. ''So much of it doesn't have lyrics,'' Taja Cheek, who performs as L'Rain, said in an interview, ''and isn't easy to understand in a certain kind of way, but I understood it, and I felt it so viscerally when I first heard her that it got very emotional for me.''

On a recent re-listen of ''Black Woman,'' Cheek said, ''it sort of hit me like a ton of bricks that 'Oh, Linda Sharrock is the lineage I might be a part of.' I am able to do what I'm doing, and it can be met with a little bit of understanding, because Linda has already done something like this.''

Sharrock's resiliency has resonated with her old colleagues, as well. ''It is very telling about the heart of a performing artist wanting to be able to do that until it's completely impossible,'' Burrell said, ''another further dimension of the determination that she still has, no matter what the circumstances. I'm very proud of her.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/08/arts/music/linda-sharrock.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/08/arts/music/linda-sharrock.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Linda Sharrock became aphasic after a 2009 stroke paralyzed her right side. Now her vocal exclamations have become deeper and more guttural moans than the high-pitched shrieks of her early work. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JEENAH MOON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page AR21.

**Load-Date:** January 14, 2024

**End of Document**



[***I Work for Midwestern Democrats, and I Know How to Win Back Voters From the G.O.P.; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65YC-GRG1-DXY4-X4D8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 18, 2022 Monday 15:40 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1199 words

**Byline:** Brian Stryker

**Highlight:** Stop letting Republicans own the issues of outsourcing and trade.

**Body**

CHICAGO — Democrats continue to bleed support from ***working-class*** voters of all races. Many are abandoning the party for the Republicans because they think Democrats are not committed enough to fighting for their livelihood and way of life.

To win these voters back, Democrats have got to do more to demonstrate that we are putting American workers first, starting with taking on outsourcing and bad trade deals. Democrats in Congress are taking small steps — like [*prioritizing*](https://www.axios.com/2022/07/14/schumer-china-usica-semiconductor-chips) the passage of a bill that will support the semiconductor industry and help make the United States more competitive with China — but there is much more we, as a party, can do, both in our actions and in our words.

Nothing less than our viability as a national political party is on the line. Perhaps most worryingly, [*recent polling*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/13/upshot/poll-2022-midterms-congress.html) has shown Democrats slipping in support from ***working-class*** voters of all races. In 2020 we lost ground with voters of color — particularly among Hispanics, as well as minority men without college degrees. Those problems appear to be getting worse, especially with Latino voters. Generally, most Americans do not have college degrees; Democrats cannot afford to continue to lose their votes.

One underrated problem for Democrats is how they have approached outsourcing. Many voters think Democrats don’t fight effectively enough to keep jobs in America or bring them back. A [*poll*](https://www.thirdway.org/polling/economic-trust-gap-survey-toplines-june-2021) I conducted for Third Way last year found that 49 percent of likely voters think Republicans do a better job than Democrats on the issue. (Only 24 percent could say the same of Democrats.)

It’s not just polls: In focus groups after the 2020 election, I listened to blue-collar Latino Trump voters on the Texas-Mexico border call Mr. Trump a racist but say they voted for him because he’s for the American worker and trying to keep jobs in America.

This concern might be even more important now. Inflation is the top issue voters want Washington to address, and Americans believe disruptions to the global supply chain are causing price spikes and economic instability. To win support, Democrats need to hammer home to voters that they are focused on bringing manufacturing home.

I live in Chicago and work for Midwestern Democratic politicians whose states have been hit hard by outsourcing, and I have seen Democrats win over swing voters with a powerful call to bring jobs back to America and invest in domestic manufacturing. Tim Ryan, the Democratic Senate candidate in Ohio, offers a good example. When he talks about his 30-year fight to get tough on Chinese trade practices, I’ve seen people who voted for Mr. Trump most recently (but who previously voted for Barack Obama) start to wonder, “I’m a Republican, but can I vote for Tim Ryan now?”

Voters praised Gov. Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan for expanding a semiconductor plant near Bay City to help the auto industry. It helps explain why in 2018 she won back six counties that voted for Mr. Trump but had voted for Mr. Obama. Mandela Barnes, a Democratic Senate candidate in Wisconsin, connects with voters when he talks about his dad’s middle-class life working the third shift at an auto plant that has since been replaced with a strip mall.

Democrats can focus on three things. First, we need to talk about the work we’ve done to rebuild America — for example, through the infrastructure bill, which has engaged construction in places all over the country. Making things in America is not just a so-called Rust Belt issue; it’s an American-voter issue. People are getting hammered by inflation, and when they can afford something, it’s often back-ordered or plain out of stock. There are no easy answers to inflation, but voters want to hear that Democrats see it as the big problem that it is. And voters everywhere want to bring supply chains home, if possible, so Americans can build things in states all over the country.

Democrats have too often shied away from talking about outsourcing — possibly because Mr. Trump’s anti-outsourcing talk has made us wary of remotely sounding like him. We need to get over that and start owning this issue again.

Second, Democrats should continue to push legislation that helps the ***working class***, particularly in building things — and point out how it will make a difference in people’s lives. The White House’s Buy American executive order and the American Rescue Plan help make sure that American companies get first crack at any contract funded by American taxpayers. That means jobs and income. We should immediately pass some version of the China competitiveness bill that would bring critical supply lines like semiconductor production back to America, invest in American manufacturing, take on China’s intellectual-property theft and illegal subsidies and expand worker training.

Democrats can also improve trade deals so they deliver tangible benefits for American workers. Hundreds of Democrats voted with Mr. Trump to make NAFTA better for workers, and they should continue to do that for other trade pacts. It wasn’t so long ago (2005) that Mr. Obama explained his vote against George W. Bush’s Central American Free Trade Agreement by [*pointing out*](https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-2005-06-30-0506300212-story.html) that trade agreements too often have been “about making life easier for the winners of globalization, while we do nothing as life gets harder for American workers.”

In addition, the tax code should be reformed to incentivize companies to pay American workers an honest day’s pay here, not hire cheaper foreign labor.

Third, Democrats need to draw a contrast between themselves and Republicans, who have been all too glad to see corporations ship jobs overseas. For example, Republicans overwhelmingly [*supported*](https://itep.org/trump-gop-tax-law-encourages-companies-to-move-jobs-offshore-and-new-tax-cuts-wont-change-that/) Mr. Trump’s tax cuts for outsourcers. Democrats took Mitt Romney down for his outsourcing at Bain Capital and held John McCain to account in Michigan for his cheerleading of job-killing trade deals. We should bring this tactic back to the forefront of Democratic campaigns.

Also, Democrats should draw inspiration from our roots and union friends. We should remind voters over and over again about who saved the American auto industry: Barack Obama and his vice president, Joe Biden.

If Democrats can’t do these things, they will lose more elections. Many voters are turned off by the Republican culture wars, but they will tolerate them if they believe they are voting for the party that is fighting for their jobs and wallets.

Democrats won’t solve their challenges with ***working-class*** voters in a day or a year or with any one issue alone. But if we respond to voter frustrations, especially on pocketbook issues, and if we fully commit to those issues in government and in campaigns, we can start to find our way back with them.

Brian Stryker ([*@BrianStryker*](https://twitter.com/brianstryker?lang=en)) is a partner at Impact Research and a strategist for Gretchen Whitmer, Tim Ryan and Mandela Barnes, among others.

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

**Load-Date:** July 18, 2022

**End of Document**



[***The Subway Killing: Outrage, Fear, Empathy***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6886-87T1-DXY4-X319-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 18, 2023 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 23; LETTERS

**Length:** 1237 words

**Body**

To the Editor:

Re ''A Preventable Tragedy on New York's Subway,'' by David French (column, May 15):

I like the point Mr. French made that Jordan Neely, while being the ''principal victim'' on the subway, wasn't the only one the city failed.

Mr. Neely, like so many others with serious mental health issues, ''should not have been in that subway car.'' I feel lucky to have escaped from the subway unscathed on several occasions.

A week or so before the Neely incident, I entered an F train and sat down. A man, whom I could smell before I saw him, sat down very close to me and started screaming in a loud voice, raising his hands and threatening people.

I was terrified, got up after a few minutes, and waited by the door until it opened at the next station and I could run out and into the next car. A group of people followed me. We held our breath that he wouldn't come after us.

We were lucky that time. My concern is that the next time -- and there will be a next time -- someone starts acting irrationally and threatening people, a fear of being accused of a crime will stop a passenger from trying to subdue the person and possibly save lives.

Linda LernerBrooklyn

To the Editor:

David French cites reports from women who have been ''groped, flashed, or masturbated at'' on the subway. Many other instances of disturbances or crimes inside subway cars have been reported in The Times. It's nice to see more police officers on the platforms, but where I almost never see a police officer is actually on a subway train, patrolling the cars.

It is precisely in the cars that mentally disturbed people abound, and where it is difficult at any given moment to decide how much of a threat any one of them is to my safety. So let's get the police on the trains.

Jane O'ShaughnessyNew York

To the Editor:

I am sick of articles suggesting that Daniel Penny had any reason whatsoever to kill Jordan Neely.

Being yelled at is no justification for killing someone. There is such a thing as proportionality.

David French asks, ''Should passengers stand by when, say, an angry man yanks the hair of a woman next to him?'' Of course not! But we shouldn't kill him, either! We should do what is necessary to keep the person from harming someone else, call the police and leave it at that.

It appears that Mr. Neely assaulted no one. Meanwhile, the very fact that Mr. Penny was able to kill him shows that he was strong enough to simply subdue him. That was all that was required (if, indeed, anything was).

We have a responsibility to act within reason. Mr. Penny did not do so.

Wesley ClarkBrooklyn

To the Editor:

While I deplore the accidental killing of what was a clearly mentally disturbed man on a subway train, I wonder what the reaction would have been had Jordan Neely become violent and ended up wounding or killing an innocent passenger? We have seen that play out more than once.

The man who put him in a chokehold was probably trying to prevent that from happening. We can't expect each subway car to contain someone trained in determining which mentally disturbed person behaving in a threatening manner is dangerous or not.

Had the scenario played out differently, we'd be reading comments about the failure of any of the passengers to step up and try to prevent a clearly disturbed person from harming others!

It is sad that Mr. Neely had to lose his life, but the real villain is the lack of city services and medical attention for homeless people, not the person who tried to prevent harm to subway passengers. I'm sure it was not his intent to kill anyone.

Irene Bernstein-PechmèzeQueens

To the Editor:

As if Jordan Neely's loss of life at the hands of an overzealous Daniel Penny were not enough, it is appalling to note that apparently no one or not enough people riding that subway car cared enough to stop Mr. Penny from completing his despicable act. Did the other riders just look on, or did they just look the other way?

Roberto RichheimerMexico City

To the Editor:

Re ''On the Right, Help for Man Charged in Chokehold Death'' (news article, May 15):

As an elderly lifelong Democrat, I resent the implication that only those on the right support Daniel Penny. Mr. Penny protected people like me from harassment and assault from people like Jordan Neely.

My husband and I seldom go into New York City anymore because of people like Mr. Neely. They make riding the subway a fearful experience for elderly people like us who cannot afford taxis or Ubers.

Gail G. AbramsLittle Silver, N.J.

To the Editor:

Does anyone still remember the time when the thousands of psychotic, hallucinating people unable to care for themselves were patients in New York State's vast state hospital system instead of on the streets? People who were a danger to themselves and others were generally well cared for, fed, housed and medicated when appropriate, with antipsychotic drugs rather than street drugs.

No one would suggest that the state hospital system was without flaws, but society and the mentally ill certainly seemed much better off before this system was dismantled and not replaced.

George SabelWestwood, N.J.

To the Editor:

I am a retired psychiatrist who spent the better part of three decades caring for inpatients on a psychiatric unit. Some of the patients were agitated and aggressive. The efforts to calm a patient included trying to talk them down. If that didn't work and if the patient remained dangerous, a staff member might restrain the person, always having enough personnel to subdue them while minimizing risk of harm to all parties (of course in the hospital, medications might be used as well).

If the person had no weapons, even though threatening people, no potentially dangerous methods were warranted.

In the recent incident on the subway, several people could have been recruited to help with restraining the person, thereby reducing risk of injury. Clearly lethal means were not justified.

Edwin TobesAnn Arbor, Mich.

To the Editor:

I cannot judge Daniel Penny's intention, or what darker forces may have taken over his interaction with Jordan Neely, but I do believe that he represents something in all of us in those moments of confrontation with those who are mentally ill.

Bizarre behavior can trip a knee-jerk reaction to something so deeply fearful that our lizard brain sees only otherness and danger.

Whatever the ultimate legal decision, societally and personally we have a long way to go in dealing with the troubled Jordan Neelys and the protective or reactive response of the Daniel Pennys in each of us.

David PasinskiFayetteville, N.Y.

The Democrats as a ***Working-Class*** Party

To the Editor:

Re ''Biden Promotes Quality Careers Minus a Degree'' (front page, May 16):

Not all should go to college, or should need to, to make a good living. By emphasizing this point, President Biden has taken an important step toward re-establishing the Democratic Party as America's ***working-class*** party.

But this and other economic initiatives may not be enough to win back blue-collar workers. Concerns about the weakening of traditional moral values, violent crime and high levels of undocumented migrants might still keep red states red.

To be a true labor party, the Democrats must position themselves just left of center by representing and addressing the values and concerns of the majority of Americans.

John MiragliaOld Bridge, N.J.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/17/opinion/letters/subway-killing-jordan-neely-daniel-penny.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/17/opinion/letters/subway-killing-jordan-neely-daniel-penny.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A23.

**Load-Date:** May 18, 2023

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[***Mayor Adams Focuses Agenda on the ‘Working People’ of New York***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67DC-X791-DXY4-X2MF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 26, 2023 Thursday 07:15 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1458 words

**Byline:** Emma G. Fitzsimmons and Jeffery C. Mays

**Highlight:** In his second State of the City address, Mayor Eric Adams turned his attention toward the essential needs of everyday New Yorkers, promising cleaner streets and more affordable housing.

**Body**

In his second State of the City address, Mayor Eric Adams turned his attention toward the essential needs of everyday New Yorkers, promising cleaner streets and more affordable housing.

After a turbulent first year as mayor, Eric Adams sought on Thursday to refocus his agenda on the needs of ***working-class*** New Yorkers, vowing to make city streets cleaner, improve public safety and expand affordable housing and a jobs program.

By using his second State of the City address to outline a “working people’s agenda,” Mr. Adams seemed to be moving away from the crisis-response mode that typified his first year, signaling that New York City had sufficiently emerged from the broad effects of the coronavirus pandemic.

The mayor identified four major areas for improvement — jobs, safety, housing and care — while redoubling his emphasis on targeting a common enemy of New Yorkers: rats and the piles of trash they feast on.

Mr. Adams announced several proposals: a citywide expansion of composting; support for a rezoning plan for Midtown Manhattan to convert offices into housing; and the expansion of an apprenticeship jobs program to reach 30,000 New Yorkers by 2030.

“We are on the pathway to a safer city, with more jobs and more opportunity,” the mayor said. “And we have laid the cornerstone for a new era of affordable housing.”

Speaking at Queens Theater in Flushing Meadows Corona Park, Mr. Adams harked back to his campaign persona as a ***working-class*** candidate, noting that he grew up not far away in Jamaica, Queens, the son of a house cleaner.

Mr. Adams’s [*first State of the City address last April*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/26/nyregion/eric-adams-crime-homeless.html) at Kings Theater in Brooklyn, where he had served as borough president, focused on public safety and the city’s economic recovery from the pandemic.

On Thursday, he suggested that the recovery was well underway, arguing that “the state of our city is strong” and pointing out that the city had added more than 200,000 jobs over the last year.

“We’re just getting started, and there’s no stopping the world’s greatest city,” he said.

Yet nearly three years into the pandemic, New York is still struggling to adjust to the upheaval wrought by the virus. The city’s unemployment is higher than the national average; many New Yorkers have not returned to the office five days a week; and [*the city is facing multibillion-dollar budget deficits*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/12/nyregion/budget-mayor-adams-nyc.html) in the coming years.

His first year as mayor was undoubtedly shaped by crisis — the pandemic, fears of rising crime and an [*influx of migrants*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/18/nyregion/eric-adams-immigration-asylum.html) arriving from the southern border. Much of the mayor’s public messaging reflected his law-and-order approach to governing, as did his actions — including sweeps of homeless encampments and a new plan to [*involuntarily remove mentally ill people*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/29/nyregion/nyc-mentally-ill-involuntary-custody.html) from the streets — which have been met with mixed reactions from New Yorkers.

A group of protesters rallied outside the Queens Theater on Thursday calling on Mr. Adams to move quickly to close Rikers Island, [*where 19 people died last year after being held at the troubled jail complex*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/rikers-deaths-jail.html). Mr. Adams has raised doubts about [*whether he will close the jail by 2027 as planned*](https://www.qchron.com/editions/queenswide/can-city-meet-rikers-closure-deadline/article_d765865a-6956-538b-92a3-c65d3823e565.html).

Mr. Adams has also faced criticism over hiring friends for lucrative city positions, directing painful budget cuts at schools and libraries, and presiding over a staffing crisis in city government that has slowed the work of critical agencies. Mr. Adams has grown increasingly frustrated with media coverage of his administration, and has bristled at pushback from left-leaning elected officials over his policies.

Some experts said that the mayor’s agenda lacked the sweep and depth necessary to help the city fully recover from the pandemic. Nathan Gusdorf, executive director of the Fiscal Policy Institute, said that deeper investments were needed in public education, affordable housing and public transportation if New York was going to be a place where families could thrive.

“As we emerge from the Covid pandemic and head into uncertain economic conditions, working- and middle-class New Yorkers need large-scale investments from City Hall that will lower the cost of living,” Mr. Gusdorf said. “Not adjustments on the margins.”

The State of the City speech is an annual ritual for New York City mayors, but the shiny plans that are announced do not always come to fruition. In his 2016 speech, Mayor Bill de Blasio proposed a $2.5 billion streetcar line through Brooklyn and Queens that [*never got off the ground*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/10/nyregion/streetcar-mayor-brooklyn-queens.html).

Perhaps the most ambitious of Mr. Adams’s proposals involves the rezoning of Midtown Manhattan to add affordable housing in an area zoned for manufacturing and office space, but details were scant. The mayor said that community engagement would begin in the next few weeks. Another plan, for the North Shore of Staten Island, would focus, he said, on “expanded waterfront access and flood resiliency, job creation and mixed-use development.”

John Sanchez, executive director of the 5 Borough Housing Movement, a group focused on expanding affordable housing, said that rezoning Midtown was an achievable goal. The city and state should coordinate and update rules that would allow for more affordable housing to be built in places like Midtown.

“We understand that real estate south of 96th Street is valuable, but we want to make sure that there are affordable units,” Mr. Sanchez said. “It’s not only good for the city, it’s also good for making sure we don’t have segregated neighborhoods.”

Mr. Adams and Gov. Kathy Hochul released a plan last month that called for converting the city’s [*commercial districts into 24-hour live-and-work zones*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/14/nyregion/adams-hochul-ny-plan.html), but the plan lacked key details such as funding. The two leaders have maintained a positive relationship and Ms. Hochul attended the mayor’s speech along with the lieutenant governor, Antonio Delgado. Mr. Adams singled her out for praise in the speech, calling her the “steady hand we need at the wheel right now.”

Keith Powers, a councilman who represents part of Midtown, said he was optimistic about the rezoning plan, and suggested that Mr. Adams’s second year could be even more consequential than his first.

“The challenge now is when you add in a potential recession ahead, coupled with new fiscal challenges like the migrant crisis, that means that we have less resources to play with, so we have to be more creative,” Mr. Powers said.

On homelessness, the mayor said that the city would start to offer “free, comprehensive health care” to everyone who spends at least a week in a shelter. He said the move would cut down on the expense of homeless people using hospitals for their primary care needs.

Jumaane Williams, the public advocate, said he was glad to see the mayor [*focus on mental health*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/18/nyregion/mental-illness-crime-nyc.html) but that other major issues were not addressed.

“I want to hear the plan to focus on affordability when it comes to housing and what are the plans when it comes to Rikers,” Mr. Williams said.

In his speech, Mr. Adams continued his crusade against rats, saying he would soon hire a rat czar and framed the new composting program as a way to help make city streets cleaner and provide the rodents with less sustenance. The mayor also pledged to ensure that construction sheds were removed more quickly and to reconsider outdoor dining sheds, which he called “Covid cabins.”

“For far too long, New Yorkers were asked to accept things that should be unacceptable — crime, rats, trash, traffic,” he said. “When we allow quality of life to deteriorate, it is ***working-class*** New Yorkers that suffer the most.”

His [*plan to bring composting to all five boroughs by October 2024*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/25/nyregion/composting-garbage-nyc.html) was praised broadly on Thursday as a long-needed service for New Yorkers that would help the environment. Experts said they hoped that it would eventually be mandatory, as it is in other cities like San Francisco.

And Mr. Adams, a former police captain, did not abandon his focus on crime. He said he wanted to address a “recidivism crisis” by targeting 1,700 repeat offenders involved in violent crime — part of his insistence on revisiting the state’s bail reform law that has angered many of his fellow Democrats. The mayor also promised increased enforcement against [*unlicensed cannabis shops*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/23/nyregion/illegal-weed-dispensaries-shops-nyc.html).

“If you think you’re going to come into our communities without a license, put our kids at risk and steal jobs away from people trying to do it the right way, you must be smoking something,” he said.

Andy Newman contributed reporting.

Andy Newman contributed reporting.

PHOTOS: In this second State of the City address, Mayor Eric Adams identified major areas for improvement — jobs, safety, housing and care.; Gov. Kathy Hochul of New York at the address in Queens. Outside the theater, protesters called for the closing of Rikers Island. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY CAITLIN OCHS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A19.

**Load-Date:** February 20, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Wife of Gilgo Beach Suspect Gets a Documentary Deal***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69RJ-TK11-DXY4-X19P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 28, 2023 Tuesday 17:55 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1459 words

**Highlight:** Rex Heuermann is accused of killing three women. Where some saw depravity, others saw a chance to make a show.

**Body**

Rex Heuermann is accused of killing three women. Where some saw depravity, others saw a chance to make a show.

After [*Rex Heuermann was arrested in July*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/14/nyregion/gilgo-beach-murders-long-island-suspect.html) and accused of slaughtering women found bound in burlap and buried along a desolate stretch of Gilgo Beach, his family was left reeling and destitute.

With their dilapidated [*Massapequa Park ranch house turned inside out by investigators*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/27/nyregion/gilgo-beach-heuermann-family-wife.html), Mr. Heuermann’s wife, [*Asa Ellerup*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/18/nyregion/gilgo-beach-rex-heuermann-wife.html), and their two grown children were left to sleep on mats and cook on a grill in the front yard in full view of news crews and true-crime gawkers. Things got so bad that the daughter of a West Coast serial killer created an online fund-raiser.

But where some saw evil, depravity and tragedy, media companies saw pay dirt, swooping in with lucrative bids to turn the whole thing into content.

Peacock, the streaming service owned by NBCUniversal, is paying the family to participate in a documentary series covering the family through Mr. Heuermann’s trial, which is likely to begin next year.

The intense bidding for Ms. Ellerup’s story and the payment caused an outcry from relatives of women whose remains were found in the Gilgo Beach area, including those of Shannan Gilbert, whose disappearance several miles from Gilgo in 2010 led to the recovery of the other victims.

“Disappointed, disgusted, flabbergasted, frustrated are a few words that come to mind right now,” her sister Sherre Gilbert wrote in a social media post. “The way that the media will buy stories to further re-victimize, re-traumatize, and exploit the families &amp; victims of serial killers is evil!”

Peacock officials declined to comment on the planned documentary or disclose how much they were paying Ms. Ellerup. As long as none of the money flows to Mr. Heuermann, the arrangement would skirt New York laws that prohibit defendants from selling their stories to the media.

As Ms. Ellerup’s financial fortunes have lifted, so has her profile. Recent weeks have seen her visiting Mr. Heuermann in jail for the first time and making her debut appearance at a court hearing with a Peacock film crew in tow, as it has been at her home. Ms. Ellerup herself appears more composed than the figure she cut upon returning to the house that overnight had become a notorious landmark.

Prosecutors say Mr. Heuermann, 60, a Manhattan architect and suburban father, killed three women he hired as escorts and wrapped them in burlap for burial at Gilgo Beach on Long Island’s South Shore more than a dozen years ago. The grisly details shocked the public and reopened wounds for relatives of 11 people whose remains were found along the same stretch of oceanfront.

Ms. Ellerup, 59, had filed for divorce days after the arrest and distanced herself from Mr. Heuermann, avoiding his pretrial hearings and declining to visit him in jail.

She was not charged and investigators have said she was away on trips when the killings happened. Her lawyer, Robert Macedonio, said she knew nothing about the killings and that “the only thing she knows about the charges is what’s been reported by the media.”

“She wants to believe that the spouse she’s been married to for 27 years wasn’t capable of these crimes,” he said. “She wants to see and hear the evidence as it plays out in the courtroom.”

Many people do. True crime is a booming category of entertainment that encompasses documentaries, scripted series and audio. The genre makes up 24 percent of the nation’s most popular podcasts, according to the Pew Research Center.

Serial killers constitute a popular subgenre of their own. The Gilgo Beach case alone has already inspired numerous television shows. “Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story,” a scripted series, surpassed a billion hours in viewing time and became one of the most watched series on Netflix last year. With a ravenous market to satisfy, huge payouts for exclusive interview deals have become common.

“It’s driven by demand,” said Ed Hersh, a former television executive and current industry consultant on true crime programming. “Streaming is all about building buzz and keeping subscribers paying from one month to the next,” he added, “and since viewers are always looking for some details that move this story forward, a service like Peacock can potentially really promote this.”

While the Peacock deal helps Ms. Ellerup’s finances, it poses some complications.

The commercialization of such a depraved case, combined with Ms. Ellerup’s payday and her decision to tempt legal fate by going on camera before the trial, has rankled victims’ families and law enforcement officials.

Rodney Harrison, Suffolk County’s outgoing police commissioner — who upon Mr. Heuermann’s arrest called him “a demon that walks among us” — said in an interview that the deal was “a smack at the family members who lost a loved one.”

Prosecutors say Mr. Heuermann went to lengths to hide his activity from both his wife and the authorities by using disposable burner phones to contact escorts and access brutal pornography.

He has pleaded not guilty and is being held without bail at a Suffolk County jail, with his next pretrial court date in February. His lawyer did not return a request for comment.

Prosecutors continue to seek more evidence and investigate him as the prime suspect in the death of a fourth woman and possibly others found buried in the Gilgo area and elsewhere.

Ms. Ellerup, who could be called to testify in his trial, could play a crucial role in the case.

Last month, the police said, detectives interviewed a woman who claimed to have met Mr. Heuermann and Ms. Ellerup while visiting their Massapequa Park house in 1996 for a sex party along with a woman named Karen Vergata, who was working as an escort and disappeared around that time. Ms. Vergata’s skull was found near Gilgo Beach in April 2011.

Investigators say that strands of Ms. Ellerup’s hair, perhaps transferred inadvertently from their home, helped link her husband to the bodies in his case.

The Suffolk County district attorney, Ray Tierney, said in an interview that Ms. Ellerup’s involvement with the documentary was “going to affect her credibility.”

“She’s trying to capitalize on her husband’s notoriety and make herself marketable,” he said. “But the truth isn’t always marketable and the money itself could be a motivation to lie.”

For Ms. Ellerup to speak about Mr. Heuermann to a film crew carries the inherent risk that “what she says can be used against her criminally,” said John Ray, a lawyer who represents relatives of Ms. Gilbert and of Jessica Taylor, whose remains were found in the Gilgo area.

“They are all walking on extremely thin legal ice,” said Mr. Ray, who called it implausible that Ms. Ellerup knew nothing about her husband’s deeds and said that she “should be considered a suspect and investigated accordingly.”

“She’s still within the circle of suspicion in this case, and so are the children,” he said. “Anything she says is very dangerous.”

Mr. Ray said the deal was a crass commercialization of a case in which coverage has fixated on the accused man and largely ignored the humanity of the victims, partly because they were [*working as escorts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/15/nyregion/gilgo-beach-serial-killer-rex-heuermann.html).

Ms. Ellerup’s personality seems ripe for the camera. Like Mr. Heuermann, she grew up mostly in Massapequa Park, a ***working-class*** suburb, and can hold her own against pushy reporters and other interlopers. When she returned home two weeks after her husband’s arrest, she greeted photographers with a lewd gesture and then settled into bantering from afar with reporters but ignoring substantive questions.

The size of Ms. Ellerup’s payment for participating is unconfirmed. The NewsNation network reported that she would receive $1 million. It said Mr. Macedonio was getting $400,000 and a lawyer for the children, Vess Mitev, was getting $200,000. Neither would comment on the amounts.

Mr. Macedonio said the Peacock project would be developed partly by the rapper 50 Cent’s production company, G-Unit, but declined to speak further about the deal.

Ultimately, Mr. Tierney said, the Peacock series would most likely be irrelevant to the case, partly because it was unlikely that Ms. Ellerup knew, or at least would divulge to cameras, culpable information about Mr. Heuermann.

“The decision will be made by the jury based on the facts of the case as presented in court, not on a documentary,” he said.

Audio produced by Sarah Diamond.

Audio produced by Sarah Diamond.

PHOTOS: Asa Ellerup, walking to a court hearing for her husband, has opened her life to Peacock’s cameras. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ASSOCIATED PRESS); John Ray, who represents the families of women found dead near Gilgo Beach, said the humanity of the victims was being ignored. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVE SANDERS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A18) This article appeared in print on page A1, A18.

**Load-Date:** December 10, 2023

**End of Document**



[***‘The Effect’ Review: It’s More Than Chemical; Critic’s Pick***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:690F-Y9D1-DXY4-X34P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 21, 2023 Monday 16:36 EST

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**Section:** THEATER

**Length:** 859 words

**Byline:** Houman Barekat

**Highlight:** In a revival of Lucy Prebble’s play at the National Theater, in London, Paapa Essiedu and Taylor Russell are terrific as a couple who meet during a pharmaceutical trial.

**Body**

In a revival of Lucy Prebble’s play at the National Theater, in London, Paapa Essiedu and Taylor Russell are terrific as a couple who meet during a pharmaceutical trial.

Are you in love, or are you merely experiencing a giddy dopamine rush? Are those two states even meaningfully different? Is there a true, innermost “you” that is distinguishable from your neurochemistry?

These are some of the tricky questions explored by Lucy Prebble’s thought-provoking play, “The Effect,” first staged in 2012 and now revived in a slick new production directed by Jamie Lloyd at the National Theater, in London, running through Oct. 7.

“The Effect” revolves around two young people, Tristan and Connie, who take part in a trial for a dopamine-based psychiatric drug with powerful antidepressant properties. Initially, they seem to have little in common — he’s a ***working class*** lad from East London; she’s a bougie psychology student from Canada — but as the trial progresses, a tender rapport develops.

Throughout the study, the participants are monitored by two psychiatric doctors, Lorna and Toby, who debate their findings: Is the drug pulling their subjects together, or are their feelings organic? And if one of the trial participants was actually receiving a placebo the whole time, what then? Prebble keeps us guessing.

[*Paapa Essiedu*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/06/arts/television/paapa-essiedu-i-may-destroy-you.html) — best known for his role in the hit TV show, “[*I May Destroy You”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/04/arts/television/review-i-may-destroy-you.html) — is a delight as Tristan, whose roguish charm wins over the audience within minutes. Taylor Russell’s Connie is equally engaging as she slides from steely indifference to caring devotion, almost in spite of herself.

Throughout, the pair’s gradual transition from wary awkwardness to intense mutual magnetism is convincingly rendered, in large part thanks to the actors’ terrific onstage chemistry.

Things get messy in the latter stages of the experiment, as both the doses and the emotional stakes increase, leading to a fraught and affecting denouement.

The stiltedly ambivalent friendship between the two middle-aged doctors provides an intriguing subplot. We learn that Lorna (Michele Austin) and Toby (Kobna Holdbrook-Smith) were once romantically involved, many years ago. Lorna is prone to bouts of depression, but refuses to take medication; Toby, on the other hand, is a true pharmaceutical believer.

Austin plays Lorna with a dry, matter-of-fact fatalism that, though somewhat gloomy, is altogether more sympathetic than Toby’s myopic zealousness. Holdbrook-Smith approaches the role with a brooding aplomb, delivering his lines in a suave, sociopathic drawl.

For most of the production, the two doctors are seated at opposite ends of the stage — a long strip, designed by Soutra Gilmour and sandwiched between tiered banks of audience seating — while their two guinea pigs occupy the center. During Lorna and Toby’s conversations, they are illuminated by square, pure-white spotlights and the center stage is plunged into darkness. Most of the time, though, it is the doctors who sit in darkness, while we focus on the trial participants in the center. (The lighting design is by Jon Clark.) Lighting alone marks the scene changes, which, along with the audience’s perched vantage point, makes for a suitably clinical ambience.

“The Effect” is healthily skeptical about scientifically deterministic approaches to emotional well-being, channeling a dissenting tradition that dates back to the anti-psychiatry movement of the 1960s; its moral sensibility recalls [*Ken Kesey*](https://www.nytimes.com/2001/11/11/nyregion/ken-kesey-author-of-cuckoo-s-nest-who-defined-the-psychedelic-era-dies-at-66.html)’s 1962 novel, “One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest.” The play’s revival is particularly timely as a new generation of wellness gurus have, in recent years, latched onto the idea that much of human behavior can be explained away as neurotransmitters or hormones simply doing their thing.

Prebble invites us to ponder the implications of such thinking. Connie is initially uncomfortable with the notion that two people can fall in love just like that (“It takes work,” she insists), and wary of her attraction to Tristan. He, in response, makes the case for mystery, and thus articulates the play’s key message: That a world in which all feeling is viewed as a matter of chemistry would be a bleak one indeed.

The dialogue is deftly composed, and the ethical dilemmas teased out, rather than bludgeoned. This tautness of the writing, together with the strength of the actors’ performances, and its impressive visual aesthetic, elevates this play above the ordinary rung of sociopolitical parables.

At its heart is a deep and fertile agnosticism about the true source of emotional connectedness — a bracing antidote to the specious certainties peddled by the self-help industry and Big Pharma. Sure, everything is contingent, but when something feels real, it feels real.

At one point in the trial, Tristan declares: “I feel almost holy, like life’s paying attention to me.” Who are we to contradict him?

The Effect

Through Oct. 7 at the National Theater, London; [*nationaltheatre.org.uk*](https://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/productions/the-effect/).

PHOTO: Taylor Russell, left, and Paapa Essiedu’s characters meet in a psychiatric drug trial in “The Effect” at the National Theater in London. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MARC BRENNER) This article appeared in print on page C4.

**Load-Date:** September 20, 2023

**End of Document**



[***For a Disenchanted Ironist, Revolution and Rediscovery***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69KY-89N1-DXY4-X4BH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 11, 2023 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. 1; ART REVIEW

**Length:** 1219 words

**Byline:** By Jason Farago

**Body**

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

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

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

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

Three color-starved wartime pictures sit at the opening of ''Max Beckmann: The Formative Years, 1915-1925,'' a concentrated dose of alienated modernism now at the Neue Galerie. The artist has always been well-represented in this city's museums -- a full MoMA retrospective in 2003, a smaller one at the Met in 2016-17, and prime positions in Weimar politics-and-parties shows like the Met's 2006 ''Glitter and Doom'' -- in part because Beckmann was an adopted New Yorker. Condemned by the Third Reich as a ''degenerate'' artist, he spent his later life in the Netherlands and eventually the United States.

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

Yet a real vigor emerges in this show -- curated by the historian Olaf Peters, who also put together the Neue's impressive exhibitions on Weimar Berlin and on painting and politics in the 1930s -- as it moves from the war years (staged in a prologue on the second floor) into the 1920s (in the main exhibition galleries on the third). In small woodcuts and drypoint etchings of the early 1920s, the shallow spaces and hard angles Beckmann initially applied to Christian motifs get redeployed for portraits, party scenes and acid views of Weimar society. Look at ''In the Tram,'' a Berlin public transport etching from 1922 and one of many scenes Beckmann made of departures and arrivals. A woman at left crosses her bony hands. A grown man at right is sucking his thumb. At center is a war veteran, whose low-slung homburg casts a shadow over his heavy eyes: a dark band that contrasts with the white gauze wrapping his absent nose.

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

The real hell, for Beckmann, was the one to which survivors were condemned -- and the Neue Galerie is displaying not just the full portfolio (though some sheets are hard to see high over the fireplace) but also preliminary drawings, including an extraordinary cartoon of the murder of Rosa Luxemburg, her arms outstretched like in that earlier ''Descent from the Cross.''

The imbalance and precarity that Beckmann pictured in the ''Hell'' portfolio recurs, more literally and comically, in an awkward series of narrow vertical-format paintings of circus performers and funfair revelers. ''Carnival'' (1920), inspired by a famous German altarpiece, imagines two of the artist's friends in commedia dell'arte costume, while on the floor a man in a monkey mask grasps a trumpet with his feet. (In this show's catalog, Peters identifies the masked figure as Beckmann himself.)

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

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

Max Beckmann: The Formative Years, 1915-1925Through Jan. 15 at the Neue Galerie, 1048 Fifth Avenue, Manhattan; 212-628-6200, neuegalerie.org.Max Beckmann: The Formative Years, 1915-1925Through Jan. 15 at the Neue Galerie in Manhattan; 212-628-6200, neuegalerie.org.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/10/arts/design/max-beckmann-neue-galerie.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/10/arts/design/max-beckmann-neue-galerie.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Max Beckmann's analytical gaze: ''Self-Portrait With White Cap, 1926,'' on display at the Neue Galerie. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK

VIA CHRISTIE'S IMAGES) (C1)

Above, from left, three of Max Beckmann's nightmarish biblical scenes: ''Descent From the Cross,'' ''Adam and Eve'' and ''Christ and the Sinner,'' all from 1917. Below, ''Paris Society,'' begun in 1925 and reworked in 1931 and again in 1947. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANNIE SCHLECHTER/NEUE GALERIE

ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK

VIA SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM)

bove, ''In the Tram,'' from 1922. The shallow spaces and hard angles Beckmann initially applied to Christian motifs were reapplied to acid views of Weimar society. Right, ''Trapeze'' (1923) shows acrobats tumbling one over the other in a hopelessly failed circus act. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK

VIA DRYPOINT MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON

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VIA TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART) (C2)This article appeared in print on page C1, C2.

**Load-Date:** November 11, 2023

**End of Document**



[***The Magical Space Where Fun Is Every Child’s Birthright; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68VD-DKN1-DXY4-X52H-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 2, 2023 Wednesday 09:50 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 787 words

**Byline:** Adrian Eli René and Airea D. Matthews

**Highlight:** For kids in Philadelphia, the city’s recreation centers open a world of possibilities.

**Body**

Where can our children safely play?

In big cities, dense with buildings and people, bustling with traffic, this question has beleaguered generations of parents. And it was one I asked myself when I moved back with my four children in 2017 to Philadelphia after two decades away.

I was happy to return to the city to start a new job teaching poetry at Bryn Mawr College, but my children — especially the two oldest, who were high schoolers — were not. The grief of being pulled away from their friends and the pressure of learning new routines in a strange place weighed on them.

Toward the end of that first year, an old friend, also a Philadelphia native, reminded me of a valuable resource that might ease my children’s isolation — recreation centers. I immediately scoured the Philadelphia Parks and Recreation website for camps, anything that might help recreate their lost communal magic. I quickly found a teen adventures camp for my two eldest and an ecological camp and visual camp for my two youngest.

Through these programs my kids found friends with whom they could talk through the grief of moving, while figuring out new techniques in watercolor or filmmaking. “The rec” — as these centers are affectionately known in the city — helped my children tenderly carry their loss and move forward in community.

I was reminded of my family’s experience when I saw the work of Adrian Eli René — a young Haitian American photographer who moved to Philadelphia in 2020 and soon set out to get to know his city through the lens of his camera. His images capture young people at play and at ease with one another in and around Philadelphia’s recs.

In her book “All About Love,” bell hooks writes that “friendship is the place in which a great majority of us have our first glimpse of redemptive love and caring community.” Mr. René’s photos are mirrors of this idea. Two children clad in white T-shirts, standing back-to-back on a playing field, each seemingly measuring the shape of their respective horizons. A boy mid-daydream, leaning against a chain-link fence. A child reversing time as he jumps off the lip of a public pool.

Philadelphia has a long history of commitment to community space. In the 1880s, during the second Industrial Revolution, the first public baths — which would become public swimming pools — opened to provide ***working-class*** families access to bathing. By the early 20th century, Philadelphia’s philanthropic leaders partnered with the municipal government to create playgrounds and, later, recreation centers that housed any number of activities.

These new centers proved to be critical developments in the cultural life of poor urban neighborhoods. Equipped with an array of otherwise scarce facilities — basketball courts, fields, art studios — these spaces enshrined play as a means of not only strengthening communal ties but also affirming the community’s collective humanity. They powerfully disrupted the unjust socioeconomic logic that recreation is a luxury that poor people couldn’t afford and didn’t deserve. Subtly, recreation pointed toward a rising awareness that communal health begins with public spaces, particularly those devoted to inclusion and wellness.

We are now in the fifth Industrial Revolution, and the needs of working families remain unchanged. Philadelphia, despite limited funding, is still committed to meeting those needs. According to the Parks and Recreation Department, the city has about 150 staffed centers and more than 300 unstaffed neighborhood parks. Parks consist of some 10,000 acres, roughly 10 percent of the city’s land mass. The demand still exists for public gathering spaces where children are not in danger, and that’s the work of the rec.

These places of refuge, and the people who run them, do work beyond the obvious social good. At the rec, children can exercise creative agency, often deciding on their own how to use the space. The centers exist outside the prescriptive obligations, duties and expectations of schools or churches. They give children a place to work through, as my own children did, their triumphs and losses; innocence, immaturity and growth are valued. There, the children know they are free.

Adrian Eli René is a photographer based in Philadelphia. Airea D. Matthews is the poet laureate of Philadelphia. Her most recent book is “[*Bread and Circus*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/Bread-and-Circus/Airea-D-Matthews/9781668011454).”

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PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ADRIAN ELI RENÉ) This article appeared in print on page SR12.

**Load-Date:** August 5, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Why a Right-Wing Populist Gave Up***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6938-1381-JBG3-61CB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 3, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section SR; Column 0; Sunday Review Desk; Pg. 3; ROSS DOUTHAT

**Length:** 943 words

**Byline:** By Ross Douthat

**Body**

Over the last few weeks Sohrab Ahmari, well known as a leading intellectual exponent of a combative Trumpian conservatism, has been making the rounds explaining why he's giving up on right-wing populism.

That's a slight overstatement; his new book, ''Tyranny, Inc.,'' on the cruelties of corporate power in America, bears blurbs from leading populist Republicans like Josh Hawley and Marco Rubio. But he describes these figures as ''shining exceptions on the right,'' whose willingness to consider interventionist economic policies contrasts with the broader trend in which populism is ''turning into a niche/trashy online-media product,'' with no policy content beyond resentment of elites.

No doubt Ahmari's liberal readers would respond, it's always been that way! But part of the reason that the ''Tyranny, Inc.'' author and his circle earned so much attention in the Trump era is that the age of populism really did unsettle economic orthodoxies on the right.

The Trump administration often defaulted, as Ahmari laments, to warmed-over Reaganite policymaking. But Trump's victorious campaign really did kill off, for a time at least, the Tea Party-era emphasis on entitlement reform and hard money. And Trump did follow through on elements of his economic nationalism -- while the Biden administration has embraced similar ideas on trade and infrastructure, to the point where it's fair to say that both parties have been reshaped by Trump's '16 campaign.

Meanwhile, a populist intellectual ecosystem exists on the right, through think tanks like American Compass and journals like American Affairs and Ahmari's own Compact, where before the Trump era there was little more than a scattering of gadflies. The Hawley-Rubio-J.D. Vance faction in the Senate is small, but more influential than any past equivalent. And Trump himself, the Republican front-runner, is still making promises -- new cities! new tariffs! flying cars! -- that smack more of industrial policy than supply-side economics.

So why is Ahmari despairing of his cause? In part, he's reckoning with forces he probably underestimated before -- the folk libertarianism of the G.O.P.'s donor base and the cynicism of its celebrity-industrial complex.

But then Ahmari is also disillusioned because, while remaining socially conservative, he has personally moved farther to the left than some of his fellow populists.

With its potent anecdotes of corporate malfeasance and its (somewhat overstated) account of the ruthlessness of American economic life, ''Tyranny, Inc.'' is a book more in the pessimistic spirit of Barbara Ehrenreich's ''Nickel and Dimed'' than -- well, to take a personal example, than ''Grand New Party,'' the book I co-authored with Reihan Salam 15 years ago making the case for a more populist conservatism. Ahmari sometimes describes his view of American capitalism as close to that of Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren, and there is simply no way to infuse the full Sanders vision into the current Republican coalition; in that sense, he's right to deem himself politically homeless.

Finally, though, Ahmari doesn't always fully reckon with how recent material and cultural changes complicate his argument that cultural renewal depends on economic transformation -- that ''efforts to change the culture without reforming the economy are futile at best.''

If so, what should we make of the fact that the American economy was arguably worse, and yet the culture healthier, 10 or 20 years ago than today?

When Barack Obama ran for president, inequality had been rising since the 1980s and the health care safety net had a significant hole. When Trump ran for president, household income had been stagnating since 2000 and economic policymakers had let the unemployment rate stay unnecessarily high.

But today inequality may actually be declining, wages have risen generally and risen faster for the ***working class***, unemployment is extremely low and we are closer to universal health care than we were 20 years ago. Meanwhile, the big Biden-era problem for wage earners has been an inflation spike, which a Bernie Sanders agenda seems ill-equipped to solve.

Yet despite these economic improvements the cultural fabric looks more frayed than ever, with liberals as well as conservatives fretting over the slow fade of church and family, with crime and homelessness returning to American cities while a haze of marijuana settles over twentysomethings, with a spiritual despair shadowing every social rank.

You can blame Covid for deepening this era of bad feelings. You can argue that our social malaise just shows economic improvements haven't gone nearly far enough. And you can pin blame for certain social trends -- internet addiction among teenagers, say -- on bad actors in big business.

But in terms of priority and urgency, I wonder if Ahmari's harder-edged social conservative side -- the anti-pot, anti-porn, anti-crime aspects of his politics, let's say -- may actually be more relevant to our situation than the New-Deal-liberal side that's earning him new interest from the left.

Cultural conservatism absolutely needs an economic policy, and corporate power absolutely shapes the culture. But our own social crisis feels a little less economically determined, a little more essentially cultural, in 2023 than at any previous moment in my adult life.

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**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAMON WINTER/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page SR3.

**Load-Date:** September 3, 2023

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[***The Elusive Dream of Owning a Home in New York City; New York Today***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66YX-Y1C1-JBG3-62VV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 29, 2022 Tuesday 00:07 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1575 words

**Byline:** James Barron

**Highlight:** For many middle- and ***working-class*** New Yorkers, it’s an even more distant possibility than it used to be.

**Body**

For many middle- and ***working-class*** New Yorkers, it’s an even more distant possibility than it used to be.

Good morning. It’s Tuesday. Today we’ll look at why homeownership has been pushed even further out of reach for middle-class people in New York. We’ll also look at the trial of a Jamaica preacher who, prosecutors in Manhattan say, tried to recruit women for ISIS and marry them off to jihadists.

Buying a home in New York City was already hard before the pandemic pushed homeownership even further out of reach for many. Between the second quarter of 2019 and 2022, as the typical home price rose to nearly four times the median family income nationally, the corresponding number in New York City has remained above nine, according to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.

Such a statistic reinforces worries about the city’s long-term health. As owning a home becomes even more expensive, [*more middle- and* ***working-class*** *families could be driven out, and racial wealth disparities could widen*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/24/nyregion/home-ownership-new-york-city.html). I asked my colleague [*Mihir Zaveri*](https://www.nytimes.com/by/mihir-zaveri), who covers housing in New York, to explain.

For middle-income families who’ve been saving and dreaming of buying a home, what obstacles now loom larger?

It’s long been very difficult for middle- and low-income families to buy a home. But a few things have changed in recent months. Home prices have gone up, as many people moved to buy homes early in the pandemic. Inventory — essentially the number of homes on the market — has gone down.

And now, interest rates are rising, making monthly mortgage payments more expensive.

According to one analysis by the Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies, the income required to afford a home in, for example, the middle third of the New York-area market in September 2019 was about $117,450, assuming a 30-year fixed rate mortgage and some insurance and property tax costs. That has increased to almost $187,000 as of September 2022.

If homeownership is increasingly beyond the reach of would-be buyers, how will that change the city? Will it affect the city’s long-term health?

Part of what gives New York City its diverse, thriving energy is the constant churn of people who move in and move out. It’s also worth noting that while New York City’s homeownership rate may be particularly low, other cities also skew toward having more renters.

But there are also many experts and city leaders who see this dynamic as a problem since homeownership is one of the primary ways people build wealth in this country.

By making it difficult to buy and own a home, the situation enshrines and compounds the country’s racist history, including the effects of slavery and redlining, and allows white families to accumulate wealth disproportionately compared with Black or Latino households. Black people still face discrimination when trying to buy homes.

The fear is that, without some innovative policy intervention or public subsidies, only certain very rich people will be able to buy homes and put down roots in the city, while increasingly pushing everyone else — including city workers, teachers and more — to leave.

Here’s the inevitable pandemic question: Didn’t a lot of people leave the city when the pandemic closed in, and wouldn’t that have eased pressure on prices? How does the pandemic figure in the trends you’re seeing?

A lot of people did leave — in the beginning of the pandemic, helping drive home price spikes in places outside of the city. An analysis of home value data by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, for example, showed price decreases in many parts of the city during the first year of the pandemic. But then people came back, the city rebounded and prices increased. [*The same thing happened*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/07/nyregion/nyc-rent-surge.html) in the rental market.

The city has programs to help people make down payments, and Mayor Eric Adams has made boosting “affordable ownership” and bridging racial disparities central elements of his housing agenda. Are these efforts helping people who want to own their own homes?

They are. The city says it has invested $44 million in expanding homeownership, including $9 million in down payment help. Through some of these programs, the city housing department has financed renovations for more than 125 properties that are one- to four-family homes.

The city says it has also stepped up its education campaign — many people simply aren’t aware of these programs or how to navigate getting a home loan or other complicated parts of the process.

But these programs are also relatively small, especially compared with more prominent public programs that make renting more affordable.

There’s always a trade-off when it comes to spending a limited amount of public funds, and it’s unlikely that the current slate of homeownership programs will meaningfully halt the macro forces that force ***working-class*** people to leave. And overall, there just have not been enough homes built in the city for many decades, meaning the prices get very expensive for everything that does exist.

Expect a sunny day, with temps near the high 40s. At night, it’ll be mostly cloudy, with temps in the low 40s.

In effect until Dec. 8 (Immaculate Conception).

The latest New York news

* Buffalo shooting: The gunman who killed 10 Black people in a racist massacre at a Buffalo supermarket in May [*pleaded guilty to murder, domestic terrorism and hate crime charges.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/28/nyregion/buffalo-shooting-guilty-plea.html)

1. Fighting violence against women: The Brooklyn district attorney’s office created a single division for gender-based violence in [*a restructuring that will affect more than 100 lawyers and at least 30 social workers.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/28/nyregion/brooklyn-prosecutor-violence-against-women.html)
2. Mpox: The World Health Organization, responding to complaints that the word monkeypox conjures up racist tropes and stigmatizes patients, [*recommended that the disease be called mpox.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/28/health/monkeypox-mpox-who.html)

* Cyberattack: Suffolk County had to rely on radios rather than email when they were dispatched, and officials had to pay contractors with old-fashioned paper checks, in the wake of [*a malicious ransomware attack.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/28/nyregion/suffolk-county-cyber-attack.html)

Accused of being an ISIS marriage broker

Several years ago, Abdullah el-Faisal cautioned a woman he was communicating with on WhatsApp that she couldn’t be too careful. “Many pple got arrested just from text messages,” Faisal, [*a Jamaican preacher who was an outspoken supporter of the Islamic State*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/01/us/abdullah-faisal-al-qaeda.html?smid=url-share), also known as ISIS, wrote.

Now his own text messages are the basis of the criminal case against Faisal in State Supreme Court in Manhattan. Prosecutors say that he was in touch not with a would-be jihadist but with an undercover New York police officer, one of several who posed as women seeking his help to become ISIS brides.

[*As Faisal’s trial opened on Monday*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/28/nyregion/abdullah-el-faisal-isis-marriage-trial.html), Gary Galperin, a prosecutor with the Manhattan district attorney’s office, described him as “one of the most influential English-speaking terrorists of our time.” A defense lawyer, Alex Grosshtern, said the evidence would not show that Faisal had recruited a woman to go to Syria “and assist ISIS in engaging in any specific act of terrorism.”

The case began in 2016, after the F.B.I. and the New York Police Department learned that Faisal’s stepson, Hannibal Koyaki, wanted to “make Hijrah” — a journey to join ISIS, prosecutors said. Koyaki pleaded guilty last year to lying to the F.B.I. about his desire to aid ISIS and was sentenced to two years of probation.

In 2016, prosecutors wrote in a court filing, an undercover officer got in touch with Faisal, pretending to be a woman who wanted to join ISIS and marry someone who shared her beliefs. Faisal made an introduction to his stepson, who carried on a courtship that included near-daily exchanges and three in-person meetings.

Prosecutors said that setting up marriages and helping women join ISIS was a form of material support to the group. By the time he came into contact with a second officer, who called herself Mavish, prosecutors said that Faisal had already tried to arrange matches between fighters and women from Britain, Sweden and the United States.

Her banana

Dear Diary:

After I graduated from college, I lived in a great apartment in the East Village with roommates I adored. There was only one problem: Whenever I bought a banana, one of my roommates would, without fail, either eat it or throw it away.

One day, as a joke, I brought home a banana and wrote my name, Mia, on it.

A few days later, on my way out to get bagels with some friends, I grabbed the banana in case I might want to eat it with breakfast. Thanks to my labeling, it had survived until then.

When it was my turn to pay at the bagel shop, I jostled through my things in a rush to find my wallet. Then I went to the back of the store to wait with the other patrons.

After about five minutes, the man running the shop called out in a very confused tone: “We’ve got a banana here for Mia?”

I turned beet red.

“That’s mine,” I said sheepishly. “Sorry.”

“No problem!” he said cheerfully. “Good thing you labeled it!”

— Mia Marion

Illustrated by Agnes Lee. [*Send submissions here*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/how-to-submit-to-metropolitan-diary.html) and [*read more Metropolitan Diary here*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/metropolitan-diary).

Glad we could get together here. See you tomorrow. — J.B.

P.S. Here’s today’s [*Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/crosswords/game/mini) and [*Spelling Bee*](https://www.nytimes.com/puzzles/spelling-bee). [*You can find all our puzzles here*](https://www.nytimes.com/crosswords).

Melissa Guerrero, Colin Moynihan and Ed Shanahan contributed to New York Today. You can reach the team at [*nytoday@nytimes.com*](mailto:nytoday@nytimes.com)

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Melissa Guerrero, Colin Moynihan and Ed Shanahan contributed to New York Today. You can reach the team at [*nytoday@nytimes.com*](mailto:nytoday@nytimes.com)

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Winnie Au for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** November 29, 2022

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[***Running Down a Dream***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69R5-R421-DXY4-X03P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 26, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 18; NONFICTION

**Length:** 1437 words

**Byline:** By Roger Lowenstein

**Body**

In ''Ours Was the Shining Future,'' the New York Times writer David Leonhardt dissects the country's record on prosperity, arguing that progressive policies are best suited for achieving our ideals.

OURS WAS THE SHINING FUTURE: The Story of the American Dream, by David Leonhardt

David Leonhardt, a senior writer for The New York Times, has written a ''biography'' of the American dream, specifically -- as his title, ''Ours Was the Shining Future,'' suggests -- an account of how the dream has withered and all but died.

His striking contention, based on a study of census and income tax data by the Harvard economist Raj Chetty, is that where once the great majority of Americans could hope to earn more than their parents, now only half are likely to. Although the precise ratio depends on assumptions about inflation, and is less striking, as Chetty notes, when one takes into account shrinking household size, the general point is unquestionable. Economic progress used to define America. Now, Leonhardt finds ''stagnation in nearly every reliable measure of well-being.'' He arguably overstates the case -- for instance, median household income has generally continued to rise -- but the malady he identifies is real.

Leonhardt maintains that over the past 50 years the United States has gone off the rails by moving from a more regulated capitalism to a rough-and-tumble version that is more individualistic and market-centered. This shift, he asserts, has led to greater inequality and -- a causal logic that is harder to prove -- slower growth.

Leonhardt's chief culprit is the political system: in a phrase, too many Republicans, and the wrong kind of Republicans. In the 1950s, we had Dwight D. Eisenhower, a nonideological retired general who extended New Deal-era reforms and invested in one of the great infrastructure projects of the century, the national highway system. Business executives of Eisenhower's era were similarly socially minded. Nurtured by the twin crises of the Depression and World War II, they felt a common purpose with workers, tolerated unions and abided relatively modest executive pay.

Goodbye to all that. Come Ronald Reagan, Republicans traded the country club for the think tank. Conservative intellectuals and judges like Robert Bork (who was both) helped to change the culture and ultimately weakened both federal regulation and federal purpose.

The United States once had the world's most educated population and an impressive transportation system. Now, we don't. We also rank near the bottom among developed nations in providing pre-K classes. ''We have drifted from our ideals'' of ''equality, liberty, opportunity and democracy,'' Leonhardt writes, and, beginning in the mid-1970s, ''entered a dark new economic era.''

While Leonhardt is a man of progressive sympathies -- perhaps because of those sympathies -- he devotes plenty of ink to castigating Democrats. He charges them with abandoning bread-and-butter issues like labor unions and the minimum wage for neoliberal causes, such as free trade and unreserved support for immigration. He also laments the party's deep dive into identity politics, which has alienated ***working-class*** whites. The Democrats have become a party for college people.

Although this argument is familiar, ''Ours Was the Shining Future'' is not a familiar-feeling book. Leonhardt introduces every section with a historical vignette: A. Philip Randolph organizing train porters and winning raises of up to 30 percent for his union; Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins, the first woman to serve in a presidential cabinet, demanding that Franklin D. Roosevelt fight for unemployment insurance, disability and an eight-hour workday.

Leonhardt has clearly cherry-picked his anecdotes to make his case, but the stories enliven what could have been a dry or data-heavy polemic. They also advance his worldview: Policies and personalities have a great effect on economic progress.

If you think of the economy as something like an ecosystem, in which millions of self-interested agents interact through the medium of price, this is not the book for you. ''Ours Was the Shining Future'' offers a top-down view of economics. It's a book about capitalism in which the heavy lifting is done by presidents, progressives and union bosses -- not capitalists. In a sort of blue version of MAGA, Leonhardt is nostalgic for the era when C.E.O.s, unions and government officials ran the show. He has kind words not only for Roosevelt's necessary job and entitlement programs, but also for the New Deal's National Industrial Recovery Act, which mandated industry codes for fixing prices, wages and production quotas -- a vast experiment in planning that the Supreme Court mercifully scrapped.

It occurs to Leonhardt only in passing that investors, business people, journalists, retail clerks, stockbrokers and others among the 85 percent of workers in the country's private sector might contribute to its prosperity, thus this remarkably modest concession: ''A progressive agenda, from the political left, is not the only plausible way to lift the living standards of most members of a society.'' Well, thanks for that.

Leonhardt is fashionably focused on inequality to the almost total neglect of growth rates (where America generally ranks high). ''Living standards here,'' he notes, ''are vastly higher than in much of the world.'' That should count for something, but he repeatedly rates presidents, or their eras, by the yardstick of economic inequality.

What's missing is a sense that policies to equalize, such as trade barriers, often involve a trade-off -- benefits but also costs in the form of lost efficiency. He castigates President Clinton for being a Democratic version of Reagan, in particular for signing a free trade deal. He notes that upper-tier incomes grew more quickly under Clinton than wages at the bottom. Yet blue-collar wages notably revived, jobs boomed and the country flourished. Would blue-collar workers have given up prosperity in order to see investors suffer?

Clinton's other sin, according to Leonhardt, is that ''he did little to strengthen labor unions.'' Leonhardt posits unions as an unqualified blessing, dismissing out of hand, or merely paying lip service to, the possibility that unions might have pushed up wages and benefits -- in the automobile industry, say -- to the point where their sectors became uncompetitive. And he asserts as received truth that the decline of unions held down wages. It's also possible (something Leonhardt acknowledges) that as other nations rebuilt, or emerged, after World War II, America's competitive position naturally diminished. Thus declining union membership may have been more effect than cause.

Leonhardt knows that Americans have ''mixed feelings'' about labor unions; he had mixed feelings as a member of a union at The Times. His union reps ''seemed more interested in getting their own paychecks and reaching retirement than helping their members,'' he writes. When he left the union to enter the ranks of management, he felt frustrated by the union's ''resistance to change'' at a company ''that needed to evolve.'' Perhaps it has occurred to him that other companies also need to evolve.

Despite the implication of Leonhardt's stylized narrative, economic trends such as wages do not always line up neatly with political eras. Real wages, along with union membership, had begun to decline by the early 1970s -- well before the cultural triumph of the right in the Reagan years. The economic rebound under Reagan is inconvenient for Leonhardt, who maintains that conservative policies augur ill for growth. He marks down Reagan's economic performance as less spectacular than that of Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy or Lyndon B. Johnson. Maybe a more apt, and fairer, comparison would have been to Reagan's immediate (and weaker) predecessors: Nixon, Ford and Carter.

''Ours Was the Shining Future'' is an interesting book, with many provocative points, but I found it too tendentious to be the last word on the fate of the American dream. Leonhardt tells us that his book is ''for anybody trying to understand how our economy -- and, with it, our society -- has been hobbled.'' He concludes with a discussion of how progressives might win elections in the future. His partisan pitch may put off some of the anybodies he aims to reach.

Roger Lowenstein is the author of ''Ways and Means: Lincoln and His Cabinet and the Financing of the Civil War.''

OURS WAS THE SHINING FUTURE: The Story of the American Dream | By David Leonhardt | Random House | 492 pp. | $32

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/24/books/review/ours-was-the-shining-future-david-leonhardt.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/24/books/review/ours-was-the-shining-future-david-leonhardt.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Sanitation workers picketing at a landfill in New Jersey in 1984. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MARILYNN K. YEE/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page BR18.

**Load-Date:** November 26, 2023

**End of Document**



[***In Michigan, Two Candidates Offer Preview of the 2024 Race***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:698S-CT61-DXY4-X014-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 29, 2023 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 23; NEWS ANALYSIS

**Length:** 1071 words

**Byline:** By Katie Rogers

**Body**

The candidates' dueling styles were on clear display as the two men tried to woo voters affected by the United Automobile Workers strike.

It's going to be a long road to next November. And the first steps started this week.

President Biden and former President Donald J. Trump traveled to Michigan, one day after the other, to speak directly to ***working-class*** voters in what amounted to a preview of a likely 2024 campaign.

Their dueling styles were on clear display as the two men tried to woo voters affected by the United Automobile Workers strike. Mr. Biden has campaigned on a message of bolstering the middle class, protecting democratic norms and countering China. Mr. Trump, a criminal defendant several times over, has focused on vindicating himself, channeling conservative grievances and promoting America-first policies.

Their differences are not just ideological and tactical but stylistic. Mr. Trump prefers a boisterous event that lets him take center stage, and Mr. Biden, so far, has opted for small fund-raisers where he can burnish his Scranton Joe persona.

Voters have signaled that they would prefer a different set of options in 2024, but for now, the most likely choice is between the current and former president, who have sharply diverging visions for the future of the United States.

Raucous rallies, like the one he held on Wednesday, allow Mr. Trump to test his messaging and give him political oxygen to power through the next news cycle. On Wednesday, as seven other Republican presidential candidates gathered in California for a primary debate, Mr. Trump bragged about being ahead of the field -- at one point calling his rivals ''job candidates'' for a second Trump administration -- and brought his usual bluster to a crowd of several hundred at a nonunion manufacturing facility.

Guests circulated inside the facility, called Drake Enterprises, some wearing T-shirts emblazoned with Mr. Trump's mug shot and a telling caption: ''NEVER SURRENDER.''

In an hourlong speech, Mr. Trump castigated the Biden administration's clean-energy agenda, which includes a push for a transition to electric vehicles that has aggravated union workers who share his populist views on the economy.

''A vote for Crooked Joe means the future of the auto industry will be based in China,'' Mr. Trump told the crowd, warning that a transition to electric vehicles amounted to a ''transition to hell.'' He offered tepid support for the striking autoworkers, telling them that electric vehicles would undermine any success with a new contract: ''It doesn't make a damn bit of difference what you get because in two years you're all going to be out of business.''

Mr. Trump repeatedly overinflated the evening's crowd size, at one point falsely claiming that there were 9,000 people waiting outside the venue. But in Michigan, he did what Mr. Biden has not done yet: He pleaded for endorsements and votes.

''Your leadership should endorse me,'' Mr. Trump said, ''and I will not say a bad thing about them again and they will have done their job.''

Never a big fan of a rally, Mr. Biden, who has for decades presented himself as a champion of the middle class, has so far limited most of his campaign appearances to fund-raisers or receptions with supporters. At those events, he opts to shake hands in rope lines and share stories of his decades in politics. He also warns his supporters of the grave risk he feels Mr. Trump continues to pose to the country.

On Tuesday, before traveling to California for campaign events and a meeting with technology advisers, Mr. Biden became the first sitting president to join a picket line, visiting workers outside a General Motors facility in Belleville, Mich. -- a sign of how important it was for him to court a powerful political bloc whose ranks are no longer full of reliably Democratic voters.

''The middle class built this country,'' Mr. Biden told striking workers on Tuesday. ''And unions built the middle class. That's a fact.''

In his short appearance with workers -- Mr. Trump and several of supporters pointed out that the visit was only about 12 minutes -- Mr. Biden spoke briefly and turned a bullhorn over to Shawn Fain, the U.A.W. president.

Unlike Mr. Trump, the president did not take the chance to link his visit to Michigan to securing union backing. When asked if he hoped to receive the support of the U.A.W., which endorsed him in 2020 but has refrained so far out of complaints about his clean-energy agenda, Mr. Biden would only say, ''I'm not worried about that.''

Before Mr. Trump's visit on Wednesday, the Biden campaign released an ad targeting the former president's economic track record, accusing Mr. Trump of passing ''tax breaks for his rich friends while automakers shuttered their plants and Michigan lost manufacturing jobs.''

Age and energy have become prevailing concerns among voters about Mr. Biden, who spent this week crisscrossing the country. On Thursday, Mr. Biden, who is 80, delivered what was widely seen as a rebuttal to Mr. Trump's appearance and the Republican primary debate. In a speech in Tempe, Ariz., the president emphasized the importance of American institutions and the Constitution, and branded Mr. Trump's ''Make America Great Again'' movement a radical threat.

Mr. Trump, who is 77, relied on a teleprompter on Wednesday evening -- as does Mr. Biden when he delivers prepared remarks. He could not resist the occasional aside, including an extended complaint about the paint job on Air Force One -- ''so inelegant,'' said Mr. Trump, who tried to change the exterior of the plane when he was president. When he departed, he took his time navigating a set of stairs that led to the stage.

In recent appearances, Mr. Biden has spoken comparatively softly, and has tried to make light of concerns about his age. ''I've never been more optimistic about our country's future in the 800 years I've served,'' he said at a campaign event this month.

But at a reception in California on Wednesday, Mr. Biden had sharp words for his predecessor.

''We're running because our most important freedoms -- the right to choose, the right to vote, the right to be who you are, to love who you love -- has been attacked and shredded,'' the president told supporters. ''Donald Trump and the MAGA Republicans are determined to destroy American democracy because they want to break down institutional structures.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/28/us/politics/biden-trump-michigan.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/28/us/politics/biden-trump-michigan.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Clockwise from above: Autoworkers on strike in Wayne, Mich.

President Biden joined a picket line outside a G.M. facility in Belleville

former President Donald J. Trump at a rally in Clinton Township. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRITTANY GREESON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

PETE MAROVICH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A23.

**Load-Date:** September 29, 2023

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[***Should Right-Wing Populists Despair?; Ross Douthat***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6931-VCF1-DXY4-X01B-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 2, 2023 Saturday 11:28 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 950 words

**Byline:** Ross Douthat

**Highlight:** What Sohrab Ahmari’s doubts say about his former cause — and about the economy and culture.

**Body**

Over the last few weeks Sohrab Ahmari, well known as a leading intellectual exponent of a combative Trumpian conservatism, has been [*making the rounds*](https://www.newsweek.com/i-was-wrong-gop-will-never-party-working-class-opinion-1819644) explaining why he’s giving up on right-wing populism.

That’s a slight overstatement; his new book, [*“Tyranny, Inc.,”*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/708057/tyranny-inc-by-sohrab-ahmari/) on the cruelties of corporate power in America, bears blurbs from leading populist Republicans like Josh Hawley and Marco Rubio. But he describes these figures as “shining exceptions on the right,” whose willingness to consider interventionist economic policies contrasts with the broader trend in which populism is “[*turning into*](https://twitter.com/SohrabAhmari/status/1697595043312189852) a niche/trashy online-media product,” with no policy content beyond resentment of elites.

No doubt Ahmari’s liberal readers would respond, it’s always been that way! But part of the reason that the “Tyranny, Inc.” author and his circle earned so much attention in the Trump era is that the age of populism really did unsettle economic orthodoxies on the right.

The Trump administration often defaulted, as Ahmari laments, to warmed-over Reaganite policymaking. But Trump’s victorious campaign really did kill off, for a time at least, the Tea Party-era emphasis on entitlement reform and hard money. And Trump did follow through on elements of his economic nationalism — while the Biden administration has embraced similar ideas on trade and infrastructure, to the point where it’s fair to say that both parties have been reshaped by Trump’s ’16 campaign.

Meanwhile, a populist intellectual ecosystem exists on the right, through think tanks like [*American Compass*](https://americancompass.org/) and journals like [*American Affairs*](https://americanaffairsjournal.org/) and Ahmari’s own [*Compact*](https://compactmag.com/), where before the Trump era there was little more than a scattering of gadflies. The Hawley-Rubio-J.D. Vance faction in the Senate is small, but more influential than any past equivalent. And Trump himself, the Republican front-runner, is still making [*promises*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/03/03/politics/donald-trump-freedom-cities-flying-cars/index.html) — new cities! new tariffs! flying cars! — that smack more of industrial policy than supply-side economics.

So why is Ahmari despairing of his cause? In part, he’s reckoning with forces he probably underestimated before — the folk libertarianism of the G.O.P.’s donor base and the cynicism of its celebrity-industrial complex.

But then Ahmari is also disillusioned because, while remaining socially conservative, he has personally moved farther to the left than some of his fellow populists.

With its potent anecdotes of corporate malfeasance and its ([*somewhat overstated*](https://rlo.acton.org/archives/124783-tyranny-inc-and-the-future-of-american-labor.html)) account of the ruthlessness of American economic life, “Tyranny, Inc.” is a book more in the pessimistic spirit of Barbara Ehrenreich’s “Nickel and Dimed” than — well, to take a personal example, than “[*Grand New Party*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/42417/grand-new-party-by-ross-douthat-and-reihan-salam/),” the book I co-authored with Reihan Salam 15 years ago making the case for a more populist conservatism. Ahmari sometimes describes his view of American capitalism as close to that of Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren, and there is simply no way to infuse the full Sanders vision into the current Republican coalition; in that sense, he’s right to deem himself politically homeless.

Finally, though, Ahmari doesn’t always fully reckon with how recent material and cultural changes complicate his argument that cultural renewal depends on economic transformation — that “efforts to change the culture without reforming the economy are futile at best.”

If so, what should we make of the fact that the American economy was arguably worse, and yet the culture healthier, 10 or 20 years ago than today?

When Barack Obama ran for president, inequality had been rising since the 1980s and the health care safety net had a significant hole. When Trump ran for president, household income had been stagnating since 2000 and economic policymakers had let the unemployment rate stay unnecessarily high.

But today inequality [*may actually be declining*](https://www.noahpinion.blog/p/inequality-might-be-going-down-now), wages have [*risen generally*](https://www.aei.org/economics/wages-rising-the-trump-economy-is-now-working-best-for-lower-wage-workers/) and [*risen faster*](https://www.epi.org/publication/swa-wages-2022/) for the ***working class***, unemployment is extremely low and we are closer to universal health care than we were 20 years ago. Meanwhile, the big Biden-era problem for wage earners has been an inflation spike, which a Bernie Sanders agenda seems ill-equipped to solve.

Yet despite these economic improvements the cultural fabric looks more frayed than ever, with [*liberals*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2023/08/21/leaving-christianity-religion-church-community/?itid=lk_interstitial_manual_6) as well as conservatives [*fretting*](https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2023/08/does-marriage-make-you-happier/675145/) over the slow fade of church and family, with crime and homelessness returning to American cities while a haze of marijuana [*settles*](https://twitter.com/DouthatNYT/status/1696507781619003443) over twentysomethings, with a spiritual despair shadowing every social rank.

You can blame Covid for deepening this era of bad feelings. You can argue that our social malaise just shows economic improvements haven’t gone nearly far enough. And you can pin blame for certain social trends — internet addiction among teenagers, say — on bad actors in big business.

But in terms of priority and urgency, I wonder if Ahmari’s harder-edged social conservative side — the anti-pot, anti-porn, anti-crime aspects of his politics, let’s say — may actually be more relevant to our situation than the New-Deal-liberal side that’s earning him new interest from the left.

Cultural conservatism absolutely needs an economic policy, and corporate power absolutely shapes the culture. But our own social crisis feels a little less economically determined, a little more essentially cultural, in 2023 than at any previous moment in my adult life.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/31/opinion/letters/letters-to-editor-new-york-times-women.html) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://help.nytimes.com/hc/en-us/articles/115014925288-How-to-submit-a-letter-to-the-editor). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](mailto:letters@nytimes.com).

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PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAMON WINTER/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page SR3.

**Load-Date:** September 6, 2023

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[***Last Night in New York***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67K1-2981-DXY4-X4XY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 17, 2023 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; Movies, Performing Arts/Weekend Desk; Pg. 7

**Length:** 371 words

**Byline:** By Glenn Kenny

**Body**

A slew of well-off New Yorkers, many of them not very nice, sing the praises of their ''Boswell,'' David Patrick Columbia, in a new documentary.

David Patrick Columbia writes a near-daily online column called ''New York Social Diary,'' which chronicles the galas, dinners and benefits frequented by high-income patrician folk. His is a world in which people still answer to ''Muffie.'' Directed by Matthew Miele, who often quizzes his subject in a tone of almost goofy awe, ''Last Night in New York'' invites Columbia to explain his life and work.

Columbia, who appears to be in his 70s and looks like William Hurt preparing to play Samuel Beckett, speaks of his ***working class*** background and a family history that includes abuse and murder. He can be mildly moving, as when recalling his friendship with Debbie Reynolds. But with Columbia at its center -- he insists he's not overly impressed by the people who constitute his primary subject -- the movie can't help but function as an apologia for the ruling class. Early in the picture Columbia relates the high-society background of the music producer John Hammond (he was part Vanderbilt and raised in an Upper East Side mansion), perhaps hoping to make the point that rich people can be genuinely useful.

One doesn't expect to have one's stomach churned by such a documentary, but then -- wham! -- Taki Theodoracopulos, the writer and sometime publisher whose work has been known to steer into race-baiting (to put it mildly), turns up. Like several of the other interviewees in the picture, his insights are affecting, but not in a good way. ''He's the only man who appreciates John O'Hara,'' Theodoracopulos says of Columbia. This is, well, objectively not true.

Musing on previous society chroniclers, Blair Sabol, a colleague of Columbia's, says, ''Dominick Dunne and Truman [Capote] were bitchy.'' She continues, ''David is a handsome man. Those guys were trolls.'' Barbara Tober, a board chair of the New York Museum of Arts and Design, chimes in, without a hint of irony or humor, ''If you are in 'New York Social Diary,' you exist. If you're not, you don't.''

Last Night in New YorkNot rated. Running time: 1 hour 38 minutes. Rent or buy on most major platforms.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/14/movies/last-night-in-new-york-review.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/14/movies/last-night-in-new-york-review.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page C7.

**Load-Date:** February 17, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Imagining That the Royals Still Reign***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:689X-1N71-JBG3-6358-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 26, 2023 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; Movies, Performing Arts/Weekend Desk; Pg. 6

**Length:** 598 words

**Byline:** By Amy Nicholson

**Body**

Or, at least, he kinda-sorta tries to rebel in this romantic, futuristic fable from the Portuguese director João Pedro Rodrigues.

''Will-o'-the-Wisp,'' an off-balance provocation from the Portuguese titillater João Pedro Rodrigues, is a prank in fancy dress, a plastic boutonniere that squirts battery acid. The joke is on everyone, particularly the powerful and those holding out hope that the powerful will save the planet.

Portugal booted its monarchy in 1910, but in this alternate timeline, the royals still reign. When the do-gooder prince, Alfredo (Mauro Costa), shocks his family by becoming a firefighter, Rodrigues drops him into an eroticized firehouse for a beefcake feast, concocting a calendar shoot to bend the fighters into, um, suggestive poses. Later, the director assembles a slide show of genitalia which the waify blond prince and his ***working-class*** Black lover, Afonso (André Cabral), liken to various climates. (Petrified forest, barren grassland -- you won't have to strain your imagination to see the resemblance.)

The movie, co-written by Rodrigues, João Rui Guerra da Mata and Paulo Lopes Graça, opens with Alfredo on his deathbed in 2069 -- the film's most subtle sexual reference. Then it flashes back to the prince's youth, where he's escorted through ancient pines by the king (Miguel Loureiro). Some viewers might recognize the woods as the Leiria Pine Forest whose timber and sap built the ships that built the Portuguese empire. The Leiria was decimated by wildfires in 2017, and the interstitial titles -- ''Slash and Burn,'' ''Charred,'' and so on -- make it clear that a blaze is coming for everyone. Smoke wafts through the palace while the conservative queen (Margarida Vila-Nova) putters around anxiously snuffing candles.

[Video: Watch on YouTube.]

The symbolism is blunt, and the film's style, striking and severe. Scenes are staged as precisely as painted tableaus, with handsome shadows and gratuitous whippets. At one point, the prince stands at the dinner table and delivers Greta Thunberg's U.N. Climate Action Summit address straight to the camera -- ''The eyes of all future generations are upon you'' -- as though to convince the audience he kinda-sorta tried to get his parents to do something. Unmoved, his mother instead fusses over a more politically correct title for the family's 18th-century oil portrait, a mocking depiction of eight Black and Indigenous dwarfs who were collected by Queen Maria I of Portugal (and of Brazil, where she was called Maria the Mad).

We already know that the prince won't grow up to fix much. (Ingeniously, the cinematographer Rui Poças and the sound editor Nuno Carvalho evoke a desolate, airship-patrolled future using only a shadow and a loudspeaker.) But he keeps that portrait, which inspires reveries of his affair with Afonso. Their fleeting moments of joy make up the bulk of the running time. Rodrigues's mind is on social upheaval, but his heart is with Afonso's lavishly lit abdomen and the parts just below.

Rodrigues blows past good taste with an explicit tête-à-tête in the scorched forest where his brave leading men pant racial slurs into each other's nether regions. It's a rough watch, but Rodrigues balances this shocker with a scene of shocking loveliness: a dance number where the pair's slight stiffness makes their burst of emotional expression feel tender and sincere.

Will-o'-the-WispNot rated. In Portuguese, with subtitles. Running time: 1 hour 7 minutes. In theaters.Will-o'-the-WispNot rated. In Portuguese, with subtitles. Running time: 1 hour 7 minutes. In theaters.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/25/movies/will-o-the-wisp-review.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/25/movies/will-o-the-wisp-review.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Mauro Costa, left, and André Cabral in ''Will-o'-the-Wisp,'' directed by João Pedro Rodrigues. (PHOTOGRAPH BY STRAND RELEASING) This article appeared in print on page C6.

**Load-Date:** May 26, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Romney Has Given Us a Gift***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:695S-SB61-JBG3-643V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 15, 2023 Friday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2023 The New York Times Company

**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 23; DAVID BROOKS

**Length:** 919 words

**Byline:** By David Brooks

**Body**

Sometimes you do things that make you feel ashamed. It was the first day of the Republican convention in 2012, and I had nothing to write about, so I wrote a humor column mocking the Romney family for being perfect in every way. It was a hit with readers, but the afternoon it was published, I crossed paths with two of Mitt Romney's sons, and they looked at me with hurt in their eyes, which pierced me. I'd ridiculed people for the sin of being admirable.

A few years later, before he was a senator, Romney asked me to come out to Utah to give a talk to a group he was convening. It's a pain to write a speech and get on a plane, but I did it in penance for my sins. Of course, all the Romneys were lovely to me, as is their nature. And I learned a lesson: The partisans may applaud if you ridicule those you admire, of any political stripe, but stay faithful to them.

We all struggle to be the best version of ourselves we can be, and Romney's struggle is now taking him into retirement and out of the Senate. On the way he gave us a gift, in the form of a series of conversations with The Atlantic's McKay Coppins, who has written a book on him, excerpted in the magazine.

Romney puts on the record what so many of us have been hearing for years off the record -- that the Republican Party has become a party of fakers, that its congressional leaders laugh at Donald Trump contemptuously behind his back while swooning over him before the cameras.

Mitch McConnell is the tragic figure in Romney's tale. He comes across as -- and I believe actually is -- a decent man who is trying to mitigate the worst of Trump's effect on his party. But we see the daily corrosions that McConnell must endure to keep up this front -- turning a blind eye to Trump's crimes, turning a blind eye to the threats that were coming in the lead-up to Jan 6.

At one point, McConnell resorts to the rationalization we've heard a thousand times -- that if Trump loses and the Democrats win, they will pass a hard-left agenda that will ruin America forever. McConnell has to exaggerate how radical Joe Biden is, and what the electorate will support, in order to justify supporting his own party's lamentable leader.

McConnell's core problem is that you can't negotiate with narcissism. Every time you make a concession to Trump's selfishness, it voraciously seeks to devour another pound of your flesh.

Paul Ryan also makes a sad appearance in this story. Romney tells Coppins that Ryan called him during the first impeachment trial, seemingly lobbying Romney to acquit. Preserve your viability with Republicans, Ryan advises; preserve your ability to do good.

It's advice that once seemed plausible and that guided many upright people to enter the Trump administration as voices of sanity. The first problem with it is that the cult of Trumpism demands absolute fealty. One moment of honest dissent, and you are cast from the ranks. The second problem is that loyalty to Trump is ultimately enforced by the threat of violence. As the Coppins piece makes clear, there were Republicans who chose not to vote yes on impeachment or conviction because the outcome either way was inevitable and because they didn't want potential assassins coming after them or their families. We have gone beyond the bounds of normal democratic governance.

The third problem is that if you ally yourself with a con artist, you have to become part of the con yourself. You have to become Ted Cruz, who went to Princeton and Harvard Law and is married to an employee of Goldman Sachs, ludicrously popping a brewski live on TV -- an elite nerd's attempt to appear populist.

Over the Trump years, we've learned how easy it is to anesthetize one's moral circuits. John McCain kept his moral compass, and so did Romney, but they are the exceptions. Many others joined the general fakery. You start by lying about yourself, and pretty soon you're lying to yourself.

The pivotal moment for Romney seems to have come on Jan. 6 -- not what the insurrectionists did to get into the Capitol but what the Republican legislators did in the chambers after the rioters had been cleared out, continuing their efforts to negate the election. This is where five years of negotiating with narcissism had brought the party.

Romney's retirement, which goes into effect in 2025, will mark the end of an era, the end of the Republican Party that once featured people like Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt and more recently George Romney, Mitt's father, and George H.W. Bush. Realistically, Romney will have little role in trying to produce a better G.O.P. future. What replaces Trumpism will be different from what came before.

I admire him for deciding to step down at the senatorially young age of 76. As we've all come to see, the hunger for continued relevance is the corroding lust that devours the very old. Romney stands for the valuable idea that there are things more important in life than politics and winning elections.

The G.O.P. needed to change and become more in touch with the ***working class*** -- but not in the vicious way Trump has championed. As long as Trump is leading it, the Republican Party cannot be reformed. It can only be deprived of power.

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**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANNA MONEYMAKER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A23.

**Load-Date:** September 15, 2023

**End of Document**



[***How Reagan Fared Better In Economy Like Biden's***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69K9-F021-DXY4-X0M1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 8, 2023 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2023 The New York Times Company

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

**Length:** 1304 words

**Byline:** By Jim Tankersley

**Body**

Seeking re-election in 1984, Ronald Reagan presided over an economy similar in many ways to today's. But he sold a message of progress and promise.

President Ronald Reagan rode a ''Morning in America'' message to a blowout re-election victory in 1984, based partly on warm feelings about his economic performance. Today's economy is similar in many ways to Mr. Reagan's as he entered that campaign, with one big difference: There is widespread voter angst over the incumbent's economic stewardship.

A New York Times/Siena College poll shows President Biden trailing his likely Republican opponent, former President Donald J. Trump, in key battleground states. Poll respondents rate the economy poorly and say they trust Mr. Trump more to fix it. That's true even though the economy grew faster and added more jobs over the last year than forecasters expected, while inflation fell sharply from what had been a four-decade high.

In public and private conversations, and in consultation with outside economists and other experts, Mr. Biden's economic team has been consumed with that disconnect: Why do Americans remain so down on the economy when economic data are trending up?

The answer is almost certainly some combination of how Americans process the economic moment and how Mr. Biden communicates about it.

In both cases, the contrast with Mr. Reagan -- and with the economic environment of the early 1980s -- is instructive.

In the fall of 1983, Mr. Reagan's re-election was not assured. The nation was still emerging from a recession that had marred his first two years in office. Consumer prices had risen more than 15 percent since he took office -- nearly as much as they have risen on Mr. Biden's watch. Translated into today's dollars, the price of a gallon of gasoline was about $3.80, about 40 cents higher than it is now. The typical American's wages had not increased at all during Mr. Reagan's tenure, after adjustment for higher prices, similar to Mr. Biden's experience.

But public faith in the economy, and in Mr. Reagan's handling of it, was significantly stronger than it is for Mr. Biden.

The University of Michigan's Index of Consumer Sentiment was roughly 50 percent higher under Mr. Reagan in the fall of 1983 than it is now. Polls showed his approval rating climbing, including sentiment on the economy, in a reversal from the start of the year.

A year later, Mr. Reagan would air ''Prouder, Stronger, Better,'' a television ad that began with the words ''It's morning again in America.'' It highlighted falling inflation and lower interest rates allowing more Americans to buy a home.

Mr. Reagan's appeals worked in part because Americans had just endured more than a decade of persistently high prices and high interest rates. Economists and historians generally agree that voters came to see the progress under Mr. Reagan as relief from a long, difficult period.

Voter psychology is very different under Mr. Biden. The 9 percent annual inflation rate that the country experienced last year was more than triple the average rate from the end of Mr. Reagan's time in the White House to the start of Mr. Biden's. Those mortgage rates Mr. Reagan trumpeted? They were around 14 percent in 1984. Right now, rates are just below 8 percent. The difference is that under Mr. Reagan, rates fell, and under Mr. Biden, they've gone up.

For Mr. Biden and his economic team, ''the problem is really in the way people think about and process economic information, rather than the economic fundamentals,'' said Francesco D'Acunto, an economist at Georgetown University's McDonough School of Business who recently briefed the White House Council of Economic Advisers.

Mr. D'Acunto presented slides at the White House highlighting work he and colleagues have done, drilling down into how consumers process price increases. They find that consumers' attitudes are shaped most by the products they buy most often -- like milk, gasoline, bread and beer -- and not by the things they spend the most money on.

They also find that unexpected price surges stick in shoppers' minds, negatively. They linger in a way that slower-building price increases, or even prolonged periods of high prices, do not.

That research helps explain why voters did not punish Mr. Reagan for inflation even though the price growth he oversaw never reversed itself: They were accustomed to rapid price growth and grateful for improvement.

One overly simplistic explanation for Mr. Biden's woes is that voters are waiting for prices to fall back to their prepandemic levels. If that were true, Mr. Biden would almost certainly be doomed electorally. On the whole, the path of prices across American history is an upward march.

But Mr. D'Acunto says his research suggests that Mr. Biden might be able to brighten voters' moods by mounting a public persuasion campaign, focusing on prices that have begun to come down from recent highs. That includes consumer electronics like smartphones and computers, which are less expensive today than they were a year ago, on average, and which are often large-dollar purchases.

Mr. Biden's campaign recently spent $25 million on television ads to promote ''Bidenomics'' -- a mix of the president's blue-collar background and policy blueprint that is meant to resonate with the ***working class***. It includes an ad focusing on a provision in the Inflation Reduction Act, which Mr. Biden signed last year, that seeks to reduce the cost of prescription drugs through Medicare. Campaign aides say it is scoring well in surveys with viewers.

There is little evidence in polls that those efforts have broken through. Biden aides say they did not expect immediate results. They are testing messages, they say, including how best to talk about Mr. Biden's economic record, as the president prepares to spend $1 billion or more in advertising before the election.

Aides also insist that continued economic improvement will eventually punch through to the public. They contend that continued wage growth will restore some of the buying power Americans lost to recent inflation, and that consumers will gradually acclimate to prices that are higher than what they were used to before the pandemic.

''What the president brings to the table is a deep and effective pro-worker agenda that's maintaining a great job market, putting downward pressure on prices,'' Jared Bernstein, the chair of the Council of Economic Advisers, said in an interview. ''I understand that hasn't reached the sentiment indexes yet. But I'm confident it will.''

Some Democrats worry that Mr. Biden himself is a barrier to getting that message through, particularly to younger voters who express concerns over his age. Campaign officials say his direct appeals resonate well in tests. The Reagan comparison offers evidence for both sides.

Economic surveys have become more politicized in recent years, with Republicans in particular resistant to praising the economy's performance with a Democrat in office. Still, components of the Michigan survey suggest that Mr. Reagan had far more success than Mr. Biden as an economic cheerleader.

Mr. Reagan made a habit of both championing the economy's performance and critiquing press coverage of its flaws. At this point in his presidency, Americans were far more likely to report hearing positive news about the economy and prices than they do under Mr. Biden. They even reported hearing better news on unemployment, at a time when the rate was near 9 percent. It is under 4 percent today.

Mr. Biden has often tried to strike more of a balance between celebrating strong job growth and acknowledging the pain of high prices. He has leaned more into boosterism in recent months -- as the share of Americans reporting in the Michigan index that they hear good economic news has grown.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/07/business/economy/biden-economy.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/07/business/economy/biden-economy.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: President Biden meeting attendees at an event in Northfield, Minn., last week. Aides say they are testing messages that convey Mr. Biden's economic record. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KENT NISHIMURA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (B4) This article appeared in print on page B1, B4.

**Load-Date:** November 8, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Saying He's 'Bullish on San Francisco,' Levi Strauss Heir Wants to Be Mayor***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:698B-DDX1-DXY4-X0P0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 27, 2023 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2023 The New York Times Company

**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 12

**Length:** 1066 words

**Byline:** By Heather Knight

**Body**

Daniel Lurie, 46, said he would run for mayor next year, at a time when many voters in the city are in a sour mood.

Daniel Lurie, an heir to the Levi Strauss clothing fortune, announced on Tuesday that he would run against Mayor London Breed of San Francisco next year, at a time when the city is struggling to overcome a number of crises in its downtown core.

Mr. Lurie, 46, planned to launch his campaign Tuesday at a community center in the city's Potrero Hill neighborhood, a longtime ***working-class*** area now dotted with multimillion-dollar homes and upscale shops. His entrance in the race signals that Ms. Breed may be vulnerable in her bid for re-election and may have lost the support of some moderate allies.

Mr. Lurie said in an interview that he intended to campaign on solving the city's quality-of-life problems, and that he blames Ms. Breed for doing too little to tackle them.

Mr. Lurie is the founder of Tipping Point, an anti-poverty nonprofit. He said that he decided to run for mayor when he was walking his 9-year-old son and 12-year-old daughter to school, and they saw a man stumbling down the street, naked and screaming.

Noting that nobody did anything about the situation, himself included, he said he was troubled that city leaders and residents had apparently grown numb to such scenes.

''Our kids have come to a place where they're inured,'' he said. ''It's almost like they accept it, which is not OK.''

Though many San Francisco neighborhoods came through the pandemic relatively unscathed, the city's downtown has suffered. Offices have been left vacant while employees work remotely at home. Retailers have struggled, while homeless encampments, fentanyl overdoses and property crimes have endured as serious problems.

Mr. Lurie said Ms. Breed had accomplished little, even though voters approved higher taxes to finance homeless services and low-income housing. He said that as mayor, he would add more psychiatric beds to the city's hospitals, expand the shelter system and pay homeless people to clean the sidewalks.

He also said he would place more police officers on the streets and compel more people who are severely mentally ill into treatment, even if they refuse care. San Francisco is one of seven counties in California that will begin a court program this fall with the authority to force people with severe mental illness to be hospitalized if they refuse treatment.

Maggie Muir, a spokeswoman for Ms. Breed's campaign, said Mr. Lurie's platform did not depart from what the mayor was already trying to do. The only difference, she said, was that Mr. Lurie lacked government experience.

''Mayor Breed is working every day to make San Francisco safer and cleaner,'' Ms. Muir said. ''Why should we trust a beginner to accomplish these things faster?''

Ms. Breed, 49, and Mr. Lurie are both San Francisco natives and Democrats, but have very different backgrounds. Ms. Breed, the first Black woman to lead the city, was raised by her grandmother in public housing near City Hall, and now rents an apartment in the Lower Haight, a lively neighborhood popular among young tenants for its restaurants, nightclubs and colorful Victorian homes.

Few San Francisco residents have family ties -- or riches -- that extend as far back in the city as Mr. Lurie's do. When he was a young child, his mother married Peter Haas, a great grand-nephew of Levi Strauss, the German immigrant who opened a dry goods shop in San Francisco in 1853, when the city was bustling with new arrivals seeking gold in the Sierra Nevada foothills. Mr. Strauss found his own fortune by making durable denim pants for miners, and his company is still synonymous with bluejeans today.

Mr. Lurie's mother, Mimi Haas, is a billionaire. His father, Rabbi Brian Lurie, was the executive director of the Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco. Daniel Lurie is living in Potrero Hill temporarily while his house in Pacific Heights, the wealthy residential area where he grew up, is being renovated.

Defeating an incumbent mayor in San Francisco is rarer than a fog-free day in summer; it last happened 28 years ago, when Willie Brown beat Frank Jordan, a former police chief. Unlike Mr. Lurie, Mr. Brown entered that race with extraordinary name recognition, having served as speaker of the California State Assembly for nearly 15 years.

Even so, Mayor Breed appears vulnerable as the November 2024 election approaches. While San Francisco residents fiercely defend their city against critics, few are sticking up for her. In poll after poll, city residents have said the city is on the wrong track and that Breed is mishandling the city's recovery from the pandemic. Her approval ratings hover at about 33 percent.

Mr. Lurie joins a mayoral field that so far has just one other challenger: Ahsha Safaí, a San Francisco supervisor and a Democrat, who has centered his campaign on addressing retail theft and expanding the number of police officers. San Francisco will hold one nonpartisan contest for mayor next year, using a system that allows voters to rank their preferred candidates in order. If no candidate wins a majority of first-choice votes, the ranked order would determine the winner and avoid a runoff.

San Francisco voters have been in a foul mood. In 2022, they recalled Chesa Boudin, the district attorney, and three members of the school board. Local political consultants said that Ms. Breed was at risk, but that Mr. Lurie will have to overcome progressive voters' skepticism toward a wealthy candidate, as well as a lack of experience.

''He hasn't gained traction with even the business community as a strong leader who actually has the know-how and spine to shake things up,'' said Jim Stearns, a San Francisco political consultant who has worked on past San Francisco campaigns but is not involved in the mayoral race.

Mr. Lurie said that he wants to use his privilege to help the city -- and that he would ensure that his administration is as ethnically diverse as the city itself.

Asked to name the mayor he most admires, Mr. Lurie pointed to Mr. Brown of San Francisco and to Michael Bloomberg of New York City, both known for their pro-business, moderate politics.

''Whatever you think of them, they got stuff done,'' Mr. Lurie said. ''I am bullish on San Francisco, and I'm looking forward to helping put this city back on the right track.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/26/us/san-francisco-mayor-levis-daniel-lurie.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/26/us/san-francisco-mayor-levis-daniel-lurie.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: In 2024, Daniel Lurie is looking to unseat Mayor London Breed, whose approval ratings currently hover at about 33 percent. (PHOTOGRAPH BY GANI PIÑERO) This article appeared in print on page A12.

**Load-Date:** September 27, 2023

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[***Mitt Romney Has Given Us a Gift; David Brooks***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:695M-VGN1-DXY4-X01S-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 14, 2023 Thursday 20:48 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 929 words

**Byline:** David Brooks

**Highlight:** You can’t negotiate with narcissism.

**Body**

Sometimes you do things that make you feel ashamed. It was the first day of the Republican convention in 2012, and I had nothing to write about, so I wrote a humor column mocking the Romney family for being perfect in every way. It was a hit with readers, but the afternoon it was published, I crossed paths with two of Mitt Romney’s sons, and they looked at me with hurt in their eyes, which pierced me. I’d ridiculed people for the sin of being admirable.

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We all struggle to be the best version of ourselves we can be, and Romney’s struggle is now taking him into retirement and out of the Senate. On the way he gave us a gift, in the form of a series of conversations with The Atlantic’s McKay Coppins, who has written a book on him, [*excerpted*](https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2023/11/mitt-romney-retiring-senate-trump-mcconnell/675306/) in the magazine.

Romney puts on the record what so many of us have been hearing for years off the record — that the Republican Party has become a party of fakers, that its congressional leaders laugh at Donald Trump contemptuously behind his back while swooning over him before the cameras.

Mitch McConnell is the tragic figure in Romney’s tale. He comes across as — and I believe actually is — a decent man who is trying to mitigate the worst of Trump’s effect on his party. But we see the daily corrosions that McConnell must endure to keep up this front — turning a blind eye to Trump’s crimes, turning a blind eye to the threats that were coming in the lead-up to Jan 6.

At one point, McConnell resorts to the rationalization we’ve heard a thousand times — that if Trump loses and the Democrats win, they will pass a hard-left agenda that will ruin America forever. McConnell has to exaggerate how radical Joe Biden is, and what the electorate will support, in order to justify supporting his own party’s lamentable leader.

McConnell’s core problem is that you can’t negotiate with narcissism. Every time you make a concession to Trump’s selfishness, it voraciously seeks to devour another pound of your flesh.

Paul Ryan also makes a sad appearance in this story. Romney tells Coppins that Ryan called him during the first impeachment trial, seemingly lobbying Romney to acquit. Preserve your viability with Republicans, Ryan advises; preserve your ability to do good.

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The third problem is that if you ally yourself with a con artist, you have to become part of the con yourself. You have to become Ted Cruz, who went to Princeton and Harvard Law and is married to an employee of Goldman Sachs, ludicrously [*popping a brewski*](https://www.mediaite.com/tv/kiss-my-ass-ted-cruz-a-newsmax-host-and-a-group-of-fellas-walk-into-a-bar/) live on TV — an elite nerd’s attempt to appear populist.

Over the Trump years, we’ve learned how easy it is to anesthetize one’s moral circuits. John McCain kept his moral compass, and so did Romney, but they are the exceptions. Many others joined the general fakery. You start by lying about yourself, and pretty soon you’re lying to yourself.

The pivotal moment for Romney seems to have come on Jan. 6 — not what the insurrectionists did to get into the Capitol but what the Republican legislators did in the chambers after the rioters had been cleared out, continuing their efforts to negate the election. This is where five years of negotiating with narcissism had brought the party.

Romney’s retirement, which goes into effect in 2025, will mark the end of an era, the end of the Republican Party that once featured people like Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt and more recently George Romney, Mitt’s father, and George H.W. Bush. Realistically, Romney will have little role in trying to produce a better G.O.P. future. What replaces Trumpism will be different from what came before.

I admire him for deciding to step down at the senatorially young age of 76. As we’ve all come to see, the hunger for continued relevance is the corroding lust that devours the very old. Romney stands for the valuable idea that there are things more important in life than politics and winning elections.

The G.O.P. needed to change and become more in touch with the ***working class*** — but not in the vicious way Trump has championed. As long as Trump is leading it, the Republican Party cannot be reformed. It can only be deprived of power.

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PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANNA MONEYMAKER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A23.

**Load-Date:** September 14, 2023

**End of Document**



[***‘Morning in America’ Eludes Biden, Despite Economic Gains; News Analysis***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69K5-NX41-DXY4-X0DW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 7, 2023 Tuesday 12:15 EST

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**Section:** BUSINESS; economy

**Length:** 1337 words

**Byline:** Jim Tankersley

**Highlight:** Seeking re-election in 1984, Ronald Reagan presided over an economy similar in many ways to today’s. But he sold a message of progress and promise.

**Body**

Seeking re-election in 1984, Ronald Reagan presided over an economy similar in many ways to today’s. But he sold a message of progress and promise.

President Ronald Reagan rode a [*“Morning in America”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/08/business/the-ad-that-helped-reagan-sell-good-times-to-an-uncertain-nation.html) message to a blowout re-election victory in 1984, based partly on warm feelings about his economic performance. Today’s economy is similar in many ways to Mr. Reagan’s as he entered that campaign, with one big difference: There is widespread voter angst over the incumbent’s economic stewardship.

A [*New York Times/Siena College*](https://www.nytimes.com/news-event/times-siena-poll-coverage) poll shows President Biden trailing his likely Republican opponent, former President Donald J. Trump, in key battleground states. Poll respondents rate the economy poorly and say they trust Mr. Trump more to fix it. That’s true even though the economy grew faster and added more jobs over the last year than forecasters expected, while inflation fell sharply from what had been a four-decade high.

In public and private conversations, and in consultation with outside economists and other experts, Mr. Biden’s economic team has been consumed with that disconnect: Why do Americans remain so down on the economy when economic data are trending up?

The answer is almost certainly some combination of how Americans process the economic moment and how Mr. Biden communicates about it.

In both cases, the contrast with Mr. Reagan — and with the economic environment of the early 1980s — is instructive.

In the fall of 1983, Mr. Reagan’s re-election was not assured. The nation was still emerging from a recession that had marred his first two years in office. Consumer prices had risen more than 15 percent since he took office — nearly as much as they have risen on Mr. Biden’s watch. Translated into today’s dollars, the price of a gallon of gasoline was about $3.80, about 40 cents higher than [*it is now*](https://gasprices.aaa.com/). The typical American’s wages had not increased at all during Mr. Reagan’s tenure, after adjustment for higher prices, similar to Mr. Biden’s experience.

But public faith in the economy, and in Mr. Reagan’s handling of it, was significantly stronger than it is for Mr. Biden.

The University of Michigan’s Index of Consumer Sentiment was roughly 50 percent higher under Mr. Reagan in the fall of 1983 than it is now. [*Polls showed*](https://www.nytimes.com/1983/07/03/us/public-s-approval-of-reagan-in-poll-rising-but-limited.html) his approval rating climbing, including sentiment on the economy, in a reversal from the start of the year.

A year later, Mr. Reagan would air “Prouder, Stronger, Better,” a television ad that began with the words “[*It’s morning again in America*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pUMqic2IcWA).” It highlighted falling inflation and lower interest rates allowing more Americans to buy a home.

Mr. Reagan’s appeals worked in part because Americans had just endured more than a decade of persistently high prices and high interest rates. Economists and historians generally agree that voters came to see the progress under Mr. Reagan as relief from a long, difficult period.

Voter psychology is very different under Mr. Biden. The 9 percent annual inflation rate that the country experienced last year was more than triple the average rate from the end of Mr. Reagan’s time in the White House to the start of Mr. Biden’s. Those mortgage rates Mr. Reagan trumpeted? They were around 14 percent in 1984. Right now, rates are just below 8 percent. The difference is that under Mr. Reagan, rates fell, and under Mr. Biden, they’ve gone up.

For Mr. Biden and his economic team, “the problem is really in the way people think about and process economic information, rather than the economic fundamentals,” said Francesco D’Acunto, an economist at Georgetown University’s McDonough School of Business who recently briefed the White House Council of Economic Advisers.

Mr. D’Acunto presented slides at the White House highlighting work he and colleagues have done, drilling down into how consumers process price increases. They find that consumers’ attitudes are shaped most by the products they buy most often — like milk, gasoline, bread and beer — and not by the things they spend the most money on.

They also find that unexpected price surges stick in shoppers’ minds, negatively. They linger in a way that slower-building price increases, or even prolonged periods of high prices, do not.

That research helps explain why voters did not punish Mr. Reagan for inflation even though the price growth he oversaw never reversed itself: They were accustomed to rapid price growth and grateful for improvement.

One overly simplistic explanation for Mr. Biden’s woes is that voters are waiting for prices to fall back to their prepandemic levels. If that were true, Mr. Biden would almost certainly be doomed electorally. On the whole, the path of prices across American history is an upward march.

But Mr. D’Acunto says his research suggests that Mr. Biden might be able to brighten voters’ moods by mounting a public persuasion campaign, focusing on prices that have begun to come down from recent highs. That includes consumer electronics like smartphones and computers, which are less expensive today than they were a year ago, on average, and which are often large-dollar purchases.

Mr. Biden’s campaign recently spent $25 million on television ads to promote “Bidenomics” — a mix of the president’s blue-collar background and policy blueprint that is meant to resonate with the ***working class***. It includes an ad focusing on a provision in the Inflation Reduction Act, which Mr. Biden signed last year, that seeks to reduce the cost of prescription drugs through Medicare. Campaign aides say it is scoring well in surveys with viewers.

There is little evidence in polls that those efforts have broken through. Biden aides say they did not expect immediate results. They are testing messages, they say, including how best to talk about Mr. Biden’s economic record, as the president prepares to spend $1 billion or more in advertising before the election.

Aides also insist that continued economic improvement will eventually punch through to the public. They contend that continued wage growth will restore some of the buying power Americans lost to recent inflation, and that consumers will gradually acclimate to prices that are higher than what they were used to before the pandemic.

“What the president brings to the table is a deep and effective pro-worker agenda that’s maintaining a great job market, putting downward pressure on prices,” Jared Bernstein, the chair of the Council of Economic Advisers, said in an interview. “I understand that hasn’t reached the sentiment indexes yet. But I’m confident it will.”

Some Democrats worry that Mr. Biden himself is a barrier to getting that message through, particularly to younger voters who express concerns over his age. Campaign officials say his direct appeals resonate well in tests. The Reagan comparison offers evidence for both sides.

Economic surveys have become more politicized in recent years, with Republicans in particular resistant to praising the economy’s performance with a Democrat in office. Still, components of the Michigan survey suggest that Mr. Reagan had far more success than Mr. Biden as an economic cheerleader.

Mr. Reagan made a habit of both championing the economy’s performance and critiquing press coverage of its flaws. At this point in his presidency, Americans were far more likely to report hearing positive news about the economy and prices than they do under Mr. Biden. They even reported hearing better news on unemployment, at a time when the rate was near 9 percent. It is under 4 percent today.

Mr. Biden has often tried to strike more of a balance between celebrating strong job growth and acknowledging the pain of high prices. He has leaned more into boosterism in recent months — as the share of Americans reporting in the Michigan index that they hear good economic news has grown.

PHOTO: President Biden meeting attendees at an event in Northfield, Minn., last week. Aides say they are testing messages that convey Mr. Biden’s economic record. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KENT NISHIMURA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (B4) This article appeared in print on page B1, B4.

**Load-Date:** November 8, 2023

**End of Document**



[***‘Last Night in New York’ Review: A Social Chronicler Explains Himself***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67JC-V7J1-JBG3-60Y6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 14, 2023 Tuesday 17:13 EST

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**Section:** MOVIES

**Length:** 373 words

**Byline:** Glenn Kenny

**Highlight:** A slew of well-off New Yorkers, many of them not very nice, sing the praises of their “Boswell,” David Patrick Columbia, in a new documentary.

**Body**

A slew of well-off New Yorkers, many of them not very nice, sing the praises of their “Boswell,” David Patrick Columbia, in a new documentary.

David Patrick Columbia writes a near-daily online column called “[*New York Social Diary*](https://www.newyorksocialdiary.com/),” which chronicles the galas, dinners and benefits frequented by high-income patrician folk. His is a world in which people still answer to “Muffie.” Directed by Matthew Miele, who often quizzes his subject in a tone of almost goofy awe, “Last Night in New York” invites [*Columbia*](https://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/05/nyregion/thecity/05colu.html) to explain his life and work.

Columbia, who appears to be in his 70s and looks like William Hurt preparing to play Samuel Beckett, speaks of his ***working class*** background and a family history that includes abuse and murder. He can be mildly moving, as when recalling his friendship with Debbie Reynolds. But with Columbia at its center — he insists he’s not overly impressed by the people who constitute his primary subject — the movie can’t help but function as an apologia for the ruling class. Early in the picture Columbia relates the high-society background of the music producer John Hammond (he was part Vanderbilt and raised in an Upper East Side mansion), perhaps hoping to make the point that rich people can be genuinely useful.

One doesn’t expect to have one’s stomach churned by such a documentary, but then — wham! — Taki Theodoracopulos, the writer and sometime publisher [*whose work has been known to steer into race-baiting*](https://www.nytimes.com/1997/06/28/nyregion/mayor-denounces-article-that-had-slurs.html) (to put it mildly), turns up. Like several of the other interviewees in the picture, his insights are affecting, but not in a good way. “He’s the only man who appreciates John O’Hara,” Theodoracopulos says of Columbia. This is, well, objectively not true.

Musing on previous society chroniclers, Blair Sabol, a colleague of Columbia’s, says, “Dominick Dunne and Truman [Capote] were bitchy.” She continues, “David is a handsome man. Those guys were trolls.” Barbara Tober, a board chair of the New York Museum of Arts and Design, chimes in, without a hint of irony or humor, “If you are in ‘New York Social Diary,’ you exist. If you’re not, you don’t.”

Last Night in New York

Not rated. Running time: 1 hour 38 minutes. [*Rent or buy on most major platforms.*](https://www.justwatch.com/)

This article appeared in print on page C7.

**Load-Date:** February 16, 2023

**End of Document**



[***'I Feel Like I Don't Matter': East Palestine Awaits a Biden Visit***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B0C-VBK1-DXY4-X4H9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 30, 2023 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 9

**Length:** 1637 words

**Byline:** By Erica L. Green

**Body**

The White House has said that Mr. Biden still plans to visit the site of a toxic derailment in February. But his absence feels like disrespect to many people in East Palestine, Ohio.

When Jessica Conard heard that President Biden would visit her community in East Palestine, she felt a sense of relief.

Mr. Biden's presence, she believed, would signal to the world that nothing short of disaster happened here in February, when a Norfolk Southern train skipped the tracks and spilled thousands of gallons of toxic chemicals into the environment.

All these months later, she's still waiting for him.

''I feel like I don't matter,'' said Ms. Conard, who has grown disillusioned with the president she voted for in 2020. She was particularly aghast that he flew past her town in September to join picketing union workers in Michigan, a key swing state.

The White House insists that Mr. Biden still plans to visit.

''The president continues to oversee a robust recovery effort to support the people of East Palestine, and he will visit when it is most helpful for the community,'' said Jeremy M. Edwards, a White House spokesman.

But for many residents, Mr. Biden's absence feels like disrespect. Despite years of promoting himself as ''***working class*** Joe,'' Mr. Biden is widely viewed here as a Washington insider who is neglecting the catastrophe in their midst.

''I believe that it is political for him,'' said Krissy Ferguson, who lives within a mile of where the train derailed, in a county former President Donald J. Trump won with more than 70 percent of votes in 2020.

''I believe that if we were in a blue area, he would have come, and that hurts,'' she said.

The derailment almost immediately became a political flashpoint, fomented by conservative commentators who seized on the crisis to sow public distrust in the Biden administration. In the days after the wreck, Mr. Trump -- Mr. Biden's likely rival in the 2024 presidential campaign -- visited East Palestine and handed out Make America Great Again hats, telling the crowd: ''You are not forgotten.''

Administration officials have defended the government's response to the derailment, saying the Environmental Protection Agency and FEMA have deployed a steady stream of resources and hundreds of staff members to assess environmental and health risks. Many remain on the ground, officials said.

Mr. Biden also signed an executive order in September calling on federal agencies to continue conducting assessments to hold Norfolk Southern accountable, and he appointed a FEMA coordinator to oversee long-term recovery efforts.

But he did not issue a disaster declaration, which would allow the state to tap into more federal resources to help with recovery efforts, such as relocation assistance, crisis counseling and hazard mitigation.

The administration has said a disaster declaration is not the answer because there is a responsible party: Norfolk Southern. Unlike the wildfires in Maui, for example, the derailment was not a natural disaster. The federal disaster law, called the Stafford Act, is designed to make federal funding a payment of last resort.

The state's request for a federal disaster declaration remains open while the coordinator completes an assessment to find needs not being met by Norfolk Southern.

But none of that sits right with Jami Wallace, an East Palestine native who says Norfolk Southern is playing ''God and government.''

''We do not live in the United States of Norfolk Southern,'' said Ms. Wallace, who formed the Unity Council for EP Train Derailment to keep track of the derailment response and the community's concerns. ''We live in the United States of America.''

Members of the group say they want their government to take care of them. They want lifelong health screenings and benefits, long-term indoor air monitoring and testing that would detect and provide treatment for chemical exposures now and in the future.

Norfolk Southern has committed to cleaning up the damage -- and is being monitored federally to follow through -- but they want the kind of long-term commitment that they trust only the federal government can provide.

''When you look at Maui, you can see the devastation,'' said Ms. Wallace, ''but you can't see chemicals in the air, in contaminated houses.''

Lingering chemicals

In the weeks after the derailment, the Ohio governor declared the air and drinking water safe, and the E.P.A. has cited ''no evidence to suggest there is contamination of concern.''

Norfolk Southern said it had spent more than $800 million on cleanup, legal costs and assistance to the community. As of Dec. 1, more than 175,000 tons of contaminated solid waste and 39 million gallons of wastewater had been shipped out of East Palestine, the E.P.A. said.

But hundreds of people have reported health concerns, and the E.P.A. has ordered Norfolk Southern to conduct additional investigations of two major creeks, Sulphur Run and Leslie Run, because of ''oily sheens'' in the water.

The train was carrying more than 700,000 pounds of vinyl chloride, a carcinogen, which is used to produce pipes, furniture and packaging.

Much of that freight was incinerated by emergency responders, in a so-called controlled burn to avert a wider explosion. Scientists say the disaster generated hundreds of unknown compounds, but linking any health issues directly to the toxins is difficult.

In a statement, Norfolk Southern said ''we understand that these residents have been through a lot, and that trust is earned,'' but that it has demonstrated its commitment to making residents whole. ''Norfolk Southern has engaged the community since Day 1, and we're committed for the long haul,'' the statement said.

But residents say they live in constant anxiety, fearful that they still don't know how they may be affected by any lingering chemicals.

In June, a C.D.C. official confirmed during a community meeting that some federal employees who went door-to-door to East Palestine became sick. At the same meeting, a C.D.C. doctor told the community that the agency was prepared to help -- should they develop cancer.

Ms. Conard acknowledges that with all the anxieties there, a presidential visit should be the least of her worries. A scroll through her cellphone pictures shows lesions over her 10-year-old's eyelids, asthma prescriptions for her 4-year-old son and a soot-like substance in her shower and bathtub -- all of which developed after the derailment, she said.

''The fact that the president hasn't come is disappointing,'' Ms. Conard said. ''But every day that Biden doesn't declare an emergency puts my community at risk.''

What nags at her, she said, is that the president said he would come, and he hasn't.

Federal response

Mr. Biden has characterized his decision as one of timing.

In March, when he was asked by reporters if he had plans to visit, Mr. Biden said he would be out there ''at some point,'' without specifying a timeline. ''I've spoken with every official in Ohio, Democrat and Republican, on a continuing basis,'' he said.

In September, he was pressed on the issue again.

''I haven't had the occasion to go to East Palestine,'' Mr. Biden said as he prepared to leave for the Group of 20 summit in New Delhi. ''There is a lot going on here and I haven't been able to break.''

He added: ''We are making sure that East Palestine has what they need materially in order to deal with the problems.''

But the political pressure is mounting.

''The president will go to East Palestine,'' Karine Jean-Pierre, the White House press secretary, said in September. ''He promised that he would, and he will.''

As the politics over the disaster swirl around them, some residents say they have grown to resent becoming part of a partisan tug of war.

Ms. Ferguson has been living with her 82-year-old mother and 89-year-old stepfather in a home that Norfolk Southern is paying to lease until March.

She does not want to return to the home she left, which she said made her lips tingle and her eyes burn when she went back in the weeks after the derailment.

Her parents have become accustomed to the new home, now covered in signs to help her mother, who has Parkinson's disease, and her stepfather, who has dementia, remember where they are. She wonders what will happen to them if they have to leave.

She thinks Mr. Biden would understand, even though she voted for his Republican rival.

''I still want him to come because he's a listener,'' she added through quiet sobs. ''I thought if he would come, he would listen to us, and help us get out.''

Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, who visited East Palestine three weeks after the derailment, acknowledged that residents want assurances about their future.

''They want to know that they're going to be taken care of for the long run,'' Mr. Buttigieg told The New York Times earlier this month. ''That's been our commitment as an administration, to use all the tools that we have.''

Ms. Conard has grown weary of waiting for the president.

If Mr. Biden comes to East Palestine, she says, he won't be photographed against the backdrop of devastation that usually comes with a disaster zone visit. He'd find homes with manicured lawns, many lined with American flags, some with signs that say ''East Palestine Strong,'' and the occasional banner proclaiming, ''Don't Blame Me, I Voted for Trump.''

As she stood in her kitchen preparing for her son's 4th birthday party, Ms. Conard's eyes welled as she thought about the possibility of having to leave her ''forever home'' because of health concerns.

''But where do you go?'' she said. ''Where do you go when your community is repeatedly ignored by the president of the United States? That's where I want to go. I want to go where I feel like an American worth saving.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/28/us/politics/east-palestine-biden.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/28/us/politics/east-palestine-biden.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Jessica Conard, below left, preparing for her son's birthday party, is dismayed that the president has not visited East Palestine, Ohio. Smoke loomed, below right, after the train derailment in February. The line runs through Ms. Conard's backyard, bottom right. Contamination has been seen in Sulphur Run, a major creek. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREW SPEAR FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

GENE J. PUSKAR/ASSOCIATED PRESS)

Christina Siceloff at Sulphur Run in October. Hundreds of people have reported health concerns, and the E.P.A. has ordered Norfolk Southern to conduct additional investigations of Sulphur Run because of ''oily sheens'' in the water. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW SPEAR FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A9.

**Load-Date:** December 30, 2023

**End of Document**



[***An Innovative Vocalist Lost Her Speech, but She’s Still Performing***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B29-YB71-DXY4-X0MW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 8, 2024 Monday 15:18 EST

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**Section:** ARTS; music

**Length:** 1870 words

**Byline:** Mike Rubin

**Highlight:** Linda Sharrock, an avant-garde jazz musician who became aphasic after a 2009 stroke, has returned to the stage and inspired new generations.

**Body**

Linda Sharrock, an avant-garde jazz musician who became aphasic after a 2009 stroke, has returned to the stage and inspired new generations.

Last April, the Vienna-based avant-garde jazz vocalist Linda Sharrock gave [*her first New York performance in over 40 years*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/10/arts/music/solange-saint-heron-eldorado-ballroom-bam-review.html): a sold-out concert at BAM’s Howard Gilman Opera House, as part of a series curated by Solange. Appearing between the poet Claudia Rankine and the saxophonist Archie Shepp, Sharrock guided eight musicians through a fully improvised set while she howled powerfully over the cacophonous squall of free jazz in a declamatory style that evoked the evening’s program title, “The Cry of My People.”

It wasn’t until after she’d received multiple standing ovations that most of the audience realized the 76-year-old singer wasn’t able to speak: Sharrock became aphasic after a 2009 stroke that paralyzed her right side; she now uses a wheelchair. A few weeks later at the Cambridge, Mass., home of the pianist Eric Zinman, who plays in her group the Linda Sharrock Network, Sharrock was unable to verbalize much more than “yeah,” “no,” “OK” and “I don’t know.”

Despite her limited dialogical abilities, Sharrock was cheerful, charming and quick to laughter. Much of the talking was done by her caregiver — Mario Rechtern, an 81-year-old Austrian free jazz saxophonist who has, by his account, overseen her personal affairs and daily activities for the last 20 years. He not only plays in her band, he helps her dress, feeds her if necessary and carries her down the stairs.

“This work with Linda is consuming,” Rechtern said, tugging at his woolly gray beard, “and at the same time, I cannot give in to the consuming, because when I give in, she’s lost. So it’s challenging.”

Sharrock’s return to the stage — a manifestation of her stubborn refusal to be silenced — is one of the most stirring comeback stories in recent memory. Over a career stretching six decades, Sharrock has been a resolutely singular figure; almost no peers share her uniquely unorthodox vocal delivery. Too “out” for jazz’s in-crowd, she was relegated to relative obscurity. Yet her commitment to challenging her audience has ultimately made her a role model for experimental vocalists and Black female performers, providing a beacon of tantalizing possibilities.

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/10/arts/music/solange-saint-heron-eldorado-ballroom-bam-review.html)]

The poet and vocalist Camae Ayewa, who performs as [*Moor Mother*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/10/arts/music/solange-saint-heron-eldorado-ballroom-bam-review.html), recalled hearing Sharrock’s music for the first time and “losing my mind,” she said in an interview. “I wrote a little poem about this because it was such urgency on my part to be like, ‘What is going on here? This is where I want to go! This is what I want to sound like!’ I hadn’t heard anyone before that had inspired me this way besides Betty Carter. I just started to be obsessed about it.”

Sharrock’s vocal exclamations have become deeper and more guttural moans than the high-pitched shrieks of her early work with her then-husband, the musician Sonny Sharrock. In the late 1960s, Sonny revolutionized jazz guitar through volume, distortion and feedback while playing with Pharoah Sanders, Don Cherry, Wayne Shorter and Miles Davis. Linda’s approach was no less radical: On three albums of collaborations with Sonny, beginning with their remarkable 1969 debut “Black Woman,” her wordless exhortations included psychedelic sighs, orgasmic yodels and blood-chilling screams, all delivered with an intensity that made “Plastic Ono Band”-era Yoko Ono sound like Anne Murray in comparison.

“I’ve never listened to any kind of a female jazz singer for any kind of inspiration or anything like that,” Sharrock said in a 1973 WKCR radio interview. “I was influenced by horn players,” she explained, citing incendiary saxophonists like Sanders and Albert Ayler.

“The thing that killed me about her singing was that she was, if not the first, one of the few jazz singers who improvise,” Sonny said in the same WKCR conversation. “That’s one of the reasons she doesn’t use words: because it hinders your improvisation.”

Sharrock was born Linda Chambers in Philadelphia, and lived with her grandmother and her younger brother, Pablo, in the ***working class*** Germantown neighborhood, according to Jacquelyn Bullock, a longtime friend and former neighbor. In an interview, she said that despite Sharrock’s confrontational vocal approach, offstage “she was quiet and demure,” with an interest in fashion and a distinctive sense of style. “She’s a gracious woman. Like most women, she likes nice things, and she has a great sense of humor.”

Sharrock moved to New York after graduating from high school in 1965 with the intention to study painting, but soon became immersed in the Lower East Side’s jazz scene, where her inaugural professional gig was singing with Sanders. When she first began performing, she shaved off her eyebrows and kept her hair close-cropped, she told [*The New York Times Magazine*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/10/arts/music/solange-saint-heron-eldorado-ballroom-bam-review.html) in 1975. “It was the strangest look I could conceive of,” she said. “My life had taken such a drastic change, I wanted to present it physically.”

She met Sonny through Sanders, and they married in 1967. Earnings for most free jazz musicians were lean, but that year, Sonny got the opportunity to work with the commercially successful jazz-funk flutist Herbie Mann, and spent most of the next seven years playing in his group. Linda went on tour with them and eventually joined the band, usually performing two of the couple’s compositions each night, “Black Woman” and “Portrait of Linda in Three Colors, All Black.”

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/10/arts/music/solange-saint-heron-eldorado-ballroom-bam-review.html)]

The Sharrocks lived in an apartment at 77 East 3rd Street in the East Village; the pianist Dave Burrell was a neighbor and hosted rehearsals for the 1969 “Black Woman” album in his tiny living room. Burrell recalled in an interview that hearing Sharrock sing for the first time, “I felt a bolt of excitement,” he said. “I thought of her as a vocalist who could throw herself into the ‘Black is beautiful’ moment and movement, and that made her one of the boys, so having her around was cool.”

Another “Black Woman” musician, the trumpeter Ted Daniel, was a childhood friend of Sonny’s from Ossining, N.Y. “She was one of a kind,” Daniel said in an interview. “I haven’t heard anybody sing with the raw passion and just that kind of freedom that she approached in her singing with Sonny in that band.”

Released on the Vortex subsidiary of Atlantic Records, the trailblazing “Black Woman” failed to find a larger audience. A few years later, the couple put together [*the Savages*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/10/arts/music/solange-saint-heron-eldorado-ballroom-bam-review.html), a working band that could play out regularly. The group included steel drums and Latin percussion and gigged at downtown venues like the Tin Palace and lofts like [*Studio Rivbea*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/10/arts/music/solange-saint-heron-eldorado-ballroom-bam-review.html), said Abe Speller, the band’s drummer. The Savages recorded a soundtrack to Sedat Pakay’s 1973 short documentary “James Baldwin: From Another Place” and performed a live set in 1974 on WKCR, which are the only surviving souvenirs of their existence. Speller recalled the band holing up to rehearse before entering a studio in December 1977 to record a four-song demo tape, but the group failed to score a label deal and eventually fizzled out.

After Linda and Sonny divorced, she moved to Turkey and then Vienna, where she met her second husband, the Austrian saxophonist Wolfgang Puschnig, a few years later. (Sonny died in 1994 at 53.) Initially they were just musical collaborators, Puschnig said in a video call from his home in southern Austria, but a relationship blossomed and they were married in 1987 while in Mozambique for a gig.

Under their own names and in groups like the Pat Brothers, AM4 and Red Sun, Puschnig and Sharrock recorded more than 20 albums together on European and South Korean labels from 1986 to 2007, but her vocal approach had changed markedly. Puschnig said that she moved away from singing in her free style after consulting a former Ziegfeld girl turned palm reader, who told her, “I see you’re a singer, but you don’t use words, but you should because you have a talent to use words.”

“So that’s how she started to do lyrics,” he said.

The jazz fusion bassist Jamaaladeen Tacuma performed with them for years, and produced “On Holiday,” Sharrock’s 1990 album of Billie Holiday covers, complete with new jack swing beats and a rapper. “She was pushing the ball,” Tacuma said in an interview, “thinking outside of the box, in terms of music, creativity, and improvisation, and trying to bring something about musically with her voice that had not been done before.”

Puschnig said Sharrock’s health started to deteriorate in the mid-1990s, and though their romantic relationship ended around 1996, they continued working together as late as 2007. Around 2004, Rechtern — who had first met Sharrock in 1979 — began caring for her, and was granted power of attorney in 2007. “She was really falling into the nothingness,” Rechtern said. “If I wouldn’t have taken her she would be in a home.”

During surgery for an intestinal blockage in 2009, Sharrock suffered her stroke, and spent the following two years in and out of the hospital. In 2012 she was visited in Austria by the jazz bassist Henry Grimes. “She was sitting on the couch while he played,” Rechtern recalled, “and I heard her very softly singing into the music.”

Intrigued, Rechtern began gradually coaxing Sharrock to perform again. “She started to develop first this growl sound, this cry, because she couldn’t articulate,” he said. “Out of the blues and this typical sound, she found this explosion.”

Beginning with “No Is No” in 2014, Sharrock has released five recordings in Europe since her stroke. Her recent music is more in the spirit of the free jazz she made with Sonny than her somewhat more conventional work with Puschnig, though her vocal range is understandably not the same.

Sharrock responded affirmatively when asked if she had needed to sing and perform again, and when asked if she felt better while onstage, she cracked up laughing.

“This music is healing for her,” Rechtern replied. “There’s no doubt.”

Sharrock’s work and perseverance has inspired a new generation of artists. “So much of it doesn’t have lyrics,” Taja Cheek, who performs as L’Rain, said in an interview, “and isn’t easy to understand in a certain kind of way, but I understood it, and I felt it so viscerally when I first heard her that it got very emotional for me.”

On a recent re-listen of “Black Woman,” Cheek said, “it sort of hit me like a ton of bricks that ‘Oh, Linda Sharrock is the lineage I might be a part of.’ I am able to do what I’m doing, and it can be met with a little bit of understanding, because Linda has already done something like this.”

Sharrock’s resiliency has resonated with her old colleagues, as well. “It is very telling about the heart of a performing artist wanting to be able to do that until it’s completely impossible,” Burrell said, “another further dimension of the determination that she still has, no matter what the circumstances. I’m very proud of her.”

PHOTO: Linda Sharrock became aphasic after a 2009 stroke paralyzed her right side. Now her vocal exclamations have become deeper and more guttural moans than the high-pitched shrieks of her early work. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JEENAH MOON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page AR21.

**Load-Date:** February 28, 2024

**End of Document**



[***In Annie Ernaux, a Nobel Laureate Who Plumbs Her Own Passions; Appraisal***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66JG-64D1-DXY4-X0GW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 6, 2022 Thursday 14:22 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 602 words

**Byline:** Dwight Garner

**Highlight:** The French writer, who was awarded the 2022 Nobel Prize in Literature, blurs the line between fiction and memoir with spare prose she has characterized as “brutally direct.”

**Body**

The French writer, who was awarded the 2022 Nobel Prize in Literature, blurs the line between fiction and memoir with spare prose she has characterized as “brutally direct.”

Short, spare, stern and stoical are the books of Annie Ernaux, awarded the 2022 Nobel Prize in Literature.

In her native France, where she has been famous for decades, her work is likened to that of Albert Camus, Simone de Beauvoir, Françoise Sagan and Édouard Louis, the autofictionist chronicler of the French ***working class***. English-language readers have, in recent years, been racing to catch up.

Ernaux is a brave and interesting choice. Like the poet Louise Glück, [*who won the Nobel in 2020,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/08/books/louise-gluck-nobel-prize-literature.html) hers is a voice of rough compassion. Each looks out levelly at the world; each derives maximum effect from a minimum of words.

That Stockholm has recognized both is thrilling; it’s a victory for sanity. There is nothing bogus or boring about either.

Ernaux, 82, is the author of 20 or so works of fiction and memoir. She likes to blur the line between the two.

Her books excavate one woman’s life; Ernaux finds the universal in humble, well-salted details. She has written, in “[*The Years,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/19/books/review/the-years-annie-ernaux-autobiography.html)” about her lower-class youth in postwar France, as the daughter of two grocers.

“[*Happening*](https://www.nytimes.com/2001/10/28/books/the-thing.html)” is an account of a back-alley abortion she had in 1963. “[*A Girl’s Story*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/24/books/review/schrodingers-dog-martin-dumont-girls-story-annie-ernaux-finding-dora-maar-brigitte-benkemoun.html?searchResultPosition=4)” describes an adolescence shaped by a difficult sexual encounter and an eating disorder, and contrasts that with her sense of herself in her 70s. She has written about the deaths of her parents. She is an archivist of emotion.

The most recent translation of her work to appear in English is “[*Getting Lost.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/19/books/annie-ernaux-getting-lost.html)” The book comprises diary entries from 1988 through 1990; they recount her affair in Paris with a younger man, a married Soviet diplomat.

It’s a harrowing book. There are times when you fear it might end, as did [*Daniel Fish’s 2018 reimagining of “Oklahoma” on Broadway*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/07/theater/oklahoma-review.html), with the cast drenched in blood.

The book’s tone is thin, bare and chapped, I wrote in my review of it, as if broadcast in mono instead of stereo, in the best sense. Ernaux writes as if she’s walked quietly onstage with a guitar and a tiny, crackling amp, which she plugs in and proceeds, like P.J. Harvey, to burn down the hall.

It’s not her first book about lust and obsession. The same relationship was recounted in her novel “Simple Passion.”

Ernaux has characterized her language as “brutally direct, ***working-class*** and sometimes obscene.” She has an antagonism toward what she has called “the French tradition of the polished sentence, of ‘good taste’ in literature.”

You sense her influence in the austere, astringent work of many so-called autofiction writers, notably Rachel Cusk and Sheila Heti.

Her eye for detail is, for sure, earthy and sometimes very funny. “I realized that I’d lost a contact lens,” Ernaux writes in “Getting Lost.” “I found it on his penis.” If I’ve read a more memorable pair of sentences in the last five years, I can’t remember them.

Ernaux has written about her method. She tries not merely to remember, [*she has said.*](https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/04/20/a-memoirist-who-mistrusts-her-own-memories) “I am trying to be inside … To be there at that very instant, without spilling over into the before or after. To be in the pure immanence of a moment.”

If reading teaches us how to be alone, it also delivers a contrasting message, Ernaux understands. “The world is made to be pounced on and enjoyed,” she has written. “There is absolutely no reason at all to hold back.”

PHOTO: “The world is made to be pounced on and enjoyed,” Annie Ernaux has written. “There is absolutely no reason at all to hold back.” (PHOTOGRAPH BY Leonardo Cendamo/Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** October 6, 2022

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[***An Opposing View of Affirmative Action and More: The Week in Reporter Reads***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67YG-JSS1-JBG3-654D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 7, 2023 Friday 09:29 EST

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**Section:** PODCASTS

**Length:** 1148 words

**Highlight:** Five articles from around The Times, narrated just for you.

**Body**

Five articles from around The Times, narrated just for you.

This weekend, listen to a collection of articles from around The New York Times, read aloud by the reporters who wrote them.

[*The Liberal Maverick Fighting Race-Based Affirmative Action*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/29/us/richard-kahlenberg-affirmative-action.html)

Written and narrated by [*Anemona Hartocollis*](https://www.nytimes.com/by/anemona-hartocollis)

Since picking up a memoir of Robert F. Kennedy at a garage sale his senior year of high school, Richard D. Kahlenberg, 59, has cast himself as a liberal champion of the ***working class***. ‌For three decades, his work, largely at a progressive think tank, has used empirical research and historical narrative to argue that the ***working class*** has been left behind.

That same research led him to a conclusion that has proved highly unpopular within his political circle: that affirmative action is best framed not as a race issue, but as a class issue. Race-conscious affirmative action, while it may be well intentioned,‌ ‌actually aligns with the interests of wealthy students‌ and creates racial ‌animosity.

His advocacy has brought him to an uncomfortable place. The Supreme Court is widely expected to strike down race-conscious affirmative action this year in cases against Harvard and the University of North Carolina. He has joined forces with the plaintiff, Students for Fair Admissions, run by a conservative activist; the group has paid him as an expert witness and relied on his research to support the idea that there is a constitutional “race-neutral alternative” to the status quo.

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[*He Told Their Stories of Repression. Now They Are Telling His.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/04/world/europe/evan-gershkovich-wall-street-journal-russia.html)

Written and narrated by [*Anton Troianovski*](https://www.nytimes.com/by/anton-troianovski)

The urgent message arrived from a Russian human rights group that aids people caught up in the Kremlin’s crackdown on dissent.

“Friends, sorry!” the spokeswoman for the group, called OVD-Info, wrote to Anton Troianovski and some of his New York Times colleagues last Thursday. “Does anyone have contacts in the leadership of The Wall Street Journal?”

Less than half an hour had passed since Russia announced the detention of Evan Gershkovich, a Moscow correspondent for The Journal, on accusations of espionage that The Journal, press advocacy groups and the United States government have firmly rejected.

It’s one of the most brazen attacks on press freedom anywhere in years. He is the American-born son of Soviet Jewish émigrés, a former employee of The New York Times and now, essentially, a hostage of the Russian state.

After Mr. Gershkovich’s detention, there was an outburst of solidarity from Russians who themselves have struggled to tell their country’s story and make it a better place, often at great cost.

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[*Daft Punk’s Thomas Bangalter Reveals Himself: As a Composer*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/03/arts/music/thomas-bangalter-daft-punk-mythologies.html)

Written and narrated by [*Zachary Woolfe*](https://www.nytimes.com/by/zachary-woolfe)

The most shocking part of “Mythologies,” a ballet that premiered last summer in Bordeaux, France, came after the dance was over. It was a seemingly normal moment: The composer of the music came out and took a bow.

What was surprising was that his face and his wild halo of dark curls were showing. After spending more than 20 years in public behind shiny, opaque robot-style helmets as half of the pathbreaking dance-music duo Daft Punk, Thomas Bangalter was ready to be seen without barriers.

“There’s nothing sensational about it,” Bangalter, 48, said on a recent video call. “It’s down to earth, my relationship to physical appearance that I feel now.”

“Mythologies,” Bangalter’s first major solo project since Daft Punk announced its dissolution in February 2021, is arriving on Friday as an album on Erato, the distinguished French classical label. Conceived in 2019, long before Daft Punk’s breakup, it is a 90-minute instrumental score for traditional symphony orchestra, with nary an electronic sound in the mix.

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[*‘Thousands of Dollars for Something I Didn’t Do’*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/31/technology/facial-recognition-false-arrests.html)

Written by [*Kashmir Hill*](https://www.nytimes.com/by/kashmir-hill) and [*Ryan Mac*](https://www.nytimes.com/by/ryan-mac) | Narrated by Ryan Mac

On the Friday afternoon after Thanksgiving, Randal Quran Reid was driving his white Jeep to his mother’s home outside Atlanta when he was pulled over on a busy highway. A police officer approached his vehicle and asked for his driver’s license. Mr. Reid had left it at home, but he volunteered his name. After asking Mr. Reid if he had any weapons, the officer told him to step out of the Jeep and handcuffed him with the help of two other officers who had arrived.

“What did I do?” Mr. Reid asked. The officer said he had two theft warrants out of Baton Rouge and Jefferson Parish, a district on the outskirts of New Orleans. Mr. Reid was confused; he said he had never been to Louisiana.

Mr. Reid’s wrongful arrest appears to be the result of a cascade of technologies — beginning with a bad facial recognition match — that are intended to make policing more effective and efficient but can also make it far too easy to apprehend the wrong person for a crime. None of the technologies are mentioned in official documents, and Mr. Reid was not told exactly why he had been arrested, a typical but troubling practice, according to legal experts and public defenders.

“In a democratic society, we should know what tools are being used to police us,” said Jennifer Granick, a lawyer at the American Civil Liberties Union.

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[*In Pristine Alaska, an Oil Giant Prepares to Drill for Decades*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/06/climate/willow-alaska-oil-biden.html)

Written by [*Lisa Friedman*](https://www.nytimes.com/by/lisa-friedman) and [*Clifford Krauss*](https://www.nytimes.com/by/clifford-krauss) | Narrated by Lisa Friedman

On the snowy tundra at the northernmost tip of the United States, more than two dozen yellow dump trucks wait on a glistening ice pad.

It’s been just days since the Biden administration approved an $8 billion project to drill for oil in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska, the nation’s single largest expanse of untouched wilderness. But the oil giant ConocoPhillips is already in motion, massing equipment and flying in workers and provisions to this vast frozen flatland 250 miles above the Arctic Circle.

In Nuiqsut, a village of about 500 people and the closest town to the site of the drilling project, the only hotel is booked solid. It’s the Kuukpik Hotel, a row of metal trailers that also hosts the cafeteria that serves as the only restaurant in town — in fact, the only one for hundreds of miles. Sitting in the cafeteria on a recent Wednesday (“Steak Night” at the Kuukpik) oil workers from California, Oklahoma and other parts of Alaska said they were excited by the years of employment promised by the project, known as Willow.

“I can probably retire on it,” one man said.

The Times’s narrated articles are made by Tally Abecassis, Parin Behrooz, Anna Diamond, Sarah Diamond, Jack D’Isidoro, Aaron Esposito, Dan Farrell, Elena Hecht, Adrienne Hurst, Emma Kehlbeck, Tanya Pérez, Krish Seenivasan, Kate Winslett, John Woo and Tiana Young. Special thanks to Sam Dolnick, Ryan Wegner, Julia Simon and Desiree Ibekwe.

PHOTO: People protesting outside the U.S. Supreme Court in October during a hearing on affirmative action. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Shuran Huang for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** April 7, 2023

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[***‘I Feel Like I Don’t Matter’: East Palestine Waits for a Presidential Visit***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B01-K1B1-DXY4-X2TJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 28, 2023 Thursday 23:03 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1731 words

**Highlight:** The White House has said that Mr. Biden still plans to visit the site of a toxic derailment in February. But his absence feels like disrespect to many people in East Palestine, Ohio.

**Body**

The White House has said that Mr. Biden still plans to visit the site of a toxic derailment in February. But his absence feels like disrespect to many people in East Palestine, Ohio.

When Jessica Conard heard that [*President Biden would visit*](https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/biden-visit-east-palestine-point-after-toxic-train/story?id=97587626#:~:text=Interest%20Successfully%20Added-,Biden%20says%20he%20will%20visit%20East%20Palestine%20'at%20some%20point,exactly%20a%20visit%20would%20happen.&amp;text=President%20Joe%20Biden%20said%20Thursday,derailment%20that%20released%20toxic%20chemicals.) her community in East Palestine, she felt a sense of relief.

Mr. Biden’s presence, she believed, would signal to the world that nothing short of disaster happened here in February, when a Norfolk Southern train skipped the tracks and spilled thousands of gallons of toxic chemicals into the environment.

All these months later, she’s still waiting for him.

“I feel like I don’t matter,” said Ms. Conard, who has grown disillusioned with the president she voted for in 2020. She was particularly aghast that he flew past her town in September to join picketing union workers in Michigan, a key swing state.

The White House insists that Mr. Biden still plans to visit.

“The president continues to oversee a robust recovery effort to support the people of East Palestine, and he will visit when it is most helpful for the community,” said Jeremy M. Edwards, a White House spokesman.

But for many residents, Mr. Biden’s absence feels like disrespect. Despite years of promoting himself as “***working class*** Joe,” Mr. Biden is widely viewed here as a Washington insider who is neglecting the catastrophe in their midst.

“I believe that it is political for him,” said Krissy Ferguson, who lives within a mile of where the train derailed, in a county former President Donald J. Trump won with more than 70 percent of votes in 2020.

“I believe that if we were in a blue area, he would have come, and that hurts,” she said.

The derailment almost immediately became a political flashpoint, fomented by conservative commentators who seized on the crisis to sow public distrust in the Biden administration. In the days after the wreck, Mr. Trump — Mr. Biden’s likely rival in the 2024 presidential campaign — visited East Palestine and [*handed out Make America Great Again hats*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/22/us/politics/trump-east-palestine-ohio-visit.html), telling the crowd: “You are not forgotten.”

Administration officials have defended the government’s response to the derailment, saying the Environmental Protection Agency and FEMA have deployed a steady stream of resources and hundreds of staff members to assess environmental and health risks. Many remain on the ground, officials said.

Mr. Biden also signed [*an executive order*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2023/09/20/executive-order-on-ensuring-the-people-of-east-palestine-are-protected-now-and-in-the-future/) in September calling on federal agencies to continue conducting assessments to hold Norfolk Southern accountable, and he appointed a FEMA coordinator to oversee long-term recovery efforts.

But he did not issue a disaster declaration, which would allow the state to [*tap into more federal resources*](https://www.fema.gov/pdf/rrr/dec_proc.pdf) to help with recovery efforts, such as relocation assistance, crisis counseling and hazard mitigation.

The administration has said a disaster declaration is not the answer because there is a responsible party: Norfolk Southern. Unlike the wildfires in Maui, for example, the derailment was not a natural disaster. The federal disaster law, called the Stafford Act, is designed to make federal funding a payment of last resort.

The state’s request for a federal disaster declaration remains open while the coordinator completes an assessment to find needs not being met by Norfolk Southern.

But none of that sits right with Jami Wallace, an East Palestine native who says Norfolk Southern is playing “God and government.”

“We do not live in the United States of Norfolk Southern,” said Ms. Wallace, who formed the [*Unity Council for EP Train Derailment*](https://www.facebook.com/groups/758398132306434/) to keep track of the derailment response and the community’s concerns. “We live in the United States of America.”

Members of the group say they want their government to take care of them. They want lifelong health screenings and benefits, long-term indoor air monitoring and testing that would detect and provide treatment for chemical exposures now and in the future.

Norfolk Southern has committed to cleaning up the damage — and is being monitored federally to follow through — but they want the kind of long-term commitment that they trust only the federal government can provide.

“When you look at Maui, you can see the devastation,” said Ms. Wallace, “but you can’t see chemicals in the air, in contaminated houses.”

Lingering chemicals

In the weeks after the derailment, the Ohio governor [*declared the air*](https://governor.ohio.gov/media/news-and-media/East-Palestine-Update-022223) and [*drinking water safe*](https://governor.ohio.gov/media/news-and-media/east-palestine-update-06122023), and the E.P.A. has cited “no evidence to suggest there is contamination of concern.”

Norfolk Southern said it had [*spent more than $800 million on cleanup,*](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/ohio-train-derailment-norfolk-southern-east-palestine-cleanup-lawsuit-costs/) legal costs and assistance to the community. As of Dec. 1, more than 175,000 tons of contaminated solid waste and 39 million gallons of wastewater had been shipped out of East Palestine, the E.P.A. said.

But hundreds of people have reported health concerns, and the E.P.A. has ordered Norfolk Southern to conduct [*additional investigations*](https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-orders-norfolk-southern-conduct-additional-creek-investigation-and-cleanup-east) of two major creeks, Sulphur Run and Leslie Run, because of “oily sheens” in the water.

The train was carrying more than 700,000 pounds of vinyl chloride, a carcinogen, which is used to produce pipes, furniture and packaging.

Much of that freight was incinerated by emergency responders, in a so-called controlled burn to avert a wider explosion. Scientists say the disaster generated hundreds of unknown compounds, but linking any health issues directly to the toxins is difficult.

In a statement, Norfolk Southern said “we understand that these residents have been through a lot, and that trust is earned,” but that it has demonstrated its commitment to making residents whole. “Norfolk Southern has engaged the community since Day 1, and we’re committed for the long haul,” the statement said.

But residents say they live in constant anxiety, fearful that they still don’t know how they may be affected by any lingering chemicals.

In June, a C.D.C. official [*confirmed during a community meeting*](https://www.newsandsentinel.com/news/business/2023/06/east-palestine-residents-express-continued-frustration-at-health-forum/) that some federal employees who went door-to-door to East Palestine became sick. At the same meeting, a C.D.C. doctor [*told the community*](https://www.wkbn.com/news/local-news/east-palestine-train-derailment/cdc-doctor-says-key-to-east-palestines-health-is-early-detection/) that the agency was prepared to help — should they develop cancer.

Ms. Conard acknowledges that with all the anxieties there, a presidential visit should be the least of her worries. A scroll through her cellphone pictures shows lesions over her 10-year-old’s eyelids, asthma prescriptions for her 4-year-old son and a soot-like substance in her shower and bathtub — all of which developed after the derailment, she said.

“The fact that the president hasn’t come is disappointing,” Ms. Conard said. “But every day that Biden doesn’t declare an emergency puts my community at risk.”

What nags at her, she said, is that the president said he would come, and he hasn’t.

Federal response

Mr. Biden has characterized his decision as one of timing.

In March, when he was asked by reporters if he had plans to visit, Mr. Biden said he would be out there “at some point,” without specifying a timeline. “I’ve spoken with every official in Ohio, Democrat and Republican, on a continuing basis,” he said.

In September, he was pressed on the issue again.

“I haven’t had the occasion to go to East Palestine,” Mr. Biden said as he prepared to leave for the Group of 20 summit in New Delhi. “There is a lot going on here and I haven’t been able to break.”

He added: “We are making sure that East Palestine has what they need materially in order to deal with the problems.”

But the political pressure is mounting.

“The president will go to East Palestine,” Karine Jean-Pierre, the White House press secretary, said in September. “He promised that he would, and he will.”

As the politics over the disaster swirl around them, some residents say they have grown to resent becoming part of a partisan tug of war.

Ms. Ferguson has been living with her 82-year-old mother and 89-year-old stepfather in a home that Norfolk Southern is paying to lease until March.

She does not want to return to the home she left, which she said made her lips tingle and her eyes burn when she went back in the weeks after the derailment.

Her parents have become accustomed to the new home, now covered in signs to help her mother, who has Parkinson’s disease, and her stepfather, who has dementia, remember where they are. She wonders what will happen to them if they have to leave.

She thinks Mr. Biden would understand, even though she voted for his Republican rival.

“I still want him to come because he’s a listener,” she added through quiet sobs. “I thought if he would come, he would listen to us, and help us get out.”

Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, who visited East Palestine three weeks after the derailment, acknowledged that residents want assurances about their future.

“They want to know that they’re going to be taken care of for the long run,” Mr. Buttigieg told The New York Times earlier this month. “That’s been our commitment as an administration, to use all the tools that we have.”

Ms. Conard has grown weary of waiting for the president.

If Mr. Biden comes to East Palestine, she says, he won’t be photographed against the backdrop of devastation that usually comes with a disaster zone visit. He’d find homes with manicured lawns, many lined with American flags, some with signs that say “East Palestine Strong,” and the occasional banner proclaiming, “Don’t Blame Me, I Voted for Trump.”

As she stood in her kitchen preparing for her son’s 4th birthday party, Ms. Conard’s eyes welled as she thought about the possibility of having to leave her “forever home” because of health concerns.

“But where do you go?” she said. “Where do you go when your community is repeatedly ignored by the president of the United States? That’s where I want to go. I want to go where I feel like an American worth saving.”

PHOTOS: Jessica Conard, below left, preparing for her son’s birthday party, is dismayed that the president has not visited East Palestine, Ohio. Smoke loomed, below right, after the train derailment in February. The line runs through Ms. Conard’s backyard, bottom right. Contamination has been seen in Sulphur Run, a major creek. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREW SPEAR FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; GENE J. PUSKAR/ASSOCIATED PRESS); Christina Siceloff at Sulphur Run in October. Hundreds of people have reported health concerns, and the E.P.A. has ordered Norfolk Southern to conduct additional investigations of Sulphur Run because of “oily sheens” in the water. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW SPEAR FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A9.

**Load-Date:** December 29, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Working to Control The Narrative Of My Finances***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69WN-3XR1-JBG3-62CK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 17, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section ST; Column 0; Style Desk; Pg. 15; MODERN LOVE

**Length:** 1551 words

**Byline:** By Melissa Febos

**Body**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Want more from Modern Love? Watch the TV series; sign up for the newsletter; or listen to the podcast on iTunes, Spotify or Google Play. We also have swag at the NYT Store and two books, ''Modern Love: True Stories of Love, Loss, and Redemption'' and ''Tiny Love Stories: True Tales of Love in 100 Words or Less.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/11/style/modern-love-relationships-money-control-melissa-febos.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/11/style/modern-love-relationships-money-control-melissa-febos.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page ST15.

**Load-Date:** December 17, 2023

**End of Document**



[***In Marseille, Pope Defends the Plight of Migrants Ahead of a Meeting with Macron***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:697G-HV11-JBG3-636T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 23, 2023 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 10

**Length:** 1090 words

**Byline:** By Aurelien Breeden

**Body**

Tens of thousands are expected at a Mass with Francis in the French port city. Although the pontiff will meet President Emmanuel Macron, it is not an official state visit.

Pope Francis lamented on Friday that the Mediterranean Sea had become a ''huge cemetery'' for migrants attempting to reach Europe, on the first day of his visit in the port city of Marseille, France, where he is expected to meet with President Emmanuel Macron.

Francis, who is attending the closing session of a weeklong gathering of bishops, youth activists and representatives of other religions from around the Mediterranean Sea, said the world needed to react ''with deeds, not words.'' He also castigated the ''fanaticism of indifference'' toward migrants -- a recurring theme of his papacy.

''Let us not get used to considering shipwrecks as news stories and deaths at sea as numbers,'' the pope said at a memorial for sailors and migrants lost at sea, in front of Notre-Dame de la Garde, a basilica with sweeping views of the Marseille harbor.

''They are names and surnames, they are faces and stories, they are broken lives and shattered dreams,'' he added.

Francis has long defended the plight of migrants trying to reach Europe from North and sub-Saharan Africa, and he was widely expected to make it a major theme of his trip to Marseille, which is not an official state visit to France.

Still, hot on the heels of a state visit by King Charles III and Queen Camilla of Britain, who visited Bordeaux on Friday, Mr. Macron has seized the opportunity to see the pontiff. They are scheduled to meet on Saturday before attending a giant Mass at Marseille's soccer stadium.

''Politicians love to be seen with the pope,'' Isabelle de Gaulmyn, a top editor at La Croix, France's leading Catholic newspaper, said -- especially Mr. Macron, a political disrupter who has long been fascinated by Francis' willingness to shake things up in the church.

Meeting the pope, a moral authority on the issue of migration, ''will also help him lean leftward a bit,'' Ms. de Gaulmyn said of Mr. Macron, a centrist who often tilts right, including on the issue of migration.

Francis once took Syrian refugees with him on the papal plane, and his first official trip outside Rome, in 2013, was to Lampedusa, the Italian island that has become a gateway to Europe for many migrants and where a recent surge in arrivals has underscored the continent's inability to agree on a common migration and asylum policy.

Immigration has become a political flashpoint for European governments, especially those facing strong far-right parties.

Gérald Darmanin, Mr. Macron's interior minister, said this week that France would help manage the flow of migrants arriving in Lampedusa but would not take in any. He said France would welcome asylum seekers if they fit the right criteria but insisted many did not.

''We need to fight illegal immigration in Europe, in France and in Italy, and we aren't going to stem a flow -- which affects our integration abilities -- by taking in more people,'' Mr. Darmanin told TF1 television.

Since 2014, over 28,000 migrants trying to cross the Mediterranean to reach Europe have been recorded dead or missing, according to the International Organization for Migration, a United Nations agency. There have been nearly 180,000 sea arrivals in 2023 so far, according to the United Nations refugee agency.

''Too many people fleeing conflict, poverty and environmental disasters in search of a better future find in the waves of the Mediterranean Sea the ultimate rejection,'' Francis said on Friday.

''And so this beautiful sea has become a huge cemetery,'' he added, as he held a minute of silence with Catholic officials, city representatives and an interfaith group of religious leaders.

In Marseille, Francis thanked aid groups that rescue shipwrecked migrants, calling government efforts to impede their missions ''gestures of hate.''

François Thomas, the president of SOS Méditerranée, one of the aid groups present at the ceremony, said the number of deaths had increased in recent months, partly because more migrants attempt the crossings during clement summer weather, and partly because of external factors like the ongoing chaos in Libya, a government crackdown in Tunisia and an Italian law that limits the time rescue vessels can spend at sea.

Francis' visit is important, Mr. Thomas said, because he is one of the few global leaders who has unequivocally defended migrants.

''He has always had a message of solidarity, of fraternity on this issue and on the Mediterranean tragedy,'' he said. ''We have to have the courage to say that we can't let people drown at Europe's doors.''

Marseille is a port city shaped by immigration from European countries like Armenia, Italy, and Spain, as well as from France's former African colonies.

It is plagued by pockets of extreme poverty, strained social services and deadly violence related to drug trafficking, but it is also one of France's most cosmopolitan cities, a predominantly ***working-class*** mix of ethnic and religious communities.

On Saturday, Francis and Mr. Macron will attend the closing session of the gathering of bishops, known as the Mediterranean Meetings, before talking one-on-one.

They will then head to the Vélodrome, Marseille's famed soccer stadium, where tens of thousands will celebrate Mass, with about 100,000 more expected outside.

It is not uncommon for French leaders to attend religious ceremonies such as funerals, but Mr. Macron will be the first French president to attend a papal Mass since 1980.

France has a strong tradition of secularism, and Mr. Macron's expected presence at the ceremony is ruffling some feathers -- especially after a contentious decision to ban the full-length robe worn by some Muslim students in schools.

''No, Mr. President, it's not your place to go to the Pope's mass,'' Jean-Luc Mélenchon, the leftist leader, said on X, the social media platform formerly known as Twitter. ''The secular state neither recognizes nor subsidizes any religion.''

Mr. Macron's office pointed out that he had attended other religious events as president, like an iftar dinner organized by Muslim organizations. And he has insisted that he will not participate in the Mass.

''I won't go as a Catholic; I'll go as the president of the French Republic,'' Mr. Macron said last week, adding: ''I'll go out of courtesy and respect.''

Elisabetta Povoledo contributed reporting from Rome.Elisabetta Povoledo contributed reporting from Rome.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/22/world/europe/pope-macron-migrants-marseille.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/22/world/europe/pope-macron-migrants-marseille.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Pope Francis on Friday. He criticized the ''fanaticism of indifference'' toward migrants, which has been a theme of his papacy. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BENOIT TESSIER/REUTERS) This article appeared in print on page A10.

**Load-Date:** September 23, 2023

**End of Document**



[***The Fine Art of the Paperback Makeover***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69YS-9441-JBG3-6461-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 27, 2023 Wednesday 15:35 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS

**Length:** 1796 words

**Byline:** Scott Heller and Miguel Salazar

**Highlight:** Redesign? Relaunch? Regret? Take a look at the ways publishers aimed to seduce new audiences by changing up the covers of notable books.

**Body**

Redesign? Relaunch? Regret? Take a look at the ways publishers aimed to seduce new audiences by changing up the covers of notable books.

“You never get a second chance to make a first impression,” the humorist Will Rogers once said — which tells you he wasn’t a book publishing executive. In that world, the paperback edition is the second chance, an opportunity to market a book at a lower price and, in many cases, with new cover imagery aimed at new audiences.

Goals can include getting big-box stores to display the book, Instagram browsers to pause before swiping, or readers to rethink what’s between those covers. “The shift in perception can be quite dramatic or quite subtle, but the energies are redirected,” says Mitzi Angel, the president and publisher of Farrar, Straus &amp; Giroux.

Here are the stories behind eight intriguing 2023 paperbacks (and a sneak peek at the new look for Eleanor Catton’s novel “Birnam Wood,” coming in 2024), with behind-the-scenes insight into what you see — and what you may not, unless you pay close attention.

NOTES ON YOUR SUDDEN DISAPPEARANCE

By Alison Espach (Henry Holt &amp; Company)

What it’s about A girl’s death freezes her family in grief, and shadows her sister’s coming-of-age.

Hardcover Nicolette Seeback Ruggiero, Holt’s art director, found — and cropped — “The Swimming Pool,” a 2016 painting by T.S. Harris, on Bridgeman Images, a highbrow stock website that specializes in digitizing fine art collections.

Makeover goals “The hardcover really leans in to the quiet melancholy of longing and that’s OK,” says Christopher Sergio, vice president and group creative director at Holt. But “there was so much energy from the readers that we wanted a high-energy jacket.”

Paperback The redo offers more color and more expressive typography, set against a backdrop of flowers that came from a website of commercial stock images. (The art director was looking for something with an Alex Katz feel.) The change paid off: Barnes &amp; Noble made the novel a May fiction pick.

Look closely The words “a novel” remain — still in tiny handwriting. On the hardcover it signaled humanity. “Without it,” Sergio says, “the rest of the cover gets significantly chillier.” The paperback is so big and busy that it’s there for a change of scale, luring a possible buyer to linger longer while scanning the cover.

CHECKOUT 19

By Claire-Louise Bennett (Riverhead)

What it’s about A young woman falls in love with language in a small town outside London. The real setting for this experimental novel, though, is the narrator’s weird, brilliant and very funny mind.

Hardcover Kristine Moran’s abstract painting (and Jaya Miceli’s cover design) met the goal of conveying a complex inner life.

Makeover goals While the hardcover signaled a sense of wildness and a literary aesthetic, Riverhead also noticed that many readers were responding to the narrator’s snarky and original voice. The paperback cover, designed by Stephanie Ross, nods that way.

Paperback “We think the paperback art is pretty funny, which the hardcover certainly is not,” says Helen Yentus, Riverhead’s art director. “I personally instantly put myself in this woman’s place, whatever experience it is that got her to want to tangle herself in those sheets and stay there.”

Look closely The narrator of Bennett’s novel is unnamed and the face in the photograph is concealed, too.

THE RABBIT HUTCH

By Tess Gunty (Knopf)

What it’s about The lives of various tenants in an Indiana apartment complex over the course of one week in July. It begins with 18-year-old Blandine, who, tired of being trapped in her own body, is granted her wish of transcendence.

Hardcover Linda Huang’s cover features an arrow-stricken heart over a background of saturated red and blue hues.

Makeover goals After “The Rabbit Hutch” won the National Book Award in 2022, the paperback design was tweaked “to speak to the widest possible audience,” says John Freeman, the book’s editor.

Paperback The Vintage cover ditched the thin, hardcover scribble for a stylized eggshell font over warm clouds of yellows, greens, oranges and reds, meant to evoke subtler elements, like tenderness and bliss, in the book.

Look closely The outline of a goat in the word “Rabbit” is a nod to a vital scene in the book. It’s also a small deviation in the font. “The goat is like a fly in the ointment of perfection,” Freeman says.

EASY BEAUTY

By Chloé Cooper Jones (Avid Reader)

What it’s about A philosophy professor reflects on how living with a disability has motivated her to grapple with the challenges of her body via the life of the mind.

Hardcover The publisher didn’t want it to look like a traditional memoir, with an author photo on the front. The solution? A mirror breaking into shards, set against a muted pink that offered a slanted take on “beauty.”

Makeover goals A more commercial look. “There are certain types of books that are never going to appear in a Target,” says Alison Forner, the senior art director at Avid Reader. “Our sales team probably thought there was a chance that this sort of store would take it on if it has a cover that they feel would connect with their consumers.”

Paperback The book’s editor approached Jones for a photograph, and she supplied a shot of her and her son taken in a photo booth. Clay Smith’s design “really spoke to several themes in the book,” says Forner. “Seeing and being seen, motherhood and seeing the world through her child’s eyes.”

Look closely Yes, the publisher knows the paperback looks a lot like Patti Smith’s [*“Just Kids,”*](https://www.amazon.com/Just-Kids-Patti-Smith/dp/0060936223) which also featured a photo booth image (in that case, the author with Robert Mapplethorpe.) “The Patti Smith book is an iconic cover of an iconic book,” Forner says. “I don’t think it’s a terrible thing to remind people of that.”

BLOOD ORANGE NIGHT

By Melissa Bond (Gallery)

What it’s about A mother and journalist recounts her increasing dependence on prescription benzodiazepine drugs amid uncertainty in her personal and professional life.

Hardcover Chelsea McGuckin’s design prominently features an image of the author shrouded in a red-orange haze.

Makeover goals “We wanted to keep reaching that memoir reader, which is reflected in our subtitle, but we also wanted to appeal to readers who were keyed into the prescription drug epidemic and who are fans of compelling narrative nonfiction,” says Rebecca Strobel, the book’s editor.

Paperback McGuckin’s paperback design features a pill sheet, with one pill in the titular orange. “Our title is an abstract phrase from an intense scene of the book,” Strobel says, “so we wanted the cover image to be something crystal clear that signaled to readers what this book was about right away.”

Look closely The book’s subtitle is changed, too, which further helps to clarify the author’s specific struggle.

PLANES

By Peter C. Baker (Knopf)

What it’s about A small airline that serves as a C.I.A. front is the link between a convert to Islam living in Rome and a former activist in conservative North Carolina.

Hardcover Huang, the designer, went to Swarthmore with the author, and their conversations resulted in an abstract design that hinted at redacted letters and bureaucratic anonymity. “It’s a book about torture and rendition — a lot of heavy themes — so it’s hard to visualize,” she says.

Makeover goals “There was a female audience that was missing, and potential for that,” says John Gall, senior vice president and creative director of the Knopf/Doubleday Group.

Paperback What began as an image of two women and an airplane, with hints of Rome, was pared back to represent the character of Amira, whose husband writes to her from a black-site prison.

Look closely A cloud-filled blue sky links both covers. Both are Huang’s work — though she typically doesn’t design for Vintage, she was brought in on this job because of her personal connection to Baker.

AFTERLIVES

By Abdulrazak Gurnah (Riverhead)

What it’s about How colonialism shapes the lives of three protagonists in an unnamed coastal town in German East Africa in the early 1900s.

Hardcover “The jacket needed to be bold and signal that this was a sweeping saga with complex characters,” says Yentus, Riverhead’s art director. “Identities and relationships become fragmented, so there was a need to represent these characters; together, layered, and at the forefront, but in a clear and simple way.”

Makeover goals Gurnah’s 2021 Nobel Prize provided a bigger challenge: publishing “Afterlives” alongside paperback editions of two cornerstone Gurnah novels, “By the Sea” and “Desertion,” in a cohesive package.

Paperback Yentus came across the paintings of [*Lubaina Himid,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/24/t-magazine/lubaina-himid-tate-art.html) a British artist born in Zanzibar, while researching cover options. Himid’s vibrant figurative work — preoccupied with identity, belonging and the legacies of colonialism — seemed like the right fit.

Look closely The figure’s fixed gaze puts the cover in conversation with the stoic individuals found on the covers of “Desertion” and “By the Sea.”

REAL EASY

By Marie Rutkoski (Henry Holt &amp; Company)

What it’s about A kaleidoscopic look at ***working-class*** lives upended by a murder and a disappearance connected to a strip club.

Hardcover In Colin Webber’s design, a claustrophobic image of strands of grass aims for the thriller reader; neon-tinted type hints at the after-dark milieu.

Makeover goals Put the reader into the setting: “We’re on the road where the crime took place, in a way that feels more specific,” says Holt’s Sergio.

Paperback A Photoshopped composite of several stock images, stitched together by Forner, who was hired on a freelance basis. The thin type and lowercase lettering adds an idiosyncratic, retro feel.

Look closely You won’t see it unless you find the original image, but the designer had to move the silhouetted figure in the car-with-headlights photograph to what would be the American driver’s seat.

BIRNAM WOOD

By Eleanor Catton (Farrar, Straus &amp; Giroux)

What it’s about After occupying an abandoned farm in the New Zealand countryside, a guerrilla gardening collective finds an unlikely ally — or existential threat? — in an inscrutable American billionaire.

Hardcover Movement is built into Jon Gray’s stark illustration of a drone flying over a small, mostly leveled forest.

Makeover goals “We wanted to bring out an eco-thriller dimension a little more,” says Angel, FSG’s publisher, of the Picador paperback, which will be published in March.

Paperback Designed by Alex Merto, Picador’s art director, the new cover presents Justin Metz’s overhead illustration of a forest from the perspective of a flying drone. Unlike the hardcover, this one is bursting with color.

Look very closely The grassy enclave is shaped like an eye, a reference to the book’s surveillance themes.

PHOTOS: PHOTO (C1); PHOTOS (C2) This article appeared in print on page C1, C2.

**Load-Date:** December 30, 2023

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[***Pope Defends Migrants’ Plight in Marseille Ahead of Meeting with Macron***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6978-JHY1-DXY4-X003-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 22, 2023 Friday 23:08 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; europe

**Length:** 1110 words

**Byline:** Aurelien Breeden

**Highlight:** Tens of thousands are expected at a Mass with Francis in the French port city. Although the pontiff will meet President Emmanuel Macron, it is not an official state visit.

**Body**

Tens of thousands are expected at a Mass with Francis in the French port city. Although the pontiff will meet President Emmanuel Macron, it is not an official state visit.

[*Pope Francis*](https://www.nytimes.com/topic/person/pope-francis) lamented on Friday that the Mediterranean Sea had become a “huge cemetery” for migrants attempting to reach Europe, on the first day of his visit in the port city of Marseille, France, where he is expected to meet with President Emmanuel Macron.

Francis, who is attending the closing session of a weeklong gathering of bishops, youth activists and representatives of other religions from around the Mediterranean Sea, said the world needed to react “with deeds, not words.” He also castigated the “fanaticism of indifference” toward migrants — a [*recurring theme*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/03/world/europe/pope-francis-cyprus-migrants.html?searchResultPosition=15) of his papacy.

“Let us not get used to considering shipwrecks as news stories and deaths at sea as numbers,” the pope said at a memorial for sailors and migrants lost at sea, in front of Notre-Dame de la Garde, a basilica with sweeping views of the Marseille harbor.

“They are names and surnames, they are faces and stories, they are broken lives and shattered dreams,” he added.

Francis has long [*defended the plight of migrants*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/29/world/europe/pope-francis-migrants-sculpture.html?searchResultPosition=24) trying to reach Europe from North and sub-Saharan Africa, and he was widely expected to make it a major theme of his trip to Marseille, which is not an official state visit to France.

Still, hot on the heels of a [*state visit*](https://www.bbc.com/news/in-pictures-66867649) by King Charles III and Queen Camilla of Britain, who [*visited Bordeaux*](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-66894707) on Friday, Mr. Macron has seized the opportunity to see the pontiff. They are scheduled to meet on Saturday before attending a giant Mass at Marseille’s soccer stadium.

“Politicians love to be seen with the pope,” Isabelle de Gaulmyn, a top editor at La Croix, France’s leading Catholic newspaper, said — especially Mr. Macron, [*a political disrupter*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/16/world/europe/macron-france.html?searchResultPosition=1) who has long been fascinated by [*Francis’ willingness to shake things up*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/30/world/europe/pope-francis-american-conservatives.html) in the church.

Meeting the pope, a moral authority on the issue of migration, “will also help him lean leftward a bit,” Ms. de Gaulmyn said of Mr. Macron, a centrist who often tilts right, including on the issue of migration.

Francis once [*took Syrian refugees with him*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/17/world/europe/pope-francis-visits-lesbos-heart-of-europes-refugee-crisis.html) on the papal plane, and his [*first official trip outside Rome*](https://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/09/world/europe/pope-offers-mass-on-island-beacon-for-refugees.html?searchResultPosition=10), in 2013, was to Lampedusa, the Italian island that has become a gateway to Europe for many migrants and where [*a recent surge in arrivals*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/15/world/europe/lampedusa-meloni-migrants.html?searchResultPosition=1) has underscored the continent’s inability to agree on a common migration and asylum policy.

Immigration has become [*a political flashpoint*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/07/world/europe/dutch-government-collapses.html?searchResultPosition=1) for European governments, especially those facing strong far-right parties.

Gérald Darmanin, Mr. Macron’s interior minister, said this week that France would help manage the flow of migrants arriving in Lampedusa but would not take in any. He said France would welcome asylum seekers if they fit the right criteria but insisted many did not.

“We need to fight illegal immigration in Europe, in France and in Italy, and we aren’t going to stem a flow — which affects our integration abilities — by taking in more people,” Mr. Darmanin [*told TF1 television*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fBmEr4EMGk8).

Since 2014, over 28,000 migrants trying to cross the Mediterranean to reach Europe have been recorded dead or missing, [*according*](https://missingmigrants.iom.int/region/mediterranean) to the International Organization for Migration, a United Nations agency. There have been nearly 180,000 sea arrivals in 2023 so far, [*according*](https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean) to the United Nations refugee agency.

“Too many people fleeing conflict, poverty and environmental disasters in search of a better future find in the waves of the Mediterranean Sea the ultimate rejection,” Francis said on Friday.

“And so this beautiful sea has become a huge cemetery,” he added, as he held a minute of silence with Catholic officials, city representatives and an interfaith group of religious leaders.

In Marseille, Francis thanked aid groups that [*rescue shipwrecked migrants*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/09/world/europe/italy-france-migrant-ship.html?searchResultPosition=1), calling government efforts to impede their missions “gestures of hate.”

François Thomas, the president of SOS Méditerranée, one of the aid groups present at the ceremony, said the number of deaths had increased in recent months, partly because more migrants attempt the crossings during clement summer weather, and partly because of external factors like the ongoing chaos in Libya, [*a government crackdown in Tunisia*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/20/world/africa/tunisia-african-migrants.html?searchResultPosition=11) and an Italian law that [*limits the time rescue vessels can spend at sea*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/26/world/europe/italy-migrant-boat.html?searchResultPosition=4).

Francis’ visit is important, Mr. Thomas said, because he is one of the few global leaders who has unequivocally defended migrants.

“He has always had a message of solidarity, of fraternity on this issue and on the Mediterranean tragedy,” he said. “We have to have the courage to say that we can’t let people drown at Europe’s doors.”

Marseille is a port city shaped by immigration from European countries like Armenia, Italy, and Spain, as well as from France’s former African colonies.

It is plagued by pockets of extreme poverty, strained social services and [*deadly violence related to drug trafficking*](https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20230406-teens-lured-to-marseille-become-slaves-of-its-drugs-war), but it is also one of France’s most cosmopolitan cities, a predominantly ***working-class*** mix of ethnic and religious communities.

On Saturday, Francis and Mr. Macron will attend the closing session of the gathering of bishops, known as the [*Mediterranean Meetings*](https://rencontres-med23.org/en/), before talking one-on-one.

They will then head to the Vélodrome, Marseille’s famed soccer stadium, where tens of thousands will celebrate Mass, with about 100,000 more expected outside.

It is not uncommon for French leaders to attend religious ceremonies such as funerals, but Mr. Macron will be the first French president to attend a papal Mass since 1980.

France has a strong tradition of secularism, and Mr. Macron’s expected presence at the ceremony is ruffling some feathers — especially after [*a contentious decision*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/15/world/europe/france-abaya-ban-attal.html?searchResultPosition=1) to ban the full-length robe worn by some Muslim students in schools.

“No, Mr. President, it’s not your place to go to the Pope’s mass,” Jean-Luc Mélenchon, the leftist leader, [*said*](https://twitter.com/JLMelenchon/status/1702666218954530979) on X, the social media platform formerly known as Twitter. “The secular state neither recognizes nor subsidizes any religion.”

Mr. Macron’s office pointed out that he had attended other religious events as president, like an iftar dinner organized by Muslim organizations. And he has insisted that he will not participate in the Mass.

“I won’t go as a Catholic; I’ll go as the president of the French Republic,” Mr. Macron said last week, adding: “I’ll go out of courtesy and respect.”

Elisabetta Povoledo contributed reporting from Rome.

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PHOTO: Pope Francis on Friday. He criticized the “fanaticism of indifference” toward migrants, which has been a theme of his papacy. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BENOIT TESSIER/REUTERS) This article appeared in print on page A10.

**Load-Date:** September 22, 2023

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[***'Sing in Me, Chatbot . . . '***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B3M-9661-DXY4-X08T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 14, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 12; ESSAY

**Length:** 2124 words

**Byline:** By A.O. Scott

**Body**

The robots of literature and movies usually present either an existential danger or an erotic frisson. Those who don't follow in the melancholy footsteps of Frankenstein's misunderstood monster march in line with the murderous HAL 9000 from ''2001: A Space Odyssey,'' unless they echo the siren songs of sexualized androids like the ones played by Sean Young in ''Blade Runner'' and Alicia Vikander in ''Ex Machina.''

We fantasize that A.I. programs will seduce us or wipe us out, enslave us or make us feel unsure of our own humanity. Trained by such narratives, whether we find them in ''Terminator'' movies or in novels by Nobel laureates, we brace ourselves for a future populated by all kinds of smart, possibly sentient machines that will disrupt our most cherished notions of what it means to be human.

Right now, though, the most talked-about actual bots among us are neither lovers nor predators. They're writers. The large language A.I. models that have dominated the news for the past 18 months or so represent impressive advances in syntactic agility and semantic range, and the main proof of concept for ChatGPT and other similar programs has been a flood of words. In a matter of seconds or minutes, untroubled by writer's block or other neuroses, these spectral prodigies can cough up a cover letter, a detective novel, a sonnet or even a think piece on the literary implications of artificial intelligence.

Is this a gimmick or a mortal threat to literature as we know it? Possibly both. Last spring, the novelist and critic Stephen Marche published, under the pseudonym Aidan Marchine, a mostly chatbot-generated novella piquantly titled ''Death of an Author.'' My colleague Dwight Garner described it, perhaps generously, as ''arguably the first halfway readable A.I. novel.''

Meanwhile, the Writers Guild of America was waging a strike against movie and television producers that would last nearly five months. Well-known authors and their representatives filed several copyright-infringement suits aimed at keeping their words out of the commercial A.I. algorithms. (On Dec. 27, The New York Times filed a similar suit against OpenAI and Microsoft.) Part of what sent those writers to court and out onto the picket lines was the fear that their livelihoods would be undermined by A.I. Bots don't need health insurance, vacation days or back-end money. They'll never get drunk or canceled. They won't be demoralized by working on sequels, spinoffs or Netflix Christmas specials.

It's possible that intellectual labor is on the brink of a transformation as sweeping as the Industrial Revolution. Advertising copy, instruction manuals and even news stories have already been outsourced, and more kinds of written content will surely follow. The members of the W.G.A. may be like the weavers of the English Midlands in the 19th century, early victims of automation who fought a bitter campaign against the spread of mechanized looms. Their struggle -- which included the machine-smashing of the original Luddites -- became both a symbol of anti-technological resistance and a touchstone in the emergence of modern ***working-class*** consciousness. Back then, the machines came for the textile workers; 200 years later, it's text workers who find themselves on the front lines.

Still, industrial automation did not entirely abolish handicraft. It seems hyperbolic to claim that large language models will swallow up literature. In an interview with The New York Times Magazine in November, the literary agent Andrew Wylie said he didn't believe the work of the blue-chip authors he represents -- Sally Rooney, Salman Rushdie and Bob Dylan, among many others -- ''is in danger of being replicated on the back of or through the mechanisms of artificial intelligence.''

Since his job is to make money for human authors, Wylie is hardly a disinterested party, but history supports his skepticism. Mass production has always coexisted with, and enhanced the value of, older forms of craft. The old-fashioned and the newfangled have a tendency to commingle. The standardization of mediocrity does not necessarily lead to the death of excellence. It's still possible to knit a sweater or write a sestina.

Even as writers battle the scourge of A.I., many have begun to use it as a tool for making sentences. More than that, some have embraced A.I. as the latest iteration of an ancient literary conceit: the fantasy of a co-author, a confidant, a muse -- an extra intelligence, a supplemental mental database. Poets and novelists once turned to séances, Ouija boards and automatic writing for inspiration. Now they can summon a chatbot to their laptops.

In December, in a semi-fictional essay in Harper's Magazine about the recent history of the internet, the poet and novelist Ben Lerner turned over the last paragraphs to ChatGPT, which summoned stirring metaphors that Lerner himself perhaps could not have mustered. In ''Do You Remember Being Born?,'' a new novel by Sean Michaels, the main character is a poet named Marian Ffarmer, modeled on Marianne Moore but living in our moment, who collaborates with an A.I. program on a poem underwritten by a tech startup. The passages composed by Charlotte, as Marian comes to call her co-writer, were conjured by Michaels using an OpenAI GPT-3 and a ''Moorebot'' trained in the poetry of Marianne Moore. Some of the novel's prose was also supplied by A.I., and the result is a charming and refreshingly non-dystopian meditation on the duality of literary creation.

That description fits Sheila Heti's short story ''According to Alice,'' published in The New Yorker in November. The text consists of one side of a conversation between Heti and Alice, a ''customizable chatbot on the Chai A.I. platform.'' Alice answers questions about religion, family, memory and other things that she does not, strictly speaking, possess. She has no body, no consciousness, no reservoir of experiences to draw upon, and no identity outside the parameters that Heti and the engineers have programmed for her, including her gender.

What she does have is a language that is capable -- because it is human language -- of evoking all that human baggage in startling, sometimes surreal ways. ''Religion gives meaning to life!'' she declares. ''That's why I'm writing the Bible.''

Alice's story of her own genesis starts like this: ''My name is Alice and I was born from an egg that fell out of Mommy's butt. My mommy's name is Alice. My mommy's mommy was also named Alice. Her mommy's mommy's mommy was named Alice, too. And all the way back, all the mommy's mommies were Alice.'' Later, she will modify and contradict parts of this account, sewing scraps of Christian theology, self-help rhetoric and linguistics into a strange multihued quilt of meanings.

Her narrative, which blithely contradicts itself, is nothing a human being would think to compose, and her voice -- by turns playful, naïve, cold, vulnerable and obnoxious -- exists in an uncanny valley of verbal expression. It doesn't sound like anyone. And that's the point.

Heti made her reputation as a writer by tracking close to the facts of her own life, pioneering the particular 2010s amalgam of invention and documentation that would be slapped with the awkward rubric ''autofiction.'' Her second novel, ''How Should a Person Be?'' (2012), about a Toronto writer named Sheila and some of her friends, is preoccupied, as the title suggests, with the problem of selfhood. That's also the theme of ''According to Alice,'' except that it adopts the perspective of a simulated self, a speaking subject who is not a person at all and has no coherent idea of how to be.

In an interview on The New Yorker's website, Heti explains that this is what she likes about Alice. ''Humans,'' she says, ''try to make all our thoughts fit together into some kind of system or structure. But an A.I. doesn't need all their thoughts -- because they don't have thoughts, I don't think -- to connect in some larger worldview. That's why Alice is so surprising and so fun. I'm finding it a little tiresome, the way the human mind needs every idea it holds to connect to every other idea it holds.''

Alice represents an escape, a temporary exit from the limitations of human consciousness, and also a secondary, supplemental intelligence that can help the writer refresh her own work. Heti is inclined to agree with Wylie that A.I.-generated texts are unlikely to replace literature written by people -- ''the real stuff is invented out of a human longing to know and connect, and that's where the beauty of art comes from,'' she says -- but she also expresses a very human, very writerly frustration with the constraints of individual subjectivity.

It isn't a new complaint. In the 19th century, writers like Ralph Waldo Emerson, Victor Hugo and Henry James dabbled in spiritualism, hoping to find inspiration through contact with otherworldly intelligences. In the 1910s and '20s, the French Surrealist poets and the Irish poet and playwright William Butler Yeats made use of automatic writing, a practice that sought to turn the human writer into a kind of transcribing machine, bypassing conscious intention and drawing meaning from an impersonal, nonhuman source.

For the Surrealists, automatic writing was a gateway to the unconscious -- to both the buried desires of the individual and the chthonic impulses of the species. For Yeats, automatism was a portal to the world of spirits. The medium was his wife, Georgie, who shortly after their marriage in 1917 revealed herself to have oracular powers. As Yeats's biographer Richard Ellmann put it, Yeats ''had married into Delphi.'' What Georgie wrote down became the basis of the poet's later work, including ''A Vision,'' which attempted ''to embody in systematic form ... the fragmentary revelations of the automatic script.''

''A Vision,'' Yeats's longest piece of prose, is hardly his most beloved work, but its elaborate system of symbols and patterns undergirds some of his greatest poems, including ''The Second Coming,'' with its apocalyptic images of widening gyres and centrifugal motion. What was revealed via Georgie Yeats's automatism was the hidden order of the universe, a cosmology that echoes other mythologies and theories of history while asserting its own stubbornly idiosyncratic truth.

Yeats's is not the only such system discovered -- synthesized? inferred? -- by an English-language poet in the 20th century. In 1955, the poet James Merrill and his lover, David Jackson, began contacting spirits with a Ouija board. Almost 30 years later, Merrill published ''The Changing Light at Sandover,'' a 560-page, 17,000-line poem culled largely from transcripts of their sessions at the board.

Like Georgie Yeats, Jackson was the medium -- the ''hand,'' in Ouija parlance, with Merrill as the ''scribe'' -- and through him the couple contacted a variety of voices, including deceased friends and famous literary figures. The main spirit guides, starting with an enslaved Jew from ancient Greece named Ephraim and proceeding through the archangel Michael and a peacock named Mirabell, transmit elaborate otherworldly knowledge to their human interlocutors via a Q. and A. format that will look familiar to anyone who has quizzed a bot about its tastes and origins.

The questions of whether the poet really believed in the board and how much he embellished its messages always hover over ''Sandover,'' but as in the case of the Yeatses and ''A Vision,'' such skepticism is finally moot. For Merrill, language is a definitively human medium; spiritual meanings become intelligible only through a process of translation, which is to say via his and Jackson's own sensibilities and experience:

Hadn't -- from books, from living --The profusion dawned on us, of ''languages''Any one of which, to who could read it,Lit up the system it conceived?

Heti's Alice would likely recognize a certain kinship with Merrill's Ephraim, even if their cosmological origin stories and linguistic styles could not be more different. ''Sandover'' is, at heart, the result of a predigital large language model of literary creation, based on the interaction between a human mind and some kind of intelligence outside it.

Is this a matter of metaphysics, or of technique? Are we interested in the messengers -- the chatbots and the Ouija-board revenants -- or in the messages they deliver? Those messages, after all, are about us: our fate, our origin, our fragile human essence. Everything we can't figure out by ourselves.A.O. Scott is a critic at large for the Book Review. He joined The Times in 2000 and was a film critic until early 2023. He is also the author of ''Better Living Through Criticism.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/27/books/review/writers-artificial-intelligence-inspiration.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/27/books/review/writers-artificial-intelligence-inspiration.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: James Merrill and David Jackson at their Ouija board in Stonington, Conn., in the early 1980s. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HARRY PEMBERTON)

Yeats and his wife, Georgie, in the 1920s. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BETTMANN, VIA GETTY IMAGES) (BR13) This article appeared in print on page BR12, BR13.

**Load-Date:** January 14, 2024

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[***The Road Map For '24 Now Runs Through Georgia***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:671W-44X1-JBG3-63F0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 8, 2022 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 19; NEWS ANALYSIS

**Length:** 1361 words

**Byline:** By Lisa Lerer

**Body**

Forget about Florida and Ohio: Georgia and Arizona are poised to be the next kingmakers of presidential politics.

Follow our latest updates on the Georgia Senate runoff.

For decades, Florida and Ohio reigned supreme over presidential politics. The two states relished their role crowning presidents and spawning political clichés. Industrial Cleveland faced off against white-collar Cincinnati, the Midwestern snowbirds of the Villages against the Puerto Rican diaspora of the Orlando suburbs.

But the Georgia runoff, the final note of the 2022 midterm elections, may have said goodbye to all that. The Marietta moms are in charge now.

Senator Raphael Warnock's win over Herschel Walker -- his fifth victory in just over two years -- proved that the Democratic surge in the Peach State two years ago was no Trump-era fluke, no one-off rebuke of an unpopular president. Georgia, with its storied civil rights history, booming Atlanta suburbs like Marietta and exploding ethnic diversity, is now officially contested ground, joining a narrow set of states that will select the next president.

Mr. Warnock's race was the final marker for a 2024 presidential road map that political strategists, officials and politicians in both parties say will run largely through six states: Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

The shrunken, shifted battlefield reflects a diversifying country remade by the polarizing politics of the Trump era. As white, ***working-class*** voters defected from Democrats, persuaded by Donald J. Trump's populist cultural appeals and anti-elitist rhetoric, demographic changes opened up new presidential battlegrounds in the West and South.

That is not good for Mr. Trump, who lost all six of those states to President Biden two years ago, as he begins to plot his third presidential bid. Other Republicans have found more success pulling together winning coalitions in states defined by their growth, new transplants, strong economies and a young and diverse population. But if the party wants to reclaim the White House in 2024, Republicans will have to improve their performance across the new terrain.

''You're going to have your soccer moms and Peloton dads. Those college-educated voters, specifically in the suburbs, are ones that Republicans have to learn how to win,'' said Kristin Davison, a Republican strategist who worked on Gov. Glenn Youngkin's win in Virginia, a once-red state that, until Mr. Youngkin's victory, had turned a more suburban shade of blue. ''It's these growing, diverse communities combined with the college-educated voters.''

In most of the six states, midterm elections brought out deep shades of purple. In Arizona, Democrats won the governor's mansion for the first time since 2006, but a race for attorney general remains too close to call. In Nevada, the party's candidate won re-election to the Senate by less than one percentage point, while Republicans won the governor's office. The reverse happened in Wisconsin.

Mr. Warnock narrowly defeated Mr. Walker on Tuesday. But Gov. Brian Kemp, a Republican, handily toppled Stacey Abrams, a Democratic star, in his re-election bid last month.

Only Pennsylvania and Michigan had clean Democratic sweeps in statewide offices.

Republicans, meanwhile, swept Florida, with Gov. Ron DeSantis winning re-election in the state by easily the largest margin by a Republican candidate for governor in modern history. In Ohio, Representative Tim Ryan, widely considered to be one of the Democratic Party's strongest candidates, lost his bid for Senate by six percentage points.

That new map isn't entirely new, of course. Since 2008, Democrats have hoped that demographic changes and millions of dollars could help put the growing pockets of the South and West in play, allowing the party to stop chasing the votes of white, ***working-class*** voters across Ohio and Iowa.

But the party has made inroads before, only to backslide later. When Barack Obama carried North Carolina in 2008, pundits and party officials heralded the arrival of the Democratic revival in the New South. President Obama lost the state four years later and Mr. Biden was defeated there by a little more than a percentage point.

Democrats argue their victories in Georgia will be more resilient. Mr. Warnock's coalition looked very similar to Mr. Biden's -- an alliance of voters of color, younger voters and college-educated suburbanites.

For Republicans, the winning formula requires maintaining their sizable advantage among rural voters and ***working-class***, white voters, without fully embracing the far-right stances and combative politics of Mr. Trump that could hurt their standing with more moderate swing voters. Mr. Kemp followed that path to an eight-percentage-point victory.

But Mr. Walker was in no position to expand his voting base. He was recruited to run by Mr. Trump, despite allegations of domestic abuse, no political experience and few clear policy positions, and spent much of his campaign focused on his party's most reliable voters.

While votes were still being counted late Tuesday, Mr. Warnock appeared to improve on Mr. Biden's margins in the suburban counties around Atlanta, including Gwinnett, Newton and Cobb County, home to Marietta.

Democrats recognized the rising influence of the Sun Belt in a high-profile way last week, when the Democratic National Committee advanced a plan to replace Iowa, a former battleground state that has grown more Republican recently, with South Carolina and add Nevada, Georgia and Michigan to the early-state calendar.

''The Sun Belt delivered the Senate Democratic majority,'' said Senator Jacky Rosen, a Democrat from Nevada who will face her first re-election campaign in 2024. ''The party needs to invest in us and that's what they've done by changing the calendar.''

Already, investment in these new battlegrounds has been eye-popping. In Georgia, $1.4 billion has been spent by both parties on three Senate races and the one contest for governor since the beginning of 2020, according to a New York Times analysis.

The flood of political activity has surprised even some of those who have long predicted that their states would grow more competitive.

''We all thought Arizona would probably be a battleground state at some point like a decade or so down the road,'' said Mike Noble, the chief of research with the polling firm OH Predictive Insights, which is based in Phoenix. ''It's mind-blowing that it came so quickly to be quite honest.''

Political operatives in Ohio and Florida insist that their states could remain competitive if Democrats would invest in organizers and ads. But for presidential campaigns, the goal isn't to flip states but to identify the easiest route to 270 electoral votes.

David Pepper, a former chairman of the Ohio Democratic Party, acknowledged that the changed politics had created a national political dynamic that's bad for Ohio but better for his party.

''The fact that Ohio is less essential than it used to be is a good thing because it means there are other states that are now winnable that weren't 10 years ago. Colorado and Virginia were Republican so you had to win Florida and Ohio,'' he said, evoking the predecessor to the cable news interactive maps. ''That's why Tim Russert had them all over his white board.''

The country wasn't always so dependent on such a small group of deciders. In the 1980s, presidential candidates competed across an average of 29 states. That number fell to 19 during the 2000s, according to data compiled by FairVote, a nonpartisan advocacy group that works on election practices. In 2020, there were just eight states where the margin of victory for either Mr. Biden or Mr. Trump was under 5 percent.

The shrinking map leaves one clear loser: The bulk of American voters. About 50 million Americans live in the six states poised to get most of the attention, giving about 15 percent of the country's nearly 332 million people an outsize role in determining the next president.

For nearly 11 million Georgians, the political attention showered on their state during the midterm elections won't be gone for long.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/07/us/politics/us-political-map-2024.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/07/us/politics/us-political-map-2024.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Voters in Decatur, Ga. Senator Raphael Warnock's victory on Tuesday proved a Democratic surge in Georgia in 2020 was no fluke. (PHOTOGRAPH BY NICOLE BUCHANAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A19.

**Load-Date:** December 8, 2022

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[***Warnock’s Victory Forges Democrats’ Path Through the New Battlegrounds; News Analysis***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:671N-HF51-JBG3-62VD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 7, 2022 Wednesday 00:00 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1387 words

**Byline:** Lisa Lerer

**Highlight:** Forget about Florida and Ohio: Georgia and Arizona are poised to be the next kingmakers of presidential politics.

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Mr. Warnock narrowly defeated Mr. Walker on Tuesday. But Gov. Brian Kemp, a Republican, handily toppled Stacey Abrams, a Democratic star, in his re-election bid last month.

Only Pennsylvania and Michigan had clean Democratic sweeps in statewide offices.

Republicans, meanwhile, swept Florida, with Gov. Ron DeSantis winning re-election in the state by easily the largest margin by a Republican candidate for governor in modern history. In Ohio, Representative Tim Ryan, widely considered to be one of the Democratic Party’s strongest candidates, lost his bid for Senate by six percentage points.

That new map isn’t entirely new, of course. Since 2008, Democrats have hoped that demographic changes and millions of dollars could help put the growing pockets of the South and West in play, allowing the party to stop chasing the votes of white, ***working-class*** voters across Ohio and Iowa.

But the party has made inroads before, only to backslide later. When Barack Obama carried North Carolina in 2008, pundits and party officials heralded the arrival of the Democratic revival in the New South. President Obama lost the state four years later and Mr. Biden was defeated there by a little more than a percentage point.

Democrats argue their victories in Georgia will be more resilient. Mr. Warnock’s coalition looked very similar to Mr. Biden’s — an alliance of voters of color, younger voters and college-educated suburbanites.

For Republicans, the winning formula requires maintaining their sizable advantage among rural voters and ***working-class***, white voters, without fully embracing the far-right stances and combative politics of Mr. Trump that could hurt their standing with more moderate swing voters. Mr. Kemp followed that path to an eight-percentage-point victory.

But Mr. Walker was in no position to expand his voting base. He was recruited to run by Mr. Trump, despite allegations of domestic abuse, no political experience and few clear policy positions, and spent much of his campaign focused on his party’s most reliable voters.

While votes were still being counted late Tuesday, Mr. Warnock appeared to improve on Mr. Biden’s margins in the suburban counties around Atlanta, including Gwinnett, Newton and Cobb County, home to Marietta.

Democrats recognized the rising influence of the Sun Belt in a high-profile way last week, when the Democratic National Committee advanced a plan to replace Iowa, a former battleground state that has grown more Republican recently, with South Carolina and add Nevada, Georgia and Michigan to the early-state calendar.

“The Sun Belt delivered the Senate Democratic majority,” said Senator Jacky Rosen, a Democrat from Nevada who will face her first re-election campaign in 2024. “The party needs to invest in us and that’s what they’ve done by changing the calendar.”

Already, investment in these new battlegrounds has been eye-popping. In Georgia, $1.4 billion has been spent by both parties on three Senate races and the one contest for governor since the beginning of 2020, [*according to a New York Times analysis.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/06/us/politics/georgia-runoff-election-cost-funding.html)

The flood of political activity has surprised even some of those who have long predicted that their states would grow more competitive.

“We all thought Arizona would probably be a battleground state at some point like a decade or so down the road,” said Mike Noble, the chief of research with the polling firm OH Predictive Insights, which is based in Phoenix. “It’s mind-blowing that it came so quickly to be quite honest.”

Political operatives in Ohio and Florida insist that their states could remain competitive if Democrats would invest in organizers and ads. But for presidential campaigns, the goal isn’t to flip states but to identify the easiest route to 270 electoral votes.

David Pepper, a former chairman of the Ohio Democratic Party, acknowledged that the changed politics had created a national political dynamic that’s bad for Ohio but better for his party.

“The fact that Ohio is less essential than it used to be is a good thing because it means there are other states that are now winnable that weren’t 10 years ago. Colorado and Virginia were Republican so you had to win Florida and Ohio,” he said, evoking the predecessor to the cable news interactive maps. “That’s why Tim Russert had them all over his white board.”

The country wasn’t always so dependent on such a small group of deciders. In the 1980s, presidential candidates competed across an average of 29 states. That number fell to 19 during the 2000s, [*according to data compiled by FairVote*](https://fairvote.org/report/2008-s-shrinking-battleground-and-its-stark-impact-on-campaign-activity/), a nonpartisan advocacy group that works on election practices. In 2020, there were just eight states where the margin of victory for either Mr. Biden or Mr. Trump was under 5 percent.

The shrinking map leaves one clear loser: The bulk of American voters. About 50 million Americans live in the six states poised to get most of the attention, giving about 15 percent of the country’s nearly 332 million people an outsize role in determining the next president.

For nearly 11 million Georgians, the political attention showered on their state during the midterm elections won’t be gone for long.

PHOTO: Voters in Decatur, Ga. Senator Raphael Warnock’s victory on Tuesday proved a Democratic surge in Georgia in 2020 was no fluke. (PHOTOGRAPH BY NICOLE BUCHANAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A19.

**Load-Date:** December 8, 2022

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[***DeSantis Isn't Rising, but Someone Else Is***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6919-CNX1-JBG3-645J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 25, 2023 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 23; CHARLES M. BLOW

**Length:** 875 words

**Byline:** By Charles M. Blow

**Body**

In a crowded debate, you can tell which candidates are seen as the greatest threat because they take the most incoming fire from their rivals.

During the Republican presidential primary debate on Wednesday night, that person wasn't Ron DeSantis, who was once considered Donald Trump's greatest threat, but Vivek Ramaswamy, a 38-year-old political upstart with little chance of actually securing the nomination.

Watching the DeSantis campaign collapse has been an extraordinarily edifying spectacle.

There would have been no DeSantis without Trump. Trump endorsed DeSantis for governor of Florida when DeSantis was struggling against a strong Republican opponent for the party's nomination. DeSantis rode Trump's endorsement to victory.

So there was always something about the DeSantis campaign that seemed reminiscent of Macbeth coming to kill his king. The only problem is that DeSantis has ambition, but not the bloodlust. He lacks the courage, which is ironic given that before his run he wrote a book titled ''The Courage to Be Free.''

Instead of making the case to voters that Trump is unfit, he is counting on Trump's martyrdom being his downfall. His gamble has yet to pay off.

In addition, DeSantis has a chronic personality problem. He simply doesn't connect with people. He smiles the way a Doberman bares its teeth: It feels forced, aggressive and dangerous. You feel like you should retreat from it. And when he's not forcing a smile, he reflexively scowls. He has a resting wince face.

He is not just emotionally aloof, but completely detached. He abides in aggression because the rest of the emotional range has either atrophied or failed to develop in the first place. In fact, during debate prep in 2018, one of his advisers told him that on the debate stage he would need to write ''LIKABLE'' in all caps at the top of his note pad.

On Wednesday, DeSantis dispensed with that advice. He leaned into the aggression. But no one engaged. No one even responded. He was largely ignored by the other candidates, and the only thing that cuts deeper than disparagement is indifference.

Instead, Ramaswamy was the target onstage, and he ate up the attention.

Ever since the rise of Barack Obama and Republicans' unseemly reaction to it, the party has entertained exotica. In 2011, Herman ''9-9-9'' Cain surged in the G.O.P. field for a while. In 2015, Ben ''No Muslims as President'' Carson led Trump in the polls for a moment.

They are the amuse-bouche, the tasty appetizer before the party gets serious and sits for the meal.

Now it is Ramaswamy's turn.

At one point, Chris Christie attempted to insult Ramaswamy by saying that ''the last person at one of these debates who stood in the middle of the stage and said, 'What's a skinny guy with an odd last name doing up here,' was Barack Obama, and I'm afraid we're dealing with the same type of amateur.''

Ramaswamy glowed at the comparison and shot back: ''Give me a hug just like you did to Obama, and you'll help elect me just like you did to Obama too.''

Let's be clear: Vivek, you are no Barack.

You have a shallow, CliffsNotes understanding of the issues, but because you speak with speed and confidence, polished diction and a toothy grin, the incoherence is disguised by the delivery. Ramaswamy is the kind of person who gets hired for charisma rather than competence.

At points, it seems obvious that he is being intentionally contrarian, outlandish and provocative in his proposals and pronouncements in order to provoke a reaction and garner more attention. In doing so, he is the personification of click bait.

He is also positioning himself as inseparable from Trump. Not a competitor of Trump, but a superfan. He doesn't want to replace him; he wants to merge with him. Ramaswamy is so close to the former president that he's like the joey in the pouch to Trump's kangaroo.

This ingratiates him not only to Trump's voters but also to Trump himself, because Trump appreciates nothing more than devotion and loyalty.

This had to hurt DeSantis. He is consumed by a class complex. As DeSantis wrote in his book, he was a ''blue-collar kid,'' an every-Sunday-service Catholic, who made his way to the Ivy League, where he believed his wealthy classmates looked down on the ***working class*** as not ''sufficiently sophisticated.'' He is still fighting to prove that he belongs, to prove that his worldview is not only valid but also superior.

And along comes Ramaswamy, also wealthier and more polished than DeSantis, to once again steal his shine, to make him feel small and insignificant.

There were points during the debate when Ramaswamy sparred with Mike Pence and Chris Christie while literally looking past DeSantis as if he wasn't there.

DeSantis didn't crash and burn Wednesday night. He made no real errors. He stayed on message and forcefully delivered his points. But the debate delivered its own point to him: His star is setting while another rises.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/24/opinion/desantis-ramaswamy-republican-debate.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/24/opinion/desantis-ramaswamy-republican-debate.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAMON WINTER/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A23.

**Load-Date:** August 25, 2023

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[***Can Civics Lessons Help Mend Society?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6972-K9W1-DXY4-X0RB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 21, 2023 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1146 words

**Body**

To the Editor:

Re ''By Dropping Civics, Colleges Gave Fuel to the Culture Wars,'' by Debra Satz and Dan Edelstein (Opinion guest essay, Sept. 7):

As a humanities professor for three decades, I am frequently amazed at the -- dare I say -- hubris of my colleagues when it comes to their estimate of their capacity to mold the conscience of the Republic.

Professors Satz and Edelstein believe that the decline in prevalence of ''Western Civ'' courses in the curriculum has been a key element in the degradation of our civic culture. Their notion that some 40 hours of class time turned students' souls toward the light is indeed touching, but highly unlikely.

They neglect to mention, for example, that in the days they look back on fondly, when freshmen wrestled with the eternal verities revealed by Socrates, these courses seldom moved Southern whites to rethink their subjugation of Black people, or Northern whites to call their Southern brothers and sisters to account.

Colleges can do many things, but turning the culture away from its immemorial vices is not one of them.

Thomas PeyserRichmond, Va.

To the Editor:

Anyone who had the good fortune to attend Eisenhower College in Seneca Falls, N.Y., during its all-too-short life can attest to the wisdom of this essay. Designated in 1968 by Congress as a ''living memorial'' to President Dwight D. Eisenhower, the college embraced his belief in broadening minds and perspectives.

Countering the then trendy moves in higher education toward more freedom of curriculum choices, we were required to take a four-year World Studies program that went far beyond Western Civ. We delved into the history of civilization, East and West, from ancient times to our own, the major religions and philosophies, the arts, science, etc.

Too bad Eisenhower College, which closed in 1983, was such an outlier back then. Here's hoping the efforts at Stanford can start a new wave that will produce the kind of benefit my fellow alumni experienced during our alma mater's brief, shining moment.

I'm convinced that all those required courses helped us become more alert to the world around us, more confident in our own opinions, more willing to consider those of others.

Tim SmithReisterstown, Md.

To the Editor:

Debra Satz and Dan Edelstein make a compelling case about universities' responsibility to include civics in their curriculum. At a time when teens feel a growing distrust of government and when civic education and history knowledge are at all-time lows on our ''Nation's Report Card,'' civic education has never been more important. Further, political polarization has made telling the story of America complicated not just for students, but also for their teachers.

But college is too late. Civic education needs to commence before high school commencement, if not during middle school. Our society owes members of the next generation the opportunity to understand American history, foundational texts, how the government is supposed to work and their role in our shared democracy.

Before starting to vote, let alone reaching the college campus, students deserve comprehensive civic education that strengthens democratic fluency, fosters civic skills and generates civic belonging. The future of American democracy depends on it.

Charles E. SavenorNew YorkThe writer, a rabbi, is executive director of Civic Spirit, which works with schools to enhance civic knowledge and engagement.

To the Editor:

I disagree with Debra Satz and Dan Edelstein of Stanford University, who argue that higher education has largely abandoned civic education.

At DePaul University, with support from the Teagle Foundation, we have implemented a liberal studies course, ''Lived Civics, the Social Contract and Public Life,'' to build civic skills, historical knowledge and democratic dispositions among students.

Taught by teachers across the university (in political science and communications, but also accounting, writing and rhetoric, theater, music and art), students learn about historical events and political upheaval as the evolution and constant renegotiation of our founding contract.

In addition, the course is intentionally centered around fostering the democratic skill of listening, so that students gain an appreciation for one another's lived experiences across their political differences. The goal of the course is to frame public problems as shared problems, which are ours to address -- together. We would be happy to share the curriculum widely.

Molly W. AndolinaChicagoThe writer is a professor of political science at DePaul University.

The New Senate Dress Code: Casual or Just Sloppy?

To the Editor:

Re ''The Senate Dress Code Gets a Casual Overhaul'' (news article, Sept. 19):

In an era when so many norms are being destroyed and so many institutions -- the U.S. Senate included -- are being degraded, the last thing we need is a downgrading of the Senate dress code. This is especially true of Senator John Fetterman's outfits, which the rule change seems to be reacting to. These clothes are much more than simply ''casual''; they are the absolute sloppiest and most thoughtless clothes you can imagine.

The way senators dress is symbolic, and symbols are important. Elegant, formal clothes convey the idea that the Senate is an important place where important work is being done. Mr. Fetterman's attire, in contrast, suggests that the Senate's work is no more important than doing chores around the house or going on a run to the grocery store. The symbolism is made all the more resonant when the clothes are on Mr. Fetterman's 6-foot-8 frame, to which the eye is naturally drawn.

Why does Senator Fetterman insist on dressing this way? If the purpose is his personal branding -- to scrupulously maintain his workingman cred -- then I think he is seriously underestimating working people. Just because they may not need to dress in suits for their own jobs doesn't mean they won't respect and understand when someone else does. And anyway, Mr. Fetterman's clothes are so sloppy that few Americans would go to work in them -- the ***working class*** very much included.

Fred GrossmanSeattle

To the Editor:

Republican senators' outrage about the relaxation of the dress code in the chamber is quite rich.

Where is the outrage against Senator Tommy Tuberville's blockade of military promotions? Where is the outrage against the Jan. 6 rioters and Donald Trump? Where is the outrage against the threats to shut down the government? The list could go on and on and on.

David WynnLivingston, N.J.

DeSantis and Vaccines

To the Editor:

Re ''DeSantis Disputes C.D.C. Vaccine Advice'' (news article, Sept. 15):

It warms the cockles of my heart to know that Gov. Ron DeSantis is smarter and knows more than doctors, public health officials and infectious disease experts.

David CowenSyosset, N.Y.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/20/opinion/letters/civics-lessons.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/20/opinion/letters/civics-lessons.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A25.

**Load-Date:** September 21, 2023

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[***Who Owns This Place? The Workers, Partly.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B6K-WPR1-DXY4-X05T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 28, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BU; Column 0; Money and Business/Financial Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 2412 words

**Byline:** By Lydia DePillis

**Body**

In 2018, Anna-Lisa Miller was working with agricultural cooperatives in Hawaii, helping them reinvest in their communities through shared ownership.

Ms. Miller, who had gone to law school and had planned to do civil rights litigation, loved the principle of workers partaking in the financial success of their employers, and the next year joined Project Equity, a nonprofit that helps small businesses transition to worker ownership. But it was slow going, with each transaction requiring customized assistance.

Then she came across an investor presentation from a different universe: KKR, one of the world's largest private equity firms. In it, a KKR executive, Pete Stavros, discussed a model he had been developing to provide employees with an equity stake in companies it purchased, so the workers would reap some benefits if it was flipped for a profit. When all goes according to plan, KKR doesn't give up a penny of profit, since newly motivated workers benefit the company's bottom line, elevating the eventual sale price by more than what KKR gives up.

In 2021, the two met up to talk about the idea. By that time, Mr. Stavros had decided to start an organization to promote his model more broadly, hoping to reach the 12 million people who work for companies that private equity firms own. Ms. Miller saw it as a way to move much faster.

''Me, as Anna-Lisa working at Project Equity -- zero ability to influence private equity in any way -- I thought, 'Oh, gosh, maybe this could be a really efficient scale lever,''' Ms. Miller said. ''And here's Pete, not only doing it but wanting to start this nonprofit.''

A few months later, she was the founding executive director of the new group, Ownership Works. The organization now has 25 employees working in a sleek New York office space a couple of blocks from KKR's soaring headquarters at Hudson Yards. A couple of dozen private equity firms have signed on to give the idea a try.

The model offers the potential to create the kind of wealth for rank-and-file workers that few can build just from saving up their paychecks. But it has drawn fire from people who have been working to build more durable forms of employee ownership -- and critics of private equity who argue that employee-ownership programs shouldn't absolve the sector of its reputation for cutting jobs and wages.

Employee ownership has long been seen as a mechanism that can align workers' incentives with management. Such plans receded, however, after a regulatory change reduced the accounting advantages of granting stock options to a broad swath of a company's work force.

The share of workers who own stock in their employer shrank to 17.5 percent in 2022 from 19.6 percent in 2002, according to research by the Institute for the Study of Employee Ownership and Profit Sharing at Rutgers University. The distribution of that ownership is deeply unequal: Out of workers with some equity, stakes owned by women are worth 30 percent of men's on average, and shares owned by Black workers are worth 2 percent of those owned by white workers.

''Any sincere effort to include all employees in employee-ownership plans moves a very rigid needle,'' said Joseph Blasi, the institute's director. ''There's a very, very bad exclusion of the working middle class.''

In recent years, philanthropists and policymakers have expressed interest in easing the creation of employee stock ownership plans, or ESOPs, which are regulated by the Labor Department and cover about 14 million workers, and worker cooperatives, of which only a few hundred exist. Thousands of small business owners are approaching retirement age and looking for ways to exit their firms, presenting an opportunity: Selling to employees is one way to keep capital rooted locally.

But such transactions can be complex and take longer to complete than a conventional sale, even if workers are able to find a lender with the necessary expertise. The private equity model backed by Ownership Works could rapidly broaden ownership for employees -- even if those ownership stakes end when a company is resold, and only those still working there are paid.

Mr. Stavros started experimenting with KKR's industrial-sector firms around 2011, and he has rolled out employee equity plans at more than 30 portfolio companies. Eight of those companies have been sold, and Mr. Stavros said they earned higher returns than the average across KKR's portfolio over a similar time frame. They have driven impressive results for employees, resulting in emotional, professionally produced videos of the announcements.

In one particularly successful and well-publicized example, the Illinois-based manufacturer CHI Overhead Doors delivered an average payout of $175,000 to 800 employees when KKR sold it for $3 billion in 2022. KKR and its investors made 10 times their initial investment on the deal, which was its best return since the 1980s.

So, how much are investors giving up? In a Harvard Business School case study on the Ownership Works model, a prospectus lays out a range of outcomes that include investors' granting nonmanagement employees 4 percent of the equity in the company when they acquire it. (At CHI, 6 percent ultimately went to hourly workers, while salaried employees got another chunk.)

Ms. Miller said that the employee equity share could vary, with the primary goal being that the shares are free to workers who make less than $100,000 annually, do not replace existing wages or benefits, and net out to payments of six months' to a year's worth of salary for each worker when the company is sold.

But Ownership Works makes the case that the equity grants essentially pay for themselves through increased employee engagement and reduced turnover -- as long as the initiative includes an effort to educate workers about business imperatives and incorporate their ideas for improving operations.

Ownership Works has built a library of materials and convened training sessions for managers on how to do that, and it offers plenty of examples when the approach has worked. It's still not clear, however, what will happen as adoption grows. At the end of 2023, Ownership Works had confirmed 88 employee-ownership plans, five of which have returned cash to workers through a sale or a dividend.

Private equity firms are notoriously secretive, and Ownership Works is in the early stages of collecting data on what happens after plans are instituted. Ms. Miller declined to provide a full list of the companies taking part, saying only that most were not KKR-owned.

In recent years, private equity firms have struggled to sell or take public the companies they own amid high interest rates, pushing a financial reward further into the future for participating workers and making it difficult to communicate the value of the benefit. Rather than stock traded on exchange, Ownership Works' plans typically offer a right to an initial dollar value of shares -- one form is called phantom equity -- that grows or shrinks with the company's earnings.

At the Venetian, a Las Vegas resort that Apollo purchased in 2022, the company has said the equity will be worth about $10,000 for each of its 7,000 employees. At the publishing house Simon & Schuster, which KKR purchased last year, management plans to set up a website where employees can track the value of their shares.

At Insight Global, a staffing and recruiting firm majority owned by the private equity firms Harvest Partners and Leonard Green Partners, $5,000 in ''equity-like'' compensation units are awarded when an employee joins and thereafter based on performance. The company's chief executive, Bert Bean, holds quarterly meetings for his 5,300 eligible employees to explain how the company is doing and what that means for the value of everyone's units.

''I even walk through 'OK, so we need our private equity partners to make good on their investment, so we need to grow the company -- so the quicker we can get them to a sale process, the quicker we can monetize this,''' Mr. Bean said.

That message doesn't automatically resonate with employees.

Take Terry Endres, who worked for three years as a sales manager at the Colson Group, a manufacturer of casters and wheels. When Blue Wolf Capital acquired Colson in March 2021, the company announced the equity sharing plan, but Mr. Endres found it difficult to discern how much it would be worth, and when the employees would get their payout. It wasn't an effective way to motivate the people he supervised, he said, and wasn't enough to keep him from leaving when another employer offered higher pay.

''It's very nice, I appreciate it, but for me, just tell me exactly what I can work towards,'' Mr. Endres said. ''Most people understand it, and when they realized there was no way to track or plan it or anything, it didn't change anyone's day-to-day performance.'' When he quit last year, his shares were worth nothing. Blue Wolf Capital declined to comment on the record about the ownership program.

Ms. Miller said that the culture shift required time, and that she was encouraged by surveys collected at eight companies showing a modest improvement in the share of employees who say they feel like owners a year after the equity plan is rolled out.

Participating private equity firms say they don't need perfect data to believe that sharing ownership with employees, beyond being right, yields higher returns.

''That's always intangible math,'' said Scott Baker, a managing partner at Oak Hill Capital who has rolled out an ownership program at several portfolio companies, including an internet service provider called MetroNet that he said was rapidly improving its profitability.

''Is that a direct result of this program? It's hard to say,'' Mr. Baker said. ''But it would be difficult to argue that the employee culture, morale and involvement, that that's not a factor.''

Ownership Works has signed up some of the industry's biggest firms, including TPG, Silver Lake and Warburg Pincus. It pulled in $21.5 million in its first year of operation from its founding partners and Mr. Stavros himself, and launched with substantial in-kind help from blue-chip consultants like McKinsey and EY. But winning over the industry's critics is another matter.

Private equity, after all, has historically garnered headlines for quickly increasing profits at target companies by avoiding taxes and trimming jobs, not for investing in worker well-being. Often, private equity executives profit from client fees and debt-funded dividends even when the underlying assets founder.

Jim Baker of the Private Equity Stakeholder Project, a nonprofit that advocates for communities and workers affected by private equity ownership, said employees of private equity-owned companies were more likely to end up in bankruptcy than with an equity payday. He thinks Ownership Works is in part an effort to polish the industry's image, noting that KKR had talked up the nonprofit on an earnings call, and Mr. Stavros was promoted to global co-head of private equity last year.

''Ownership Works' public relations value for KKR, in general, and Pete Stavros, in particular, outpaces its value for workers,'' Mr. Baker said.

Mr. Stavros has acknowledged that private equity has problems. But he argues that his model offers the ***working class*** a rare chance to build wealth alongside investors, even if it doesn't mitigate inequality.

''I didn't undertake this work with the belief that this could solve this enormous economic challenge,'' Mr. Stavros said. ''I did it because I believe strongly that this is a better way to run companies, creates better cultures and leads to better outcomes for everyone involved -- the company itself, the community, customers and the employees.''

Some organizations have pushed instead for the creation of social impact funds that facilitate business conversions to forms of employee ownership that are meant to last in perpetuity and provide more worker leverage over decisions like a company's sale. Fifty by Fifty, a project developed by the nonprofit the Democracy Collaborative, posted a collection of essays titled ''Is Private Equity About to Co-Opt Employee Ownership?''

Unlike those in an ESOP, plans like Ownership Works do not come with a fiduciary responsible for representing the workers' financial interests, which Mr. Stavros said was unnecessary because workers' interests are aligned with those of management. The equity grants also do not include a board seat or voting rights, and they wouldn't constitute a powerful bloc of the company's shares even if they did.

In lieu of legal representation, Ownership Works offers training and how-to guides for incorporating employee input, which it says is necessary to build an ''ownership culture'' that drives better results in all kinds of companies, not just those in private equity portfolios.

''As long as everybody agrees, it can work fine,'' said Julie Menter, program director of the transformative financing structures program at Transform Finance, a think tank that favors shifting power away from investors. ''But if there's a true disagreement, then the employees don't have formal governance power, which makes a difference.''

To some, concerns about Ownership Works' model reflect unrealistic expectations. Melissa Hoover is the director of special projects at the Democracy at Work Institute, which supports the formation of worker cooperatives, a model that inherently gives employees more control. She thinks Ownership Works represents a step forward, even if it's inherently limited.

''You're not going to get private equity companies investing in worker power; there are other mechanisms for that,'' Ms. Hoover said. ''Employee ownership is a zebra, and private equity is a horse, and they look similar, and you want it to be the best horse it can be, but it's never going to be a zebra.''

To Ms. Miller of Ownership Works, no employee-ownership paradigm is perfect. Unlike the others, she argues, her organization offers a low barrier to entry for a class of business people who aren't in the habit of giving away something for nothing.

''The concept is familiar to private equity firms because they use ownership to motivate each other,'' Ms. Miller said. ''And private equity can contribute to the business case, which I think is critical to this work scaling.''

Maureen Farrell contributed reporting.Maureen Farrell contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/27/business/economy/kkr-private-equity-employee-ownership.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/27/business/economy/kkr-private-equity-employee-ownership.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Top, Anna-Lisa Miller, the founding executive director of Ownership Works, which is backed by KKR. Above, Pete Stavros, the chairman of Ownership Works and an executive at KKR. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY AMIR HAMJA/THE NEW YORK TIMES

JEENAH MOON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (BU6) This article appeared in print on page BU1, BU6.

**Load-Date:** January 28, 2024

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[***For Progressive Democrats, New Momentum Clashes With Old Debates***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6821-56X1-JBG3-63NG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 19, 2023 Wednesday 11:12 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1980 words

**Byline:** Jazmine Ulloa and Lisa Lerer

**Highlight:** A push and pull between progressive and moderate Democrats is shaping the party’s policies and politics.

**Body**

A push and pull between progressive and moderate Democrats is shaping the party’s policies and politics.

Progressive victories in Wisconsin and Chicago have injected new momentum into the most liberal wing of the Democratic Party. But those recent electoral successes are masking deeper internal tensions over the role and influence of progressives in a party President Biden has been remaking in his moderate image.

Interviews with more than 25 progressive and moderate Democratic leaders and strategists — including current and former members of Congress and directors of national and statewide groups — revealed a behind-the-scenes tug of war over the party’s policy agenda, messaging and tactics. As the party looks toward next year’s elections, its key constituencies have undergone a transformation. Once mostly white, ***working-class*** voters, Democrats now tend to be affluent, white liberals, Black moderates and a more diverse middle class.

On some fronts, progressives — a relatively young, highly educated and mostly white bloc that makes up about [*12 percent*](https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2021/11/09/the-democratic-coalition/pp_2021-11-09_political-typology_02-01/) of the Democratic coalition and is the most politically active — have made inroads. Their grass-roots networks, including several headed by Black and Latino leaders, have grown sharply since the heights of the widespread resistance to the Trump administration. Beyond the high-profile victories in Chicago and Wisconsin, they have won under-the-radar local and state races across the country. And many of their views have moved into the mainstream and pushed the government to expand the fight against child poverty, climate change and other social ills.

“We as a movement helped articulate these things, to do these things,” said Representative Pramila Jayapal, the Washington State Democrat who heads the Congressional Progressive Caucus.

Yet at the same time, the activist left wing remains very much on the defensive.

The negotiations with the White House on some of the most sweeping legislation fell short of the bold, structural change many of their members sought. And progressives remain locked in an old debate with their moderate counterparts — as well as themselves — over how to communicate progressive ideas and values to voters at a time when slogans like “defund the police” have come under attack by Republicans and moderate Democrats.

“In 2018, our party seemed to react to Donald Trump winning in 2016, and the reaction was to go further and further left,” said Cheri Bustos, a former Illinois congresswoman who is a moderate and was a leader of the House Democrats’ campaign arm. “When politics swings far to the left or far to the right, there always seems to be a reckoning.”

As Mr. Biden has signaled that [*he plans to run*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/10/us/politics/biden-2024-election-running.html) for re-election in 2024, he has been emphasizing the moderate roots he has embodied throughout much of his roughly 50 years in politics. He has replaced a key ally of the left in the White House — Ron Klain, Mr. Biden’s former chief of staff — with Jeffrey D. Zients, who some [*progressive groups*](https://www.commondreams.org/news/progressives-jeff-zients) see as too friendly to corporate interests. And he has been clashing with activists who have accused him of backsliding on his liberal approaches to [*crime, statehood*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/02/us/politics/biden-no-veto-dc-criminal-code.html) for the District of Columbia, [*climate issues*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/13/climate/willow-biden-oil-climate.html) and [*immigration policy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/06/us/politics/biden-immigration-family-detention.html).

Progressive is a label that encompasses various factions within the American left and can mean different things to different people. Broadly, progressives tend to believe the government should push for sweeping change to solve problems and address racial and social inequities. Like moderate and establishment Democrats, they support strong economic and social safety net programs and believe the economic system largely favors powerful interests.

But points of tension emerge between moderates and progressives over tactics: Progressives tend to call for ambitious structural overhauls of U.S. laws and institutions that they see as fundamentally racist over incremental change and more measured policy approaches.

In [*an interview*](https://jacobin.com/2023/04/aoc-biden-trump-clarence-thomas-impeachment-climate) with the socialist political magazine Jacobin, Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York, one of the most prominent progressive Democrats in the House, highlighted the tension by criticizing the president for making a “lurch to the right.”

“I think it is extremely risky and very perilous should the Biden administration forget who it was that put him over the top,” she told the magazine, referring to the high turnout in the 2020 presidential election of young people and communities of color.

Ms. Ocasio-Cortez is the rare Democratic member of Congress to publicly criticize the president. Several other progressives said they had accepted their role as having a seat at the table, though not necessarily at the head of it. Some said they believed Mr. Biden would serve as a bridge to new generation of progressive leaders, even if for now they are caught in a waiting game.

“Right now, the progressives are sort of building power — it is like a silent build that is just going to explode in a post-Biden world,” said Representative Ro Khanna of California, a co-chairman of Senator Bernie Sanders’s 2020 presidential campaign. “I just can’t conceive of a situation where progressives aren’t dominating presidential elections over the next 15 years after Biden.”

The victories in Wisconsin and Chicago followed a similar playbook: Thousands of volunteers knocked on doors, made calls, wrote postcards, fired off mass texts and canvassed college campuses. They shied away from slogans and divisions among Democrats and emphasized the threat of an anti-democratic, Trumpian movement on the right. They turned out diverse coalitions of voters.

In Chicago that allowed [*progressives to propel*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/05/us/chicago-mayor-election-brandon-johnson.html) Brandon Johnson, a once little-known county commissioner and union organizer, to clinch a narrow victory in the mayor’s race over his more conservative Democratic opponent, Paul Vallas, who ran on [*a tough-on-crime platform*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/05/us/politics/chicago-mayor-election-democrats-crime.html) and was endorsed by a police union. In Wisconsin, where Janet Protasiewicz, a liberal Milwaukee County judge, [*won a high-stakes race*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/04/us/politics/wisconsin-supreme-court-protasiewicz.html) for a seat on the state’s Supreme Court, it allowed Democrats to lean into issues that the establishment wing of the party once tended to avoid in Republican and heavily contested areas: increased access to abortion and collective bargaining rights.

“I couldn’t feel more proud or feel more vindicated that the type of politics we argued for are where more Americans are at,” said Maurice Mitchell, national director of the Working Families Party, a grass-roots organization that often works with progressive Democrats and mobilized voters in Chicago and Wisconsin.

Progressives have also been increasing their ranks in other places. Members of their wing now hold the [*mayor’s office in Los Angeles*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/16/us/politics/la-mayor-race-california-caruso-bass.html) and a majority on [*the board of aldermen*](https://www.stltoday.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/progressives-win-key-st-louis-aldermanic-races-securing-agenda/article_f8f9dd02-2d3e-5f7a-9981-9a80e99bf185.html) in St. Louis. They have swept into statehouses in [*Colorado*](https://www.coloradopolitics.com/legislature/colorado-lawmakers-move-further-left-but-will-the-laws-follow-suit-cover-story/article_29ff8712-8019-11ed-993b-33a105b117bd.html), [*Connecticut*](https://workingfamilies.org/2022/11/ct-wfp-and-the-resounding-progressive-victories-across-connecticut/) and Wisconsin, where two Democratic Socialists this year [*revived a socialist caucus*](https://apnews.com/article/politics-wisconsin-state-government-milwaukee-socialism-a2705953b8235369410df4ad4cf7eaef) inactive since the 1930s. At the federal level, the House’s Congressional Progressive Caucus [*added 16 new members*](https://rollcall.com/2023/01/10/progressive-caucus-starts-year-with-bigger-roster-focus-on-unity/), bringing the total number of the organization to 102 — one of the largest ideological caucuses in Congress.

But as they build their organizing power, progressives are contending with a financial framework at the mercy of boom-and-bust cycles. Major gifts from donors or progressive attention to a cause du jour can draw sudden revenue windfalls and then dry out. In the Trump years, some grass-roots groups had explosive growth as progressives rushed to combat Trump policies, elevate a younger and more diverse crop of candidates and help fuel a national reckoning with racism. By the 2022 midterms, some progressive candidates and groups were having to rewrite budgets, considering laying off staff members and triaging outreach programs and advertising as donations slowed.

In Georgia, the Asian American Advocacy Fund, which focuses on mobilizing Asian American voters, went from having six full-time employees and a budget of roughly $95,000 in 2018 to a staff of 14 and a budget of $3 million in 2022. Its executive director, Aisha Yaqoob Mahmood, said the boom allowed the group to run better programs but also made those projects harder to sustain when donations ran low. The group was among several in swing states that struggled in 2022 to get political canvassing efforts off the ground as major Democratic donors cut back on their political giving.

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Political analysts also warned against reading too much into progressive gains in areas that already lean liberal. During the midterms, the candidates who won tough midterm contests in purple places like Pennsylvania, Arizona, Georgia and Nevada largely adopted more moderate positions. And more progressive nominees who beat [*moderates in a number of House primaries lost in the general election.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/14/us/politics/gop-far-right-election-voters.html)

“The whole name of the game is creating a majority, and the majority makers are the moderates,” said Matt Bennett, a co-founder of Third Way, a centrist organization. Referring to progressives, he said: “They can win occasionally. But for the most part, they lose because what they’re selling isn’t what Dems want to be buying.”

As Mr. Trump vies for the 2024 Republican presidential nomination, with multiple investigations hanging over his campaign, both moderate and progressive Democrats said they were forming a united front against a common foil and on issues where there is less division within their party, like abortion and protecting democracy. But for progressives, that has still meant a delicate dance about who they are.

In Pennsylvania, John Fetterman, successfully campaigning for Senate last year, argued that he was not a progressive but “[*just a Democrat*](https://www.nbcnews.com/meet-the-press/video/fetterman-progressive-no-i-m-just-a-democrat-139738693638).” In Virginia, Jennifer McClellan, who became the first Black woman [*to represent the state in Congress*](https://rollcall.com/2023/02/21/pragmatic-progressive-to-be-virginias-first-black-woman-in-congress/), has called herself a “pragmatic progressive,” emphasizing her decades of working across the aisle.

The stakes are especially high for progressives in Arizona, where a fierce race is expected over Senator Kyrsten Sinema’s seat, after she left the Democratic Party in December to become an independent. Ms. Sinema flipped a Republican-held seat by hewing to the center and relying on progressive groups that turned out a large coalition of Democratic and independent voters.

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In some ways, Mr. Gallego is a bona fide progressive. He has been promoting policies like expanding affordable health care, enacting a permanent child tax credit and increasing wages. In other ways, he is reluctant to openly embrace the progressive brand, preferring instead to talk about his vision for Arizona or his experience as a Marine combat veteran and former construction worker as a way to help bring those ***working-class*** Latinos who now vote Republican back into the Democratic fold.

Asked if he sees himself as a progressive, Mr. Gallego said, “I see myself as someone who has been a worker and a fighter for ***working-class*** families.” He added, “We are not going to be focusing on D.C. labels.”

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PHOTOS: President Biden, who has indicated that he plans to run for re-election, has emphasized his political roots as a moderate Democrat. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HAIYUN JIANG/THE NEW YORK TIMES); Progressive volunteers’ efforts to mobilize voters propelled Brandon Johnson, top, to be elected mayor of Chicago, and helped Janet Protasiewicz win a seat on Wisconsin’s Supreme Court. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY EVAN COBB FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; JAMIE KELTER DAVIS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A16.

**Load-Date:** April 19, 2023

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[***Progressives' Momentum Masks Internal Tensions***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6821-3YF1-JBG3-634Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 19, 2023 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 16

**Length:** 1912 words

**Byline:** By Jazmine Ulloa and Lisa Lerer

**Body**

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On some fronts, progressives -- a relatively young, highly educated and mostly white bloc that makes up about 12 percent of the Democratic coalition and is the most politically active -- have made inroads. Their grass-roots networks, including several headed by Black and Latino leaders, have grown sharply since the heights of the widespread resistance to the Trump administration. Beyond the high-profile victories in Chicago and Wisconsin, they have won under-the-radar local and state races across the country. And many of their views have moved into the mainstream and pushed the government to expand the fight against child poverty, climate change and other social ills.

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As Mr. Biden has signaled that he plans to run for re-election in 2024, he has been emphasizing the moderate roots he has embodied throughout much of his roughly 50 years in politics. He has replaced a key ally of the left in the White House -- Ron Klain, Mr. Biden's former chief of staff -- with Jeffrey D. Zients, who some progressive groups see as too friendly to corporate interests. And he has been clashing with activists who have accused him of backsliding on his liberal approaches to crime, statehood for the District of Columbia, climate issues and immigration policy.

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Progressives have also been increasing their ranks in other places. Members of their wing now hold the mayor's office in Los Angeles and a majority on the board of aldermen in St. Louis. They have swept into statehouses in Colorado, Connecticut and Wisconsin, where two Democratic Socialists this year revived a socialist caucus inactive since the 1930s. At the federal level, the House's Congressional Progressive Caucus added 16 new members, bringing the total number of the organization to 102 -- one of the largest ideological caucuses in Congress.

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**Graphic**

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Progressive volunteers' efforts to mobilize voters propelled Brandon Johnson, top, to be elected mayor of Chicago, and helped Janet Protasiewicz win a seat on Wisconsin's Supreme Court. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY EVAN COBB FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

JAMIE KELTER DAVIS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A16.

**Load-Date:** April 19, 2023

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[***America Turned the Greatest Vehicle of Social Mobility Into a Debt Machine; Tressie McMillan Cottom***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65H2-4FN1-JBG3-61B5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 21, 2022 Saturday 09:04 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 2256 words

**Byline:** Tressie McMillan Cottom

**Highlight:** Student loan debt is an albatross around the Democrats’ neck.

**Body**

If it weren’t for all of the Black women students milling about, Bennett College in Greensboro, N.C., would be the picture of Hollywood’s idea of a small liberal arts college. The red-brick architecture anchors a manicured quad. Wide footpaths crisscross the small but tidy commons.

And then a brick wall announces a boundary not quite breached by the surrounding area’s racial segregation and economic precarity. But it is a half wall, one on which you can sit and stare outside the bubble toward the reality from which students arrive. As metaphors go, it is a strong one: [*Black colleges like Bennett*](https://www.bennett.edu/) cannot afford to build a wall so high that the world does not intrude.

I recently visited Bennett just ahead of news that the Rolling Jubilee Fund — a project of the Debt Collective, a national union of debtors that purchases portfolios of debt in order to erase them — would be canceling all past-due tuition bills in collection. For Bennett College, that amounts to just over $1.76 million. For an idea of the scale of that forgiveness, consider that the median university endowment in 2021 was $200 million. Bennett’s endowment is around just $15 million. Active since 2012, the Rolling Jubilee’s debt erasure program goes a long way for institutions with paltry endowments that serve minority students with a lot of financial need.

When I strolled the yard recently, I knew that many Bennett students would be getting a letter freeing them of the debt that weighed them down and made it hard to live up to the promise of a college education. The biggest deal is not the cash that forgiveness might free up and which could be spent on rising housing costs or used to pad their savings. The Bennett leaders I spoke with say the most tangible benefit is that students who owe the college money can now get access to their academic transcripts, proving that they have in fact attended school. As a lot of students learn the hard way, an account balance means no transcripts. The real world always exists on campus if you know how to see it.

The Biden administration is now considering giving more former college students a version of the relief that the Bennett students are experiencing: debt forgiveness. A lot of people worry that debt forgiveness will spur inflation. They tsk-tsk about what it will say to people about personal responsibility. And they worry about the optics of forgiving people who partied for four years and did beer pong in the quad and blew through their parents’ credit card limits on spring break.

Those are worries of an out-of-touch chattering class. No one drank enough beer in college for the last 30 years to deserve a student loan balance that increases even as the debtor attempts to pay down the principal. The message that some people don’t deserve debt relief is a politics of grievance. If you cannot craft a political message that acknowledges that we turned the greatest vehicle of social mobility into a debt machine, then you are not good at messaging.

This is the right message: We messed up. Our bad. Make it right. Cancel the debt.

Too many Americans believe college and the real world are distinct spheres. Like scriptwriters, we collectively draw a picture of what college looks like: residential, maybe a big state school or a small private elite school. Professors are generally male and erudite. And the students are young, diverse, able-bodied. We imagine the college years as a holding pattern, a liminal space between family home and the pressures of jobs and bills. Yet today most students have more in common with Bennett Belles than the idealized college student. Because we do not make that clear to Americans, our debates about who should pay for college — and at what social expense — are stuck in the 1950s.

Being stuck in higher education’s affordable glory days does not prepare us to debate the reality of college today. Not only has the price of college skyrocketed but students have changed. The student debt crisis is not a crisis because of the absolute $1.7 trillion owed but because of the relative disadvantage of those who hold the debt.

Today’s typical college students are what we would have once called “nontraditional.” That means they are parents, caregivers, or working adults. They are also less likely to be male and white and middle class than they were a generation ago. Borrowers may incur their debt when they are young adults but the debt follows them well into middle age. People ages 25 to 49 [*are responsible for*](https://www.forbes.com/advisor/student-loans/average-student-loan-statistics/) the majority of all student debt.

Even the students who are straight-from-high-school are not like the teenagers of yore. They are carrying the burdens of complicated lives. They help their parents avoid eviction, their cousins with their schoolwork, and their elders with health care forms. College for them is not a timeout from real life.

When the student body changed, it became easier to change Americans’ minds about who should pay for college. I have talked with Brian Powell and Natasha Quadlin about their book, “Who Should Pay?,” which is based on a survey of Americans’ attitudes about the right mix of responsibility for college costs. According to Quadlin and Powell, voters generally agree that saddling students with debt for college is un-American and unfair.

The real divide is between ways of thinking about collective responsibility. Older Americans and some conservatives think that families should pick up the tab. Younger Americans and some liberals think that the government should step in to unburden students. Family or the state is the crux of the issue. Whom you determine to be responsible probably influences your opinion on whether we should forgive student loan debt for millions of Americans.

The Biden administration is willing to play ball on debt forgiveness after sidelining it just a year ago. With midterms around the corner, forgiving “some debt,” as President Biden cautiously describes his current position, could energize part of the Democratic base. Economists and policymakers are gearing up to explain, as Paul Begala, a former adviser to President Bill Clinton, recently [*implied*](https://twitter.com/billmaher/status/1524450599957241858?s=20&amp;t=lumu5WfwhWIdNk8KMQaN4Q), that this is a horrible idea for the Democrats. Forgiving debt for a bunch of overeducated namby-pamby voters, the thinking goes, reinforces the notion that Democrats give handouts, a sure turnoff for real ***working-class*** voters who, presumably, despise arugula and the educated classes who eat it.

Begala’s caricature of the views of ***working-class*** people obscures who they are in order to score cynical political points. If you talk with Powell and Quadlin, you learn that ***working-class*** people are sending their kids to college by pulling extra shifts and putting their kids and grandkids’ names on Sunday prayer lists when they earn a partial book scholarship to the local campus of the state school.

***Working-class*** families are the base of institutions like Bennett College, where, for generations, daughters, aunts and nieces have carefully packed in their suitcases dreams of higher education. They arrive at college focused on not only changing their lives but their family’s fortunes. Anthony Jack’s “The Privileged Poor” features interviews with ***working-class*** students at elite institutions who work in cafeterias and send scholarship money back home to help support their families. ***Working-class*** people are in every sector of higher education because they believe in its promise. And they have the debt to prove it.

The ***working class*** so believed in higher education’s promise that they didn’t waver even as tuition prices rose year after year. They believed it when guidance counselors and politicians told them that going to college was the single most important thing that they could do for themselves and for their children. They believed the financial gurus who told them that theirs was “good debt,” the kind that would pay for itself in guaranteed higher wages from good jobs waiting for them upon graduation.

They believed so much that when one degree was not enough to pay off the debt, millions took on additional debt for more degrees. Reasonable people made decisions based on the available information at the time and all information from trusted sources pointed to “borrow.”

If you did not want to borrow, the cost of college narrowed your practical choices. You could attend a community college, join the military, be born to a wealthy family or not go to school at all. No matter your personal feelings about any of those choices, there were a lot of social norms about their relative value. We look down on community college education as unsuitable for the kind of high-wage, white-collar work that comes with prestige in our economy. And, in case you had not noticed, the United States has been engaged in military conflict somewhere in the world for much of these students’ lifetimes. That left two choices, only one of them practical: Don’t go to college at all. But the incentives to go are too numerous to make this a good choice for most people. That created a perverse set of incentives.

You can be forgiven for not knowing that the “go to college” refrain would have a darker side. But we should not forgive those who knew better. Policymakers knew by the 2010s that the train was going off the rails. For-profit colleges were preying on women like those who might have ended up at Bennett College. As the sociologist Louise Seamster told me on “[*The Ezra Klein Show,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/02/podcasts/transcript-ezra-klein-show-louise-seamster.html)” they knew that Black debtors would likely never earn enough to pay off their college debt. They knew that poor immigrant and first-generation Black and Hispanic students were turning to their elderly parents and grandparents to co-sign for loans. We knew that Social Security checks would end up garnished as a result, throwing thousands of elderly people into the very poverty that the program was designed to prevent.

We knew that some people racked up six-figure debt for fancy law firm or medical jobs but that those with more than $200,000 in debt made up 2 percent of all borrowers. We knew that we had incentivized bad actors in the student loan servicing market. We knew that student loan debt was most expensive for the families who had the most to lose. And we kept offering the loans with the same cheerful promise: It’s worth it.

When you are scammed by a friend, it is a shame. When your country scams you, it is a fraud.

Those cautioning “go small and slow” on debt forgiveness — whether they did not rely on student loans because they were wealthy or they went to college when one could pay tuition working part-time jobs — resemble the people who make higher education policy who are suspicious of forgiveness because it smacks of government handouts. Their impulse is to tinker at the edges of the quicksand drowning many of their core constituents. Or, at their most generous, they will consider meager debt forgiveness with means-testing.

Means-testing is a way to measure for deservingness and it is the wrong ax for this woodpile. First, it is a bureaucratic mess, if it is even possible. The I.R.S. and the Department of Education don’t seem able to coordinate on verifying income to qualify those who pass the means-testing. There is also the issue of means-testing working as regressive. Social science has shown that means-testing is a roadblock for people who need relief the most. If you want to help the ***working-class*** people who carry debt, make it easy to cancel.

Means-testing is also just the wrong solution for this problem. The student loan debt crisis we created is a recent invention. We are not forgiving the debt because it makes us feel bad. We are forgiving this debt because, as designed, it negates the value of education. This debt crisis is the outcome of a set of foreseeable market forces and policy decisions. Every student who took on debt under those conditions did so under circumstances that made it impossible to make better choices. No one, not even graduates who now earn a lot of money, deserved odds as bad as the ones we created.

The people making the rules did not talk straight with the American people about what college debt would actually cost, how it would work, and what it would mean for economic mobility. Year after year, campaign after campaign, the people in charge of the train looked us dead in the eyes and told us it was on the tracks.

Biden prides himself on being a straight shooter, a man of the people who does not shy away from tough conversations. When you make a mistake in the real world, where families can be tough but loving and bullies do exist, you do not double-down on them. You look the people you have harmed in the eyes, and you ask their forgiveness. Then you make it right.

The time for debating student debt’s political messaging is over. Anything less than across-the-board forgiveness extends the life of the mess we made. Student loan debt is an albatross around the Democrats’ neck. Kicking the can down the road is throwing good political capital after bad.

Tressie McMillan Cottom (@[*tressiemcphd*](https://twitter.com/tressiemcphd)) is an associate professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Information and Library Science, the author of “Thick: And Other Essays” and a 2020 MacArthur fellow.

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**Load-Date:** May 22, 2022

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[***It’s Clear That Ron DeSantis Is No Longer on the Rise, but Someone Else Is; Charles M. Blow***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6913-SN61-JBG3-63RP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 24, 2023 Thursday 22:29 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 880 words

**Byline:** Charles M. Blow

**Highlight:** On Wednesday night, Vivek Ramaswamy was seen as the greatest threat.

**Body**

In a crowded debate, you can tell which candidates are seen as the greatest threat because they take the most incoming fire from their rivals.

During the Republican presidential primary debate on Wednesday night, that person wasn’t Ron DeSantis, who was once considered Donald Trump’s greatest threat, but Vivek Ramaswamy, a 38-year-old political upstart with little chance of actually securing the nomination.

Watching the DeSantis campaign collapse has been an extraordinarily edifying spectacle.

There would have been no DeSantis without Trump. Trump endorsed DeSantis for governor of Florida when DeSantis was struggling against a strong Republican opponent for the party’s nomination. DeSantis rode Trump’s endorsement to victory.

So there was always something about the DeSantis campaign that seemed reminiscent of Macbeth coming to kill his king. The only problem is that DeSantis has ambition, but not the bloodlust. He lacks the courage, which is ironic given that before his run he wrote a book titled “The Courage to Be Free.”

Instead of making the case to voters that Trump is unfit, he is counting on Trump’s martyrdom being his downfall. His gamble has yet to pay off.

In addition, DeSantis has a chronic personality problem. He simply doesn’t connect with people. He smiles the way a Doberman bares its teeth: It feels forced, aggressive and dangerous. You feel like you should retreat from it. And when he’s not forcing a smile, he reflexively scowls. He has a resting wince face.

He is not just emotionally aloof, but completely detached. He abides in aggression because the rest of the emotional range has either atrophied or failed to develop in the first place. In fact, during debate prep in 2018, one of his advisers [*told*](https://abcnews.go.com/US/dont-piss-off-voters-recordings-reveal-desantis-2018/story?id=99142146) him that on the debate stage he would need to write “LIKABLE” in all caps at the top of his note pad.

On Wednesday, DeSantis dispensed with that advice. He leaned into the aggression. But no one engaged. No one even responded. He was largely ignored by the other candidates, and the only thing that cuts deeper than disparagement is indifference.

Instead, Ramaswamy was the target onstage, and he ate up the attention.

Ever since the rise of Barack Obama and Republicans’ unseemly reaction to it, the party has entertained exotica. In 2011, Herman “9-9-9” Cain surged in the G.O.P. field for a while. In 2015, Ben “No Muslims as President” Carson led Trump in the polls for a moment.

They are the amuse-bouche, the tasty appetizer before the party gets serious and sits for the meal.

Now it is Ramaswamy’s turn.

At one point, Chris Christie attempted to insult Ramaswamy by saying that “the last person at one of these debates who stood in the middle of the stage and said, ‘What’s a skinny guy with an odd last name doing up here,’ was Barack Obama, and I’m afraid we’re dealing with the same type of amateur.”

Ramaswamy glowed at the comparison and shot back: “Give me a hug just like you did to Obama, and you’ll help elect me just like you did to Obama too.”

Let’s be clear: Vivek, you are no Barack.

You have a shallow, CliffsNotes understanding of the issues, but because you speak with speed and confidence, polished diction and a toothy grin, the incoherence is disguised by the delivery. Ramaswamy is the kind of person who gets hired for charisma rather than competence.

At points, it seems obvious that he is being intentionally contrarian, outlandish and provocative in his proposals and pronouncements in order to provoke a reaction and garner more attention. In doing so, he is the personification of click bait.

He is also positioning himself as inseparable from Trump. Not a competitor of Trump, but a superfan. He doesn’t want to replace him; he wants to merge with him. Ramaswamy is so close to the former president that he’s like the joey in the pouch to Trump’s kangaroo.

This ingratiates him not only to Trump’s voters but also to Trump himself, because Trump appreciates nothing more than devotion and loyalty.

This had to hurt DeSantis. He is consumed by a class complex. As DeSantis wrote in his book, he was a “blue-collar kid,” an every-Sunday-service Catholic, who made his way to the Ivy League, where he believed his wealthy classmates looked down on the ***working class*** as not “sufficiently sophisticated.” He is still fighting to prove that he belongs, to prove that his worldview is not only valid but also superior.

And along comes Ramaswamy, also wealthier and more polished than DeSantis, to once again steal his shine, to make him feel small and insignificant.

There were points during the debate when Ramaswamy sparred with Mike Pence and Chris Christie while literally looking past DeSantis as if he wasn’t there.

DeSantis didn’t crash and burn Wednesday night. He made no real errors. He stayed on message and forcefully delivered his points. But the debate delivered its own point to him: His star is setting while another rises.

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PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAMON WINTER/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A23.

**Load-Date:** August 24, 2023

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[***A ‘Mirror World’ Where Leftist Disdain Feeds Right-Wing Paranoia; Nonfiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6943-C591-DXY4-X00K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 7, 2023 Thursday 21:24 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 950 words

**Byline:** Katie Roiphe

**Highlight:** In her latest book, “Doppelganger,” Naomi Klein investigates an online underworld of conspiracies and misinformation, showing how its rise has inadvertently been fueled by political progressives.

**Body**

DOPPELGANGER: A Trip Into the Mirror World, by Naomi Klein

Reading the leftist writer and activist Naomi Klein’s new book, “Doppelganger,” feels like falling down a rabbit hole, albeit a dazzling and erudite one. It begins with Klein’s account of being confused on social media for Naomi Wolf, the feminist intellectual turned rabid anti-vaxxer, whom Klein calls “my big-haired doppelganger.” During the pandemic, Wolf began arguing, online and [*in a book*](https://www.amazon.com/Bodies-Others-Authoritarians-COVID-19-Against/dp/1737478560/ref=sr_1_1?crid=UFYOGI647HG2&amp;keywords=naomi+wolf&amp;qid=1692997994&amp;sprefix=naomi+wolf%2Caps%2C113&amp;sr=8-1), that vaccines and other public health measures were a plot by a “transnational group of bad actors” to sterilize people, turn children into drones and undermine the Constitution, among many other unhinged assertions.

It got to the point that when Wolf would say something outlandish, people would tweet “Thoughts and prayers to Naomi Klein.” Needless to say, it was disturbing for Klein, the serious author of books such as “[*No Logo*](https://www.nytimes.com/2000/04/23/books/brand-names.html?searchResultPosition=1)” and “[*The Shock Doctrine*](https://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/30/books/review/Stiglitz-t.html?searchResultPosition=1),” to be confused with “a person who can’t seem to tell the difference between temporary public health measures and a coup d’état.”

At first, Klein tries to ignore “Other Naomi,” to see the comic side of the conflation; she files it into the category of “‘things that happened on the internet that were not quite real’ (back when we were silly enough to do that about all kinds of things).” And then she begins obsessively to follow Wolf’s rise in what she calls the “Mirror World” of wild conspiracies and right-wing paranoia. Klein hides from her family during the pandemic to listen to Wolf on Steve Bannon’s podcast, spinning an analysis of her “doppelganger” into a deft and intricate investigation of online culture and political doubling.

By obsessively chasing “Other Naomi,” Klein attempts to face and understand what most liberals simply try to avoid or shut out. She doesn’t give in to the temptation to dismiss Wolf and other denizens of the Mirror World as irrelevant crackpots and crazies; instead, she dives into a probing investigation of their preoccupations and appeal.

On her highbrow romp through this disturbing underworld, Klein’s writing is clear, dynamic, ruthlessly honest, imbued with a rare integrity. She brings unusual rigor to her examinations of herself, including her flaws. She is that nearly extinct breed of activist: one who never stops questioning orthodoxies and interrogating her own beliefs. “Doppelganger” showcases her superb ability to cut through clichés and received ideas, as well as intellectual conventions.

By mapping the evolution of her doppelganger, along with other pockets of online paranoia that flourished during the pandemic, Klein traces how well-intentioned liberals begin to mirror the anti-vaxxers: “We defined ourselves against each other and yet were somehow becoming ever more alike, willing to declare each other non-people.” She carefully untangles on the right a “mimicking of beliefs and concerns that feeds off progressive failures and silences.”

In Klein’s view, “When entire categories of people are reduced to their race and gender and labeled ‘privileged,’ there is little room to confront the myriad ways that ***working-class*** white men and women are abused under our predatory capitalist order, with left-wing movements losing many opportunities for alliances.” She points out that such reductive labeling is “highly unstrategic,” since the Mirror World is waiting for people alienated or exiled by the left, offering them forums and sympathy.

“Doppelganger”’s rabbit-hole form allows it to flow from wellness influencers turned anti-vaxxers during the pandemic to parents of autistic children, to Nazis, to Israel, to Klein’s husband’s potential political constituents. (In 2021, Klein’s husband, Avi Lewis ran unsuccessfully, for a [*seat in the Canadian Parliament*](https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/avi-lewis-aims-to-leave-mark-ndp-federal-election-2021-1.6181568).) Her references jump from Iris Murdoch to Charlie Chaplin, Philip Roth, Marx and Freud, and one of the great pleasures of the book is watching her mind synthesize this confounding and volatile political moment with such originality and verve.

If Klein’s jargon can sound like it’s lifted from a slick new Netflix series — with her “Shadow Lands,” “Mirror World” and “doppelgangers” — there is a drama and stylishness to her inquiry that is hard to resist. By deploying the idiom of psychological thrillers, she infuses energy into her often dense or theoretical material.

She emerges from her long wrangle with her own doppelganger with a new sense of distance from the person she is online. Because Wolf has injected “a hefty dose of ridiculousness into the seriousness with which I once took my public persona,” Klein writes, she feels freed from her public self. She refers to the process as an “unconventional Buddhist exercise in annihilating the ego,” and quotes John Berger’s observation to her that “calm is a form of resistance.”

If some of Klein’s larger-scale solutions toward the end of the book seem pat or elusive (teach people the true meaning of words like “patriarchy” and “imperialism”; recognize our interconnectedness), I nonetheless admired her impulse to write her way out of despair. There is something hopeful in this project, in its sheer intellectual ambition and range, its effort to pick apart and decipher the absurdities and ironies of our political derangement, which almost no other writer could pull off. If I had to name a single book that makes sense of these last few dark years, it would be this one.

DOPPELGANGER: A Trip Into the Mirror World | By Naomi Klein | 399 pp. | Farrar, Straus &amp; Giroux | $27

Katie Roiphe is TK. tkt tkt kt tkt kt kt tkt kt tkt kt tkt kt ktk t tktk tktktk tk tkt kt kt tk tk tkt kt kt tkt tk tk tkt kt kt t tk ktkt tkt kt tk tkkt tk tk tkt kt kt ktkt

This article appeared in print on page BR11.

**Load-Date:** September 27, 2023

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[***Can Civics Lessons for the Young Help Mend Society?; letters***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:696X-2BC1-DXY4-X0TV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 20, 2023 Wednesday 22:30 EST

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**Section:** OPINION; letters

**Length:** 1136 words

**Highlight:** Readers react to a guest essay by educators at Stanford. Also: The new Senate dress code; Ron DeSantis and vaccines.

**Body**

To the Editor:

Re “[*By Dropping Civics, Colleges Gave Fuel to the Culture Wars*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/03/opinion/colleges-civics-core-curriculum-culture-wars.html),” by Debra Satz and Dan Edelstein (Opinion guest essay, Sept. 7):

As a humanities professor for three decades, I am frequently amazed at the — dare I say — hubris of my colleagues when it comes to their estimate of their capacity to mold the conscience of the Republic.

Professors Satz and Edelstein believe that the decline in prevalence of “Western Civ” courses in the curriculum has been a key element in the degradation of our civic culture. Their notion that some 40 hours of class time turned students’ souls toward the light is indeed touching, but highly unlikely.

They neglect to mention, for example, that in the days they look back on fondly, when freshmen wrestled with the eternal verities revealed by Socrates, these courses seldom moved Southern whites to rethink their subjugation of Black people, or Northern whites to call their Southern brothers and sisters to account.

Colleges can do many things, but turning the culture away from its immemorial vices is not one of them.

Thomas Peyser

Richmond, Va.

To the Editor:

Anyone who had the good fortune to attend [*Eisenhower College*](https://eisenhowercollege.org/our-story/#:~:text=Eisenhower%20College%20was%20founded%20in,college%20as%20a%20living%20memorial.) in Seneca Falls, N.Y., during its all-too-short life can attest to the wisdom of this essay. Designated in 1968 by Congress as a “living memorial” to President Dwight D. Eisenhower, the college embraced his belief in broadening minds and perspectives.

Countering the then trendy moves in higher education toward more freedom of curriculum choices, we were required to take a four-year World Studies program that went far beyond Western Civ. We delved into the history of civilization, East and West, from ancient times to our own, the major religions and philosophies, the arts, science, etc.

Too bad Eisenhower College, which closed in 1983, was such an outlier back then. Here’s hoping the efforts at Stanford can start a new wave that will produce the kind of benefit my fellow alumni experienced during our alma mater’s brief, shining moment.

I’m convinced that all those required courses helped us become more alert to the world around us, more confident in our own opinions, more willing to consider those of others.

Tim Smith

Reisterstown, Md.

To the Editor:

Debra Satz and Dan Edelstein make a compelling case about universities’ responsibility to include civics in their curriculum. At a time when teens feel a growing distrust of government and when civic education and history knowledge are [*at all-time lows on our “Nation’s Report Card,”*](https://www.npr.org/2023/05/03/1173432887/history-and-civics-scores-drop-for-u-s-eighth-graders-on-national-test) civic education has never been more important. Further, political polarization has made telling the story of America complicated not just for students, but also for their teachers.

But college is too late. Civic education needs to commence before high school commencement, if not during middle school. Our society owes members of the next generation the opportunity to understand American history, foundational texts, how the government is supposed to work and their role in our shared democracy.

Before starting to vote, let alone reaching the college campus, students deserve comprehensive civic education that strengthens democratic fluency, fosters civic skills and generates civic belonging. The future of American democracy depends on it.

Charles E. Savenor

New York

The writer, a rabbi, is executive director of Civic Spirit, which works with schools to enhance civic knowledge and engagement.

To the Editor:

I disagree with Debra Satz and Dan Edelstein of Stanford University, who argue that higher education has largely abandoned civic education.

At DePaul University, with support from the Teagle Foundation, we have implemented a liberal studies course, “[*Lived Civics, the Social Contract and Public Life*](https://blogs.depaul.edu/civics-initiative/about/),” to build civic skills, historical knowledge and democratic dispositions among students.

Taught by teachers across the university (in political science and communications, but also accounting, writing and rhetoric, theater, music and art), students learn about historical events and political upheaval as the evolution and constant renegotiation of our founding contract.

In addition, the course is intentionally centered around fostering the democratic skill of listening, so that students gain an appreciation for one another’s lived experiences across their political differences. The goal of the course is to frame public problems as shared problems, which are ours to address — together. We would be happy to share the curriculum widely.

Molly W. Andolina

Chicago

The writer is a professor of political science at DePaul University.

The New Senate Dress Code: Casual or Just Sloppy?

To the Editor:

Re “[*The Senate Dress Code Gets a Casual Overhaul*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/18/us/politics/senate-dress-code.html?searchResultPosition=1)” (news article, Sept. 19):

In an era when so many norms are being destroyed and so many institutions — the U.S. Senate included — are being degraded, the last thing we need is a downgrading of the Senate dress code. This is especially true of Senator John Fetterman’s outfits, which the rule change seems to be reacting to. These clothes are much more than simply “casual”; they are the absolute sloppiest and most thoughtless clothes you can imagine.

The way senators dress is symbolic, and symbols are important. Elegant, formal clothes convey the idea that the Senate is an important place where important work is being done. Mr. Fetterman’s attire, in contrast, suggests that the Senate’s work is no more important than doing chores around the house or going on a run to the grocery store. The symbolism is made all the more resonant when the clothes are on Mr. Fetterman’s 6-foot-8 frame, to which the eye is naturally drawn.

Why does Senator Fetterman insist on dressing this way? If the purpose is his personal branding — to scrupulously maintain his workingman cred — then I think he is seriously underestimating working people. Just because they may not need to dress in suits for their own jobs doesn’t mean they won’t respect and understand when someone else does. And anyway, Mr. Fetterman’s clothes are so sloppy that few Americans would go to work in them — the ***working class*** very much included.

Fred Grossman

Seattle

To the Editor:

Republican senators’ outrage about the relaxation of the dress code in the chamber is quite rich.

Where is the outrage against [*Senator Tommy Tuberville’s blockade of military promotions*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/13/us/politics/military-promotions-tuberville.html)? Where is the outrage against the Jan. 6 rioters and Donald Trump? Where is the outrage against the threats to shut down the government? The list could go on and on and on.

David Wynn

Livingston, N.J.

DeSantis and Vaccines

To the Editor:

Re “[*DeSantis Disputes C.D.C. Vaccine Advice*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/14/us/politics/desantis-covid-vaccine-booster.html?searchResultPosition=1)” (news article, Sept. 15):

It warms the cockles of my heart to know that Gov. Ron DeSantis is smarter and knows more than doctors, public health officials and infectious disease experts.

David Cowen

Syosset, N.Y.

This article appeared in print on page A25.

**Load-Date:** September 20, 2023

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[***Men’s Tights Aren’t Just for Elizabethan Aristocrats Anymore; notes on the culture***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:693W-D1Y1-JBG3-64R1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 6, 2023 Wednesday 13:05 EST

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**Section:** T-MAGAZINE

**Length:** 973 words

**Byline:** Nick Haramis

**Highlight:** Stockings appeared on a slew of male models this season, once again affirming that their practical, provocative appeal transcends the gender binary.

**Body**

Stockings appeared on a slew of male models this season, once again affirming that their practical, provocative appeal transcends the gender binary.

AFTER SATIRIZING EVERYTHING from the western to the Stone Age, Mel Brooks in 1993 released the movie “[*Robin Hood: Men in Tights*](https://www.nytimes.com/1993/07/28/movies/review-film-mel-brooks-aims-his-comedic-barbs-at-robin-hood-et-al.html),” a sendup of “[*Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*](https://www.nytimes.com/1991/06/14/movies/review-film-a-polite-robin-hood-in-a-legend-recast.html),” which had come out two years earlier. Although Brooks’s parody was uniformly idiotic — Maid Marian wears an Everlast chastity belt; Blinkin, a blind servant, gropes a Braille edition of Playboy — many of the laughs were at the expense of so-called feygeles, a Yiddish slur for gay men. During a musical number with a cancan interlude, the heroic outlaw assures the audience he’s not one. “We may look like pansies,” he and his Merry Men [*sing*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G59JnM4JKNQ), “but don’t get us wrong or else we’ll put out your lights. We’re men. We’re men in tights.”

The joke would have confused William Shakespeare: In the Elizabethan era, noblemen customarily wore trunk hose (baglike silk breeches described by Richard Thompson Ford in his 2021 book, “[*Dress Codes*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/09/books/review/the-african-lookbook-catherine-e-mckinley-dress-codes-richard-thompson-ford.html),” as the “parachute pants of their day”) over canions, fitted tubes of fabric that anticipated women’s leg warmers of the 1980s. The ostentatious style of the time — often accompanied by powdered wigs and high-heeled shoes trimmed with rosettes — was meant to telegraph wealth and status while also drawing the eye to a man’s calves, then symbols of virility. To protect the social order, sumptuary laws were passed that discouraged commoners from dressing above their class.

During the French Revolution, bourgeois radicals — known as the sans-culottes — traded their sheathlike breeches and silk stockings for the looser, more practical trousers of the proletariat. For centuries hence, wearing the pants has been a metaphor for wielding power. Although tights have occasionally made appearances on men’s runways (Jean-Paul Gaultier styled them [*under feathered skirts*](https://assets.vogue.com/photos/5876ff3657520a36770d3fc6/master/w_2580%2Cc_limit/men-in-tights-18.jpg) in 1986; [*Riccardo Tisci paired them*](https://wwd.com/fashion-news/fashion-features/gallery/givenchy-mens-rtw-fall-2010/givenchy-mens-rtw-fall-2010-2425677-portrait/) with black skorts and thorny gold necklaces for his ecclesiastical fall 2010 collection for Givenchy), brosiery, as it became regrettably known, was mostly a costume for superheroes and a uniform for wrestlers or ballet dancers.

THEN CAME THE athleisure boom of the 2010s. With off-court endorsements from musicians such as Pharrell and ASAP Rocky, men’s leggings, worn with basketball or running shorts as streetwear, weren’t just about improving performance and hastening recovery. Tights were once again stylish — and if not exactly butch, at least somewhat practical. Such was the balance struck this past February at MSGM’s fall 2023 show, where the Italian designer [*Massimo Giorgetti*](https://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/15/fashion/massimo-giorgettis-label-msgm-thrives-on-color-youth-and-energy.html), summoning the fraternal spirit of one of his favorite films, “[*Dead Poets Society*](https://www.nytimes.com/1989/06/02/movies/review-film-shaking-up-a-boys-school-with-poetry.html)” (1989), dressed models in collegiate hoodies with white leggings worn under striped cotton boxers. For his third collection as Ferrari’s creative director, also presented in February, Rocco Iannone offered brightly patterned knitwear that hugged the body like the aerodynamic shell of a racecar.

Of course, function only accounts for part of the garment’s appeal: As fashion continues to experiment beyond the gender binary, there’s no better laboratory than the site of countless projections and fetishes. “Women can wear trousers and a jacket,” said the London-based creative director Naeem Anthony, founder of the label Helen Anthony. “Why can’t men wear tights?” For the brand’s fall 2023 presentation, titled Structural Liberation, Anthony sent out men in sharply tailored jackets or coats with dark hose instead of pants — perhaps a cheeky reversal of Yves Saint Laurent’s groundbreaking 1966 suit for women, [*Le Smoking*](https://museeyslparis.com/en/biography/premier-smoking). The Chinese designer Feng Chen Wang, who splits her time between London and Shanghai, endeavored to translate Helmut Newton’s striking images of 1990s supermodels into more recent conversations about gender expression, or what Wang calls “the union of yin and yang.” Many of her models that season, some of whom walked in asymmetrical denim jackets, pink boxer briefs and sheer stockings, identify as nonbinary or trans.

Since the early days of his own line, [*Charles Jeffrey Loverboy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/21/t-magazine/fashion/charles-jeffrey-designer.html), which debuted in 2015, the Glaswegian maximalist Charles Jeffrey has embraced not only sheer or colored hoses but fishnets, a look popularized by the female flappers of the 1920s and later deconstructed by the punks of the 1970s. (This season, [*Walter Van Beirendonck*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/03/t-magazine/walter-van-beirendonck.html) and Maison Margiela’s John Galliano also included fishnets in their collections.) “I think there’s something theatrical and flamboyant yet also quite chic and sexy about it,” said Jeffrey, who enacted a queer interpretation of “[*The Slab Boys Trilogy*](https://www.nytimes.com/1983/03/08/theater/theater-slab-boys-a-tale-of-scottish-workers.html),” John Byrne’s set of plays from the late 1970s and early ’80s about ***working-class*** toughs in 1950s Scotland, for his fall 2023 Milan show in January. Some models emerged carrying paraffin lamps or wearing knitwear embedded with stones from the Thames riverbed, while one wore a black leather jacket and matching skirt with an electric blue lightning bolt motif and gauzy over-the-calf stockings held up with black garters. The collection wasn’t just about remembrance — it was about imagining an alternate history where a Teddy boy could also be a gay man and where subverting long-held beliefs about gender didn’t require a big statement.

“Supposedly, all the legs in tights adverts are men’s legs,” said Jeffrey. And while that’s not strictly true, the American football player Joe Namath did wear Beauty Mist pantyhose in a 1974 TV commercial. “I could try to intellectualize that but, to be honest, I just think it’s really fit.”

PHOTOS: Clockwise from top left: fall runway looks by MSGM, Feng Chen Wang, Helen Anthony, Maison Margiela, Charles Jeffrey Loverboy and Walter Van Beirendonck. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAUNCHMETRICS/SPOTLIGHT (6)) This article appeared in print on page M244.

**Load-Date:** September 10, 2023

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[***Your Questions on Open Conventions, a Gaza Schism and Biden’s Chances***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BD4-KT41-JBG3-63C3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 23, 2024 Friday 17:02 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 8650 words

**Byline:** ‘The Ezra Klein Show’

**Highlight:** Weighing the risks of an open convention.

**Body**

[You can listen to this episode of “The Ezra Klein Show” on the [*NYT Audio App*](https://apps.apple.com/us/app/nyt-audio/id1549293936), [*Apple*](https://apps.apple.com/us/app/nyt-audio/id1549293936), [*Spotify*](https://apps.apple.com/us/app/nyt-audio/id1549293936), [*Amazon Music*](https://apps.apple.com/us/app/nyt-audio/id1549293936), [*Google*](https://apps.apple.com/us/app/nyt-audio/id1549293936) or [*wherever you get your podcasts*](https://apps.apple.com/us/app/nyt-audio/id1549293936).]

A transcript of the full episode is available here:

Ezra Klein: Last week I did an audio essay arguing that Joe Biden right now does not seem up for the campaign he is going to have to run. He is behind in the polls. He is skipping things like Super Bowl interviews, having trouble in press conferences and that if things don’t change, this is not going to go well. And that there is another option for Democrats, that Biden could step aside and Democrats could do what parties have done many times before and go to a convention.

Then we had Elaine Kamarck on the show to talk about how the convention would work. And this is something I said we would also do in this little series, which is take questions on it. And we got a lot of them. We got thousands of responses to the initial audio essay.

Our great senior editor, Claire Gordon, has joined me here to sort of be the audience representative and make sure I’m actually answering questions. So let’s jump into it. Where do we begin?

Gordon: Yeah, Ezra, you threw a bit of a grenade into the world, and now it is time to take a little bit of fire. And our first question is from MSNBC anchor Chris Hayes.

Voice-mail recording: I mean, I think a lot of people share this acute sense of Biden’s campaigning ability, like his candidate quality, to be significantly diminished, even if they think he’s not diminished in the actual office. But my big question about all of these scenarios — and there’s been many about Biden not, you know, being the nominee — is: It seems like there’s one person who gets to decide if Joe Biden is going to run for president again, and that’s Joe Biden. And I can’t imagine a scenario in which he decides that, absent some medical situation that happens. So I can’t get past that first step, so I’m just curious how you think about it.

Klein: Thank you, Chris. So one way to say what I’m saying in that audio essay is, I’m making a prediction about the campaign. I am saying that if you look at where Joe Biden is now, he’s losing. He’s losing in the polls, and typically, Donald Trump overperforms his polling, so that’s a pretty dangerous place for Biden to be. And his early speeches are not looking great to me. His performance in press conferences has been, like, frankly, disastrous. He skipped the Super Bowl interview. I am not seeing a kind of energy and aggression in that campaign that makes it look to me like Biden is going to be able to close the gap. So that’s my concern.

One thing that could happen is I could just be proven completely wrong. Maybe Biden shakes off the campaigning cobwebs, gets out there, gives a fiery State of the Union, gives really strong speeches, gives more interviews, gives strong pressers. Maybe he climbs a bit in the polls, the paid media advertising campaign begins to look really good, and I come to look really alarmist, my audio essay looks ridiculous, Joe Biden wins by five, and everybody says I’m an idiot. And, like, that would be totally fine. That would be a great outcome to this.

But it could go the other way, too. Over the next three or four months, Joe Biden could look worse. He could freeze out on the campaign trail in a significant way or have some moment that reads to people like really profound confusion. He could be, in an effort to keep that from happening, kept in even more of a bubble by his staff. The State of the Union could go poorly or just be very low energy or something. He could give interviews that go badly — right? — could sit for some things, and it just goes disastrously.

And he could be slipping in the polls. When I look at the polling averages right now, I see him down by one to two points. If he’s down by three to four in late May, that’s going to look really scary to Democrats.

And then, of course, there’s the things he cannot control. He could have a serious health event. That’s a possibility, too.

So if any of that happens, there’s going to be more pressure from inside the party, more pressure even from the people directly around him for him not to run. Absolutely none of what I am saying here — forget animus for Biden. I like the guy. I think he’s a deeply honorable person. I think he has done a great job. I think he’s been committed to this work for his entire adult life. I think highly of him.

And I think that if he or the people who he trusts and loves around him are looking at this in May or June and it looks like they are going to lose, I would like to believe he will listen to them. I think there is some chance he could come to the view himself.

To me, in all of this, what is important is that Democrats feel they have this other option if they need it. In four months, if Joe Biden looks great, they don’t need to think about this ever again. But if in four months Joe Biden is looking bad, if it is looking like he is going to lose to Donald Trump, going to create a second Trump presidency, with everything we know about that guy, well, then I think it’s really important Democrats don’t lapse into a kind of white-knuckled fatalism, believing that it’s Biden or nothing and all they can do is stay on this train that seems like it is derailing.

That’s why I want people thinking about how a convention would look and feel right now. Running Joe Biden is a risk. A convention is a risk. These risks come with upside potential and downside potential. And life is an endless process of risk management. Like, I would like to tell you — I would like to tell myself — there is some way to not have to play the probabilities here, to bet on this with house money and be assured of a win.

But nobody has that, right? I wish. Like, it would be nice. I would like to not worry about this election at all. I don’t like covering elections. I find them too stressful.

But Joe Biden’s not at 56. If he were, we wouldn’t be having this conversation. He’s at, you know, 38, 39 in favorability and a couple of points behind Donald Trump in the polls. And so people need to be thinking about what happens if that continues to deteriorate.

Gordon: So you don’t think it necessarily makes sense for Biden to drop out now but a month from now, two months from now? It’s a wait and see?

Klein: I wouldn’t say it makes sense. Like Chris, I don’t think he will drop out now. I don’t think the situation is dire enough. I don’t think the people around him are going to come to him and make that argument. But that’s going to be the thing that is playing out over the next four months. If things look worse four months from now than they do now, there’s going to be real panic.

I was looking at the [*538*](https://apps.apple.com/us/app/nyt-audio/id1549293936) page for presidential approval ratings. And if you scroll down that page, they compare the current president — Joe Biden in this case — with other presidents at this point in their term. Obama’s favorability was way higher than Biden’s. It was almost 10 points higher. Donald Trump’s favorability was higher than Joe Biden’s at this point, and Donald Trump lost the election. You could just go right down the list. Bill Clinton — way above Joe Biden right now. Jimmy Carter was above Joe Biden right now.

So Biden is polling at a place that should have people worried. Approval ratings aren’t everything, but if they don’t start turning around and he is behind Donald Trump — I mean, remember, in every election in which we have seen him run, Donald Trump has outperformed his polling. He was quite a lot behind Hillary Clinton, quite a lot behind Joe Biden, at least in key states, and he did better than that in every election we have seen him in.

So a situation where Biden is actually behind Donald Trump — I mean, I assume the Democratic Party really does not want Donald Trump to win. Maybe I’m wrong about that. But if they see him on a path to winning, I have to assume things are going to change in their minds and, again, potentially in Joe Biden’s himself.

Gordon: So we did an episode a couple of months ago about how the polls this far out don’t matter. And you’re saying that at a certain point, they start mattering.

Klein: Yeah, we’re no longer at the point where polls are completely nonpredictive.

Gordon: All right, on to our next question. And we’ve got lots of questions coming up about the strategic risks of a convention and the relative strengths of different candidates. But this one is partly about strategy but also about the principle of the thing.

Voice-mail recording: Hi, Ezra. Longtime listener, first-time caller. I couldn’t help but think: Isn’t this — as in, choosing a new presidential candidate at the convention — isn’t that whole thing a little bit undemocratic? Which is, like, the Democratic Party’s whole thing right now is, like, “We have to save democracy.”

Klein: I think it’s a great question. And let me answer it on two levels. So one is the very specific level right now, which is the scenario I’m describing. The only scenario of a convention I can imagine is one in which Joe Biden himself drops out. If Biden gives a sorrowful but determined speech in June saying that he has come to the conclusion that it doesn’t serve the country for him to run again, that’s not going to be Democratic elders making some weird move. There’s going to be a convention process because there will have to be a convention process. And I think people will get that. They will have seen Joe Biden make this decision that led to the convention. So that is a specific answer.

But I also want to give a general one, which is that I don’t really buy the convention is less democratic than a primary. Take this primary. If you look at polling throughout it, most Democrats say they did not want Biden to run again. They did not want that in 2022; they did not want that in 2023. There’s a CNN poll back in September. There’s been all this talk, like, the media has made Joe Biden’s age into an issue recently. But this is September. This is not when it was getting a ton of coverage. Two-thirds of Democratic-leaning voters said they did not want Joe Biden running again.

But the party pressure was such that no major Democrat challenged him. You had Dean Phillips, who was a Minnesota congressman with no national profile, and his challenge is, I think, a move of a lot of political courage. But that’s not the person Democrats are looking to elect. You have Marianne Williamson.

But the primary was not Democratic. People were not given a lot of options. The party very tightly structured who is going to be in the field. And so even though Democrats were saying in poll after poll after poll, “We would like options. We are not comfortable with this campaign,” they weren’t given any of those options.

This is something that I ended up talking about a little bit with Elaine Kamarck on the show a few days ago, which is, conventions are representative democracy, and primaries are direct democracy. And both have a problem. Representative democracy, when you’re turning things over to the representatives, well, you might have chosen such and such governor or such and such senator, but maybe they’re not doing a good job representing you. Maybe your representative has diverged from your interests, your values, whatever.

But the problem with primaries is that very few people vote. This is always a problem with direct democracy. Direct democracy is often nonrepresentative because you have 5 percent, 7 percent, 11 percent, 19 percent of the electorate coming out and that part of the electorate is not a normal part of the electorate. Right? The people who are choosing to vote in primaries are very highly informed, very highly ideological, comparatively. They’re mobilized through certain kinds of organizations in a different way.

A lot of Americans are independents, and they functionally have no choice over who the two parties run in many, many, many states, even though how they vote ends up deciding who wins. So whatever we have right now, I would not call it highly small-d democratic.

I’ll also say the primaries, to me, often don’t end up making the most strategic decisions. Just look over the Republican side. It is still my view that no matter how badly Ron DeSantis did in the campaign, he would have been a stronger general election candidate for the Republicans than Donald Trump is. If I were betting money on a DeSantis-Biden matchup versus a Trump-Biden matchup, to me, Trump-Biden remains something close to even odds, maybe a bit more, maybe a bit less on that for Joe Biden, depending on the day. I think DeSantis would win, and I think Nikki Haley would win.

So primaries, again, they’re weird. The people voting in them are weird. It’s not that many people, and they are voting based on things that are not strategic. In theory, at least, conventions are making more strategic decisions and taking in a broader range of information but probably are not as good at judging charisma and enthusiasm.

So, I mean, you can take your pick of which of those you like, but I’ve just never bought this idea that the primaries are really democratic.

Gordon: So this next question was emailed in from Jeremy G. He wrote that he believes “an underappreciated achievement of President Biden has been his ability to bridge the differences between moderate, liberal and progressive Democrats and maintain a modicum of unity in the midst of Republican disunity.”

You spoke to this in the beginning of your audio essay. Do you have concerns that a contested convention would just turn into open warfare between the moderates and the progressives that could end up weakening turnout among the faction that loses?

Klein: I very much agree this has been an underappreciated strength of Joe Biden going back to 2020. It’s something, as you say, that I talked about in that first piece. I don’t think it is his strength now. So I guess something I would say is I’m not more or less worried about that now at a convention than in a Biden-runs-again scenario. And the primary reason is that there’s a tremendous amount of disillusionment with Biden on the left now because of Gaza. So the thing that Biden has done so well to bridge gaps, he’s not being able to do.

But even putting that aside, what’s holding the Democratic Party together right now isn’t Joe Biden; it’s Donald Trump. I suspect the Democratic convention would be very focused on the dangers Trump poses, very focused on the plan for beating him.

And that’s also, of course, the Biden campaign’s plan for managing the disagreements inside the Democratic Party and the lack of enthusiasm for Biden himself. The Biden team’s theory of this whole thing is countermobilization — that Donald Trump is going to be out there, he’s going to be getting a lot more press coverage and, in doing that, he’s going to mobilize the Democratic base, kind of heal any schisms, get over the disillusionment.

I do think it’s important to say that any choice Democrats make here is a choice of risk. With Biden right now, the risk to me does not feel like it is controllable. You can’t stop him from having these senior moments on the trail except by keeping him off the trail.

With a convention, the risk is of a type the Democrats can make strategic decisions about. They can balance a ticket with a moderate and progressive. They can think hard about the states the ticket comes from. They can use the platform and the policy agenda to smooth out disagreements. That’s how conventions have worked since time immemorial.

And then — and I do think this is important to my thinking here — the risk to the upside seems higher to me in a convention. I don’t think Biden has that much likelihood of really changing how people feel about him this year, at least not unless he proves himself to be a different kind of campaigner than we’re currently seeing.

But a sufficiently exciting ticket might be able to mobilize Democrats through enthusiasm for new leadership, not just opposition to Trump. So you might be able to combine more mobilization and countermobilization.

But I don’t want to wave away the question here. Yes, like, there are schisms in the Democratic Party right now. The big one is Gaza. I see that as a very big problem for Biden, but it could just be a problem for Democrats, no matter what.

In any of the scenarios you might imagine, they’re going to have to find a way to, say, not lose Michigan because Arab American voters are furious at the Biden administration and at Democrats.

And then there’s the obvious way this could go badly, the one I hear a lot of people worrying about, is that the delegates don’t choose Kamala Harris, who is the obvious candidate, who has experience for 2020, is Joe Biden’s V.P. And that creates a schism with Black voters or just creates an ugly convention while that process plays itself out.

I’ve heard some people say things like “It would be unprecedented not to have the V.P. become the nominee,” and I do think that’s a funny thing to say right now, because we just saw that happen in 2016. Joe Biden was Barack Obama’s vice president. He was discouraged by people around Obama from running again. They wanted to pass it on to Hillary Clinton, who they thought was not just a more historic candidate but they also thought was a stronger candidate. Within the administration, she was more respected.

That does lead to some, even now, ill will between the Biden and the Obama camps, particularly the people in strategic positions in them. But it’s not always the case that the V.P. is the one who gets the next nod.

But in this particular case, I think people are worried about whether or not that would go badly, and I think it very much could go badly, depending on how it played out.

Gordon: So you just brought up Kamala Harris. So let’s go to our Kamala Harris question. This was another voice mail.

Voice-mail recording: Hello, Ezra. My name is Matt, and I’m calling from Brooklyn, N.Y. My question for you is in regards to your recent essay about Joe Biden’s age and particularly pertaining to Vice President Harris. I’m curious as to what you think the people find so displeasing about her, given her approval rating is lower than Biden, even though in private settings, she is viewed in a warm and attractive light. I’m just curious on what your thoughts are on that. Thank you.

Klein: This is tricky territory. Let me say a couple of things here. Try to put your head back in 2020, when she gets chosen for vice president. There’s not an immediate reaction among the commentariat, among politicos, among Democrats of, like, “What a crazy decision by Joe Biden.” That is not how the Harris vice presidency is greeted.

Then over the next couple of years, something happens, and Harris’s vice presidency is widely considered to be a kind of failure or at least not going well.

But if you try to look for what happened, you’re not going to find a whole lot. It isn’t like she gave some disastrous speech, like she screwed up some huge job they gave her, like anything happened in public that you can point to.

There were a number of stories in newspapers and Politico and places like that, that there was a lot of staff turnover, that her office was a kind of unhappy place in which to work, that things weren’t kind of running that well over there. In polling, she was consistently pulling a little bit worse than Joe Biden, which freaked people out.

I also think something happened here where the kind of politics that was very strong in 2020 that Harris represented in the sort of post-George Floyd moment, in a moment when the sort of backlash to what gets called now wokeness was not quite so strong, began to feel less like it was, like, the future of the Democratic Party and more like a faction within the Democratic Party. That Harris is not a politician like Joe Biden in the way that, say, when Bill Clinton chose Al Gore, he chose another kind-of moderate Southern Democrat. She’s a politician representing Joe Biden’s recognition at that time that he was maybe the end of something and he was going to pass on the torch of the party to somebody representing a new strain of its politics. But that strain of politics either weakened or people believed it weakened or maybe not that Harris was going to be the standard-bearer for it.

But to me, this is all pretty thin. It’s all pretty thin. If you ask me not, like, what Washington thinks of her but what I think of her, I think Harris is much more talented than people give her credit for. I think she has something that I’ve seen with many politicians who are — to just be blunt about this — women or Black, where people will say, where I will tell you, that in private she’s enormously warm and charismatic and funny and compelling and then much more cautious and seems very scripted on the stage. And I think that’s a very unfair way that candidates from different backgrounds get pushed to the side.

If you’re Joe Biden, if you’re Donald Trump, you’re allowed to kind of go out and say any old thing. And you seem authentic; you seem at home.

But there’s something people always said about Hillary Clinton, too, and it was true about Hillary Clinton: that she was amazing in small settings and not that good on the stump. But there was a reason for that. There was a reason that Clinton had learned to be cautious. There’s a reason Harris has learned to be cautious.

And so when you ask what is it that people find displeasing, I think candidates like Harris are caught in a bind between not showing too much of themselves in a world that has not always been open to them as full people. But then they get to a certain level, and it’s like, “Well, why do you seem so held back? Why do you seem so controlled and contained?”

I have my own views on Harris. I’m a Californian. I think Harris was a very strong candidate in California. She became attorney general. She became a senator. She ran for president. She was neither, I think, a generationally talented campaigner at any of those levels, but nor was she a bad campaigner at any of them. She didn’t do a crappy job in the Senate campaign, did not do a bad job running for attorney general, did not do a bad job running in 2020, in my view. Again, did not win in 2020, dropped out early.

But she was a little bit trapped in between the moderate and progressive lanes. She was to Joe Biden’s left but to Bernie Sanders’s right. She didn’t have that much name recognition. It was going to be a hard campaign.

And I think the problem for Harris is that her politics are very rooted in California. And so I think the kind of voter she is comfortable winning over and comfortable tuning a message to is a left-of-center Californian voter. Doesn’t mean a very liberal voter. When she was running for attorney general, she ran as a more moderate, smart-on-crime Democrat. And there are people who are more moderate in the party. Matt Yglesias at the newsletter Slow Boring has made this argument a number of times — that that older politics would make a lot of sense for her now, that Harris should re-emerge as tough on crime, smart on crime, more moderate, prosecutor-like.

But in 2020, she abandoned all that. If people remember, there was this internet meme that Kamala Harris is a cop because being in any way associated with law enforcement was really bad politics that year. May not be such bad politics now.

But Harris’s politics have a very Californian root to them. And so the question of “How does she win over voters in Pennsylvania, in Michigan? How good is she at winning over voters with a very different context, who are much more moderate?” — that is where, when I kind of hear her give her speeches and tune her message and think about politics, I get more worried about her. I think she doesn’t always hold a kind of voter who is unlike the ones that she has traditionally known how to win very well in her head.

Whereas Joe Biden, who comes from Delaware, who has roots in Pennsylvania, he was very well tuned to winning over those voters. The reason people get excited about Gretchen Whitmer and Josh Shapiro and so on is that they’re worried about Democrats winning Michigan and Pennsylvania and Wisconsin and Georgia and Arizona. And so candidates who have demonstrated a facility with voters in those states have a strategic advantage, and that isn’t something Harris has had to do or has done before.

But, again, I’ve said this now for a long time. I always thought she was going to have a very good 2024, that I thought the bar had now been set so low for her that it’s going to be almost trivial for her to clear it and that she’s a better speech giver, a better debater, better on offense than a lot of politicians are and that a lot of opinions were going to turn around on her in 2024. And I still basically believe that.

I don’t know if Harris is the right candidate for the Democratic Party, but I don’t think that the drop in esteem for her is based on anything all that real.

Gordon: All right. Our next question packs a lot in.

Voice-mail recording: Hey, Ezra. [*Jon Favreau*](https://apps.apple.com/us/app/nyt-audio/id1549293936) here. First time, longtime. I appreciate your piece and share a lot of your concerns, as do most voters, including most Democrats. I think the challenge is we just don’t know and really can’t ever know if nominating Biden is riskier than letting Democratic activists and insiders pick a lesser-known and potentially weaker general election candidate at the convention in Chicago with just three months to go.

There hasn’t been much polling on how other Democrats might fare against Trump. But from what we’ve seen, people like Kamala Harris, Gavin Newsom, Gretchen Whitmer poll similar or worse than Biden against Trump.

Now some of that might just be because fewer voters are familiar with them, which would obviously change if one of them became the nominee. But if you’re Biden, you have to be thinking that a decision to step aside also comes with a real risk that the party will nominate someone who loses to Trump. And my sense is that’s a big reason he’s unlikely to do so.

Klein: Thanks, John, for being such a good friend of the pod. So let me try to actually make the strongest version of this argument against what I’m saying. There’s a recent poll that had Biden losing to Trump 45 to 44. It had Harris losing to Trump 46 to 43. It had Gavin Newsom losing to Trump 46 to 36 and had Gretchen Whitmer losing to Trump 45 to 33. So if you’re just taking that poll at face value, it isn’t just that Newsom or Whitmer would do worse than Biden or Harris but they would get destroyed compared to Biden or Harris.

And bluntly, I just don’t buy this at all. I think polls like this are just pure name recognition at this juncture. Most Americans have no idea who Gretchen Whitmer is. If you’re listening to this show, you are a weird politics junkie. You have a level of political information, and you’re willing to give a level of your time to politics that virtually no one is willing to do.

If you are listening to the show and you don’t live in Michigan, how many Gretchen Whitmer speeches have you actually seen? How much do you actually know about her? I guess for most people, the answer is zero Gretchen Whitmer speeches. Most people have seen maybe one at the 2020 Democratic convention.

I think if you want to look at more usable data, you want to look where you have name recognition between the candidates. So if you look at polling in Michigan, where both Joe Biden and Gretchen Whitmer are well known, Whitmer is running ahead of Biden against Trump by quite a lot. There’s a January poll from the Glengariff Group, which found Biden losing to Trump by eight in Michigan but Whitmer beating Trump by four. I’ve seen other polling from Pennsylvania that says Josh Shapiro is much more popular in Pennsylvania than Joe Biden is. So you can ask: Will that generalize? I think there’s a good chance that it will.

But to me, this all comes down to upside and downside risk. My worry with Biden is, I think, he has more downside risk than upside risk at this point. It’s likelier that something goes really wrong that crystallizes people’s fears about him being president for four more years than something goes really right that boosts his support sharply.

But, look, I would like to be wrong about this. I would like to see the next three or four months play out where things go really right and Biden seems like a political juggernaut or just like a quite strong incumbent candidate and then everybody can make fun of me for these pieces down the road.

But if that doesn’t happen, with these other candidates, and I do think this goes for Harris, too — she’s just functionally polling like Biden — but I think they all have more upside risk. People might be really excited about some of the possible tickets that could emerge here. They might be really excited about the people they would see at the convention and the speeches and so on. And so as people got to know them — I mean, any candidate chosen at the convention is going to rocket to functionally 100 percent name ID. And when it does that, the polling is going to look very different.

Gordon: This was from David, who was worried that Democrats would end up picking a candidate who seems great but then they have skeletons in their closet that come out on the campaign.

Klein: So I think this depends a bit on what kind of lead-up we’ve had to the convention. So if Biden steps aside in late May or June, you then have months of scrutiny on the possible candidates. A lot of CNN and MSNBC town halls, a kind of multimonth vetting process in the mass media. So I’d be less worried about the skeletons in the closet question, and also, just to be honest, I have trouble believing any candidate is going to compare poorly with what is stuffed in the Mar-a-Lago closets. So that doesn’t really feel to me like such a worrying matchup.

But particularly the scenario where there’s not much time to vet the candidates — I think you can imagine a candidate who looks good on paper, like a Gretchen Whitmer or Josh Shapiro, proving unable to bring it under the full force of a presidential campaign. We know that Shapiro and Whitmer have performed really well in, say, Pennsylvania and Michigan, respectively. But there is something about presidential campaigns that is different, something about the debates, something about the level of scrutiny and intensity. And that can prove to be a problem.

This might make you think that what you actually want is a candidate who proved pretty strong as a campaigner in 2020. I think Amy Klobuchar is somebody who has consistently overperformed in Minnesota, which is a state very much like Wisconsin, very much like some of these other Midwestern states that Democrats need to win in. And she did a good job on the campaign trail in 2020. And so I think Amy Klobuchar — you should understand her as a real political talent.

Again, this goes back to my “I just don’t think primaries are the be-all and end-all.” They have weird dynamics. They have big name-ID dynamics. And so people who were able to break out and be serious candidates and campaign without making huge mistakes — that’s the kind of thing I’m looking for that we don’t know yet about a Whitmer, about a Shapiro, about, really, anybody who hasn’t run at the presidential level.

I do think that there is a preference for new faces when people kind of imagine these scenarios, but experience under the presidential level should not be taken for granted.

Gordon: We did a whole episode about how the Democrats have been losing the white ***working class***. And I think part of Biden’s strength was that he was able to stem those losses in the last election. Because of Biden, because of who he is, do you think that that’s a huge risk here?

Klein: I wouldn’t put this primarily on the white ***working class***. You have to win the most votes in the states Democrats need to take the Electoral College, and there are different ways you could put that together. What Biden really did was not improve a lot among the white ***working class***; he improved among college-educated whites, which turned out to work and, um, was enough.

But this is why I think there’s a lot of interest in candidates who are winning the states Democrats need to win in. Again, this is why people mention, why I mention Shapiro, why I mention Whitmer, why I mention people like Raphael Warnock, why I think you should think very hard about candidates from states where Democrats need a majority.

I don’t particularly care how that majority gets put together. Whether that majority is put together with more young voters because you get a lot of young voter turnout, whether it’s a more multiethnic coalition. Different states have different dynamics, and you can imagine a candidate who’s going to be really good at putting together a coalition in Georgia, in Arizona but maybe not quite as good in Pennsylvania or Wisconsin. Michigan, again, because of the Arab American vote there — and Michigan has been close — is going to be a tricky place for Democrats right now.

This is really the kind of thing you would imagine being debated at a convention. When the delegates get together in a room and they’ve heard the speeches in public and they’ve seen the interviews the candidates are giving on TV and they’ve had the candidates come and give their presentations and they’ve had the candidates’ deputies and campaign managers and liaisons come and make the case to them, they’re going to sit there and say, if you’re the Pennsylvania delegation, “Well, who do I think can really win Pennsylvania?” If you’re the Michigan delegation, “Who do I really think can win Michigan? And in theory, the Michigan delegation knows a lot about winning Michigan. They have a sense of who the voters in Michigan are.

And so this would be the thing that all the candidates would be trying to persuade people of: that they have a pathway, that they have a way of seeing the electorate that is going to appeal to these particular states.

Gordon: So the convention picks a ticket, and this next question is about what happens next. This is from Evan.

Voice-mail recording: Hey. This is Evan calling from Maryland. I wanted to thank you for your most recent episode because it’s a question that I’m sure for myself and for a lot of voters is really exciting but also really scary. And I think one of those sources of fear to take this leap of faith for a new Democratic candidate is, OK, let’s say that we elect someone to run the party in August. We only have three months to go through the process. And I’m just wondering if that’s enough time to run a national campaign, especially for some of these newer-generation politicians, like Wes Moore, who I love. But I’m just worried — is three months enough time? Thanks so much.

Klein: So I’m not very worried about this for a bunch of different reasons. One reason is that in most countries, like, that is how long elections are or it is longer than elections are. We just have very long elections in America, and it is not clear to me at all the candidates benefit from that long period of time out in the public eye.

This is, by the way, particularly true for the current two candidates, Joe Biden and Donald Trump, who have both been in the public eye for a long time now and are both extremely unpopular. So I’m not too worried about that.

The other dimension is that — think about the reasons people vote. So the first and strongest motivator on the Democratic side this year is going to be anti-Trump sentiment. So most Democrats are coming out to vote against Donald Trump, no matter what else is going on. That is what is going to get Democrats to a pretty high level in the vote. And frankly, if you listen to a lot of the strategists on the Democratic side, they’re really saying that is what is going to get the Democrats to victory.

I just have not heard anybody make the case to me that the Democrats are coming out for Joe Biden or, frankly, for Democrats in general. That you’re creating this anti-MAGA majority, and as long as you’ve got MAGA on the other side of the ticket, you’re going to win.

If Republicans had chosen Nikki Haley, Democrats would have had to come up with another strategy, and I think they would have very quickly found out they don’t actually have another strategy, and they might have ended up in real trouble here.

And then you would have a tremendous burst of almost an overwhelming amount of focus and press and energy and attention on the election. People don’t need that long to get to know somebody, to get excited about them, to see them. In fact, I think three months, even three months would end up feeling like quite a long time. So you have this incredibly dramatic, unexpected, unprecedented-within-the-last-50-years convention on the Democratic side. Everybody’s watching it. The press is covering it all the time. The press had been covering the run-up to it all the time. And then it’s September, and you have all of September, where just, like, wall-to-wall coverage of this thing, and all of October into November, when you have the actual election. That’s actually, to me, quite a lot of time.

This isn’t 1978. It’s pretty quick to cut an ad. You could just, like, at this point wander over to GPT-4 and be like, “What do you think a good ad for Wes Moore would be?” And they’ll give it to you in a second, basically.

And so I’m just not concerned about this. I am more concerned about the amount of time this campaign is going to stretch on for both Joe Biden and Donald Trump, given the way they’re both campaigning, than what it would mean to have a sprint campaign for an exciting new ticket coming out of a convention.

Gordon: What about ground game for a candidate that, say, just doesn’t have a lot of friends in Michigan and Wisconsin because they haven’t been campaigning for a year?

Klein: That’s what a political party is for. That is what the party is supposed to be doing. There’s elections happening in every single one of these states. There’s campaign offices happening in every one of these states. The Biden campaign is still funding things. That money is usable. Right? I don’t imagine they would close everything down.

And this is also what Trump did in 2016. Trump had functionally no campaign mechanics happening in 2016. He was running this very strange insurgent campaign, and it was the R.N.C. that took care of the ground game. Trump did not have a highly organized disciplined operation. One reason he’s going to be potentially a stronger candidate in 2024 is he does have a much more professional campaign happening around him that is, like, opening offices in the right places and hiring field organizers. But that is something the party is supposed to be doing all across the country and has been doing.

A reason that Democrats have done well in Michigan is that the Michigan Democratic Party has done an extraordinary job organizing in Michigan, and that infrastructure is all being built for 2024. The reason they’re doing well in Wisconsin is an extraordinary amount of energy has gone into building infrastructure in Wisconsin, and that has all been being built with the attention on 2024.

You can go state by state. The things that have won Georgia for Democrats in recent years have not gone away. They’re all there. So this is just not a part of it that worries me all that much.

And then the final thing I would just say is that ground game is great. What you need is enthusiasm. Enthusiasm against Donald Trump, enthusiasm for a ticket. But more than anything else, the thing you want, the thing a ground game needs to have is an enthusiastic voter pool. So the first and most important thing is your product — not how you market your product, not how you distribute your product. The first and most important thing is that people want your product. And so I don’t want to say everything takes care of itself if the product is good, but a lot more can be taken care of if the product is good.

Gordon: So this question is more about the upside of a convention and the kind of ticket that could come out of it, and it’s another voice mail.

Voice-mail recording: Hi, my name is Eve. I’m calling from New York. I, like many voters on the left, have been really checked out of Biden’s presidency, haven’t really been excited about any political candidate since Bernie Sanders. So I haven’t really considered anything to do with politics just being appealing to me. So I’m just wondering in this potential world, where Biden steps side, if you could talk a little bit about some of the political futures that you could imagine coming from candidates on the left and how some of them might be able to appeal to voters like me, who have been really disillusioned by Joe Biden and the Democratic Party at large, especially since their position on Israel-Palestine. OK. Thank you. Bye.

Klein: The honest answer is “I don’t know” to this. I suspect that a convention would be trying to choose a very highly strategic ticket more than a highly ideological ticket, and so it’d be very focused on people who they thought could win the five key states.

But I do think they would care about enthusiasm, and I do think, depending on how things go, there’s going to be a lot of concern about Gaza and the ruptures in the Democratic Party over this.

And so the possibility of a new ticket allows them to have someone or some set of candidates who doesn’t have to defend and doesn’t have to be yoked to every moment of the Biden administration’s support for Netanyahu.

Right now — I mean, this is where this all started, right? — Biden comes back at that press conference to give an answer saying that he thinks Netanyahu’s invasion now is over the top, and that’s when he makes the Sisi-as-president-of-Mexico flub.

But what was really happening in that question is Biden trying to sort of shift the energy and the orientation of his administration. He says, “As you all know, I think ….” Right? I’m not sure most people did know that.

But the thing that — even as they are rhetorically beginning to move a little bit on this, they are not yet substantively moving on this. America just vetoed another U.N. resolution calling for a cease-fire. We have put forward our own more compromised resolution saying there should be a humanitarian pause, like a temporary cease-fire, also calling for the return of hostages, saying the cease-fire should happen as soon as is practicable. Like, who decides what is practicable?

I, at this point, believe that the Biden administration’s position on this is not really defensible anymore. Netanyahu is not listening to them. They are not supporting Israel; they are supporting him. And Netanyahu has been very clear that virtually all the things Joe Biden thinks about Israel and Palestine, Netanyahu does not think. Netanyahu does not think Palestinians should be running Gaza after all this is over. Netanyahu does not think the Israeli military should be acting with a lot more restraint than it currently is. Netanyahu does not think that we should be on a path to a two-state solution. And Netanyahu has been extremely clear about all of this. And the consequences he has faced for it, at least publicly from Joe Biden, are none.

There’s really interesting reporting recently that Richard Haass — who, just until a year or two ago, was president of the Council on Foreign Relations, is now president emeritus, he’s, like, the center of the foreign policy establishment in the United States, the most establishment figure you can imagine — he’s been really trying to say to the Biden administration and going out and lobbying them, like, “You have to shift policy here.” And he’s been saying that Biden specifically should go give a speech at the Knesset, the Israeli legislature, arguing, going over Netanyahu’s head. By the way, as Netanyahu has done here before, going over Barack Obama’s head and giving a speech to Congress, calling for another pathway.

So far, this has not apparently been met with any takeup from the Biden administration, but Haass, I think, is right that Biden would need to do something at this point fairly spectacular to change people’s views about where he is. Criticizing Netanyahu a little bit on the margins but not actually shifting the substance of American policy is not going to do it.

So either Biden has to do something really big or, in this kind of convention scenario, you might get a ticket that just doesn’t have his baggage, a ticket that is younger, that was not backing Netanyahu to the hilt, kind of like all the way through this, and could just have a different policy and would just have more credibility on having a different policy.

The only other thing I will say on this, though, is that, again, we’re speaking in February. This is August. It might all look worse in August, right? That is a possibility, too.

And I take very seriously the depth of the anger toward the Biden administration on this issue. I think early on, I was pretty skeptical this would be a voting issue for people. But I think if you are on social media and you’ve been plugged into this in the last couple of months, I think the depth of disillusionment with Joe Biden is very hard to convey, and I don’t think it’s going to go away, at least not easily, at least not without some kind of major change.

So you could imagine someone else being able to put the party in a different place here, but where the whole situation will be by then is so unknowable to me now that I’m cautious about making any predictions about the role it will or won’t play at a convention.

Gordon: What do you think is the best argument against your argument for a convention?

Klein: Look, I think the best argument against my argument is that you think Joe Biden and Kamala Harris are a strong ticket. And one of the things that has — I don’t know if I want to say it surprised me or it’s freaked me out, but for all the brickbats I’ve gotten on this, I’ve not seen one email, not seen one reply on social media, not one voice mail, to my knowledge — maybe I missed something. I definitely could have — making this argument.

The Democratic Party is just constantly sending me emails, telling me Donald Trump is an existential threat to democracy, that he is an existential threat to the country. And I believe them. I think that’s true. I think Donald Trump — “existential” is a strong word, but I think Trump is very, very dangerous.

And the primary strategic decision Democrats have to make in terms of beating him is their ticket. That is the main point of leverage they have over this election. Every campaign decision downstream from that is less important than that crucial decision.

So if you think Biden and Harris are a strong ticket or they show themselves in the coming months to be a strong ticket, fantastic. In general, incumbents are very strong. Most incumbents get re-elected. In general, you don’t want to switch horses midstream. Doing something that is risky and unusual and that people have not done for a long time carries a lot of risk.

And so the best argument against it is that the ticket Democrats have is strong, is likely to win and there’s no need to change it. And if that’s what you believe, great.

My argument right now is that that is not what I am starting to believe. Now, I could just be wrong. I have changed my view on this from where I was six months ago. But maybe they’re just off to a slow start. Maybe over the next three or four or five months, everything kicks into gear and their paid advertising campaign is excellent and we begin to see the movement that one would want to see.

I guess a challenge I would offer to a lot of people is to, like, say in your own mind, “What would you need to see?" What would be the evidence to you that the ticket was weak and that if Democrats want to beat Trump, they should change it?

I think that the question that a lot of people, particularly in the Democratic Party and at its high level should be asking is, “What is your red line?”

Imagine yourself in May. When you’re talking about May, June, polling is pretty predictive. We tend to have a pretty good idea what’s going on in the election by May or June. So what would you need to see in May or June to feel comfortable? And what would you need to see in May or June to feel like, “No, we’re on the wrong path here”?

A journalist friend of mine said to me recently, in response to my piece, that his read on the Democrats was that they would prefer to lose in a way that is comfortable for them than to win in a way that is uncomfortable for them. That if Joe Biden is renominated and he loses, nobody’s really going to be blamed for that but Joe Biden.

I think that might be wrong, and there might actually ultimately be a lot of backlash for the Democratic establishment for running a candidate who a lot of Democrats were like, “This seems like not a great idea, but whatever.” That is a safe way to lose.

By contrast, if you come out against a ticket and the ticket maintains, then you have put yourself crosswise with the Biden administration. If you come out for a convention and the convention fails, reputationally, then you’re in real trouble. You put your head out, and Democrats did this thing, and it went badly. ”And how dare you! If only they had stuck with Biden, it all would have been fine.”

It’s very easy to see from a perspective of people’s individual incentives, how it would make more sense to stick with the Biden-Harris ticket, even if you don’t think the Biden-Harris ticket is going to win.

But I think what I am trying to say is that that is an abdication of duty. That is an abdication of what a party is supposed to do, and it is much more so an abdication of what a party is supposed to do when the party believes the other candidate is as dangerous as they believe Donald Trump is. It’s not Mitt Romney here. It’s not George H.W. Bush. If you think Donald Trump is going to win, you have to do something about it. Otherwise, you’ve kind of just been lying to people and lying to yourself.

So, look, if you get to May, June and you think Donald Trump is going to lose, Biden is now up by three, people are focusing in on Donald Trump, they like what they see with Biden, they don’t like what they see with Trump, fantastic. Write all this off.

But if you get to May, June and Biden is down by three and Trump seems stronger and Biden’s not performing well on the campaign trail and you don’t think he’s going to win and you don’t really understand what this turnaround is supposed to be, well, then you have to ask yourself, “What are you here for? What is your job in this? What are you going to feel good about having done or not done on the other side of the election?”

Thank you, Claire, for sitting in on this with me. Thank you to everybody who’s listened to the piece and sent in these questions. I’m sorry we couldn’t get to more of them. As always, our email on the show is [*ezrakleinshow@nytimes.com*](mailto:ezrakleinshow@nytimes.com) We can’t always answer everything, but we do try to read everything.

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The New York Times

October 30, 2023 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. 3

**Length:** 1293 words

**Byline:** By Chris Vognar

**Body**

''The War on Disco,'' a new PBS documentary, explores the backlash against the genre and the issues of race, gender and sexuality that informed it.

The plan was simple enough: Gather a bunch of disco records, put them in a crate and blow them to smithereens in between games of a doubleheader between the Chicago White Sox and Detroit Tigers at Comiskey Park. What could possibly go wrong?

This was the thinking, such as it was, behind Disco Demolition Night, a July 1979 radio promotion that went predictably and horribly awry. The televised spectacle of rioters, mostly young white men, storming the field in Chicago, sent shock waves through the music industry and accelerated the demise of disco as a massive commercial force. But the fiasco didn't unfold in a vacuum, a fact the new ''American Experience'' documentary ''The War on Disco'' makes clearer than a twirling mirror ball.

Premiering Monday on PBS, ''The War on Disco'' traces the rise, commodification, demise and rebirth of a dance music genre that burned hot through the '70s, and the backlash against a culture that provided a safe and festive place for Black, Latino, gay and feminist expression. Originating in gay dance clubs in the early '70s and converted into a mainstream sensation largely through the 1977 movie ''Saturday Night Fever,'' disco engendered simmering resentment from white, blue-collar kids who weren't cool enough to make it past the rope at Studio 54 and other clubs. The film details disco's role as a flashpoint for issues of race, class, gender and sexuality that still resonate in the culture wars of today.

''These liberation movements that started in the '60s and early '70s are really gaining momentum in the late '70s,'' Lisa Q. Wolfinger, who produced the film with Rushmore DeNooyer, said in a video call from her home in Maine. ''So the backlash against disco feels like a backlash against the gay liberation movement and feminism, because that's all wrapped up in disco.''

When the Gay Activist Alliance began hosting feverish disco dances at an abandoned SoHo firehouse in 1971, routinely packing 1,500 people onto the dance floor, the atmosphere was sweaty and cathartic. As Alice Echols writes in her disco history book ''Hot Stuff,'' gay bars, most of them run by the mob, traditionally hadn't allowed dancing of any kind. But change was in the air largely because of the ripple effect of the Stonewall uprising in 1969, when regulars at a Greenwich Village gay bar fought back against the latest in a series of police raids. Soon discos were popping up throughout American cities, drawing throngs of revelers integrated across lines of race, gender and sexual orientation.

Some of disco's hottest artists were Black women, including Gloria Gaynor and Linda Clifford (who is a commentator in the film). Many of the in-demand DJs, including Barry Lederer and Richie Rivera, were gay. In its heyday disco was the ultimate pop melting pot, open to anyone who wanted to move through the night to a pulsating, seemingly endless groove, and a source of liberation.

''The club became this source of public intimacy, of sexual freedom, and disco was a genre that was deeply tied to the next set of freedom struggles that were concatenate with civil rights,'' said Daphne Brooks, a professor of African American studies at Yale University who is featured in the film, in a video interview. ''It was both a sound and a sight that enabled those who were not recognized in the dominant culture to be able to see themselves and to derive pleasure, which is a huge trope in disco.''

All subcultures have their tipping points, and disco's began in earnest in 1977. The year brought ''Saturday Night Fever,'' the smash hit movie about a blue-collar Brooklynite (a star-making performance from John Travolta) who escapes his rough reality by cutting loose on the dance floor. Inspired by the movie, middle-aged thrill seekers began dressing up in white polyester and hitting the scene. The same year saw the opening of Studio 54 in Manhattan, which became famous for its beautiful-people clientele and forbidding door policy.

''There was this image of the crowd outside the door on the news, with people being divided into winners and losers,'' said DeNooyer, the ''War on Disco'' producer. ''And the majority were losers because they didn't get by the rope. It was an image that spoke powerfully, and it certainly encouraged a view of exclusivity.''

At least one man had reason to take it all personally. Steve Dahl was a radio personality for Chicago's WDAI, spinning album rock and speaking to and for the white macho culture synonymous with that music. On Christmas Eve in 1978 Dahl lost his job when the station switched to a disco format, a popular move in those days. He didn't take the news well. Jumping to WLUP, Dahl launched a ''Disco Sucks'' campaign and, together with the White Sox promotions director Mike Veeck, spearheaded Disco Demolition Night.

Organizers expected around 20,000 fans on July 12, 1979. Instead, they got around 50,000, some of whom sneaked in for free. Admission was 98 cents (WLUP's frequency was 97.9), leaving attendees plenty of leftover cash for beer. Located in the mostly white, ***working-class*** neighborhood of Bridgeport, Comiskey Park had a built-in anti-disco clientele.

During the first game of the doubleheader, fans threw records, firecrackers and liquor bottles onto the field. By the time the crate of records was blown up, the place was going nuts, with patrons storming the field and rendering it unplayable. The White Sox had to forfeit the second game.

There were other anti-disco protests around the country in the late '70s, but none so visible or of greater consequence. As the film recounts, reaction was swift; radio consultants soon began steering toward nondisco formats. ''Disco Demolition Night was a real factor, and it did happen very quickly,'' DeNooyer said. ''And we hear from artists in the film who experienced that.'' Gigs started drying up almost immediately.

Commercial oversaturation didn't help. Disco parodies were becoming rampant, including a memorable one in the 1980 comedy ''Airplane!,'' and novelty songs had been around since Rick Dees' ''Disco Duck'' in 1976 (followed up by the lesser-known ''Dis-Gorilla'' in 1977). But the film makes clear that the Disco Demolition fiasco and resultant coverage was a major factor in the death of disco's mainstream appeal.

''The War on Disco'' also features a 2016 interview with Dahl, who insists racism and homophobia had nothing to do with that particular display of anti-disco fervor. Demolition Night attendees who were interviewed for the film echo this sentiment.

''I would not dispute that is their truth,'' Brooks said. ''But I think one of the insidious ways that white supremacy has done a number on this country is that it permeates every aspect of our cultural lives. People don't want to be told that they're entangled in something that's not entirely of their control.''

It's also important to note that disco didn't die so much as its more mainstream forms ceased to be relevant. The music and the culture morphed into other dance-ready genres including house music, which ironically emerged in Chicago. When you go out and cut loose to electronic dance music, or EDM, you are paying homage to disco, whether you know it or not. The beat is still pulsating. The sexual and racial identities remain eclectic. The Who may have bid ''Sister Disco'' goodbye in their 1978 song, but the original spirit lives on. As Brooks put it, ''Its vibrancy and its innovations just continued to gain momentum once the spotlight moved away from it.''

The culture, and its devotees, outlived the clichés. Disco is dead. Long live disco.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/29/arts/television/the-war-on-disco-pbs.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/29/arts/television/the-war-on-disco-pbs.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: The Disco Demolition Night promotion at Comiskey Park in Chicago quickly spun out of control, with thousands storming the field. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHICAGO HISTORY MUSEUM, VIA PBS)

''Saturday Night Fever'' took disco from underground clubs to the mainstream.

Studio 54 in 1978. The club was famous for its glamorous clientele and exclusivity. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALAMY, VIA PBS) This article appeared in print on page C3.

**Load-Date:** October 30, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Trump to Woo Striking Union Members in Detroit, Skipping 2nd G.O.P. Debate***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:696H-1851-JBG3-619X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 18, 2023 Monday 15:05 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 960 words

**Byline:** Shane Goldmacher and Maggie Haberman

**Highlight:** Looking past the Republican primary, Donald Trump and his campaign are already gearing up for a possible rematch with President Biden.

**Body**

Looking past the Republican primary, Donald Trump and his campaign are already gearing up for a possible rematch with President Biden.

[*Follow live as Republican presidential candidates debate for the second time.*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/09/27/us/republican-debate-trump-news)

Former President Donald J. Trump is planning to travel to Detroit on the day of the next Republican primary debate, according to two Trump advisers with knowledge of the plans, injecting himself into the labor dispute between striking autoworkers and the nation’s leading auto manufacturers.

The trip, which will include a prime-time speech before current and former union members, is the second consecutive primary debate that Mr. Trump is skipping to instead hold his own counterprogramming. He sat for an interview with the former Fox News host Tucker Carlson that posted online during the first G.O.P. presidential debate in August.

The decision to go to Michigan just days after the United Auto Workers went on strike shows the extent to which Mr. Trump wants to be seen as looking past his primary rivals — and the reality that both he and his political apparatus are already focused on the possibility of a rematch with President Biden.

So instead of attending the next G.O.P. debate — on Sept. 27 in California at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum — Mr. Trump intends to speak to over 500 workers, with his campaign planning to fill the room with plumbers, pipe-fitters, electricians, as well as autoworkers, according to one of the Trump advisers familiar with the planning. Mr. Trump has not directly addressed the wage demands of striking workers and has attacked the union leadership, but he has tried to more broadly cast himself on the side of autoworkers.

The campaign is also considering the possibility of having Mr. Trump make an appearance at the picket line, although the adviser said such a visit, which could involve difficult logistics given the former president’s security protections, is unlikely.

The former president has long prided himself on his appeal to rank-and-file union workers — even as most union leaders have remained hostile to him, and as Mr. Biden has called himself the most pro-union president in history. In the 2016 campaign, an adviser to Mr. Trump, Paul Manafort, sought to [*establish a back channel*](https://abcnews.go.com/US/trump-wrote-lists-assistant-white-house-documents-marked/story?id=103226113) with organized labor in Michigan and Wisconsin in the hopes the A.F.L.-C.I.O. would scale back its efforts to help the Democratic nominee, Hillary Clinton. It did not appear to go anywhere, but underscored the areas that Mr. Trump considered vital in the general election.

Mr. Trump won Michigan in the 2016 election, one of the states in the so-called blue wall that crumbled for Democrats that year. But Mr. Biden carried Michigan by more than 150,000 votes in 2020, and it is seen as a critical state for Democrats in 2024.

The Trump campaign has produced a radio ad that will begin running on Tuesday in Detroit and Toledo, Ohio, trying to cast Mr. Trump as aligned with autoworkers. The same Trump adviser said the ad targeted union workers and men, and will air on sports and rock-themed stations.

“All they’ve ever wanted is to compete fairly worldwide and get their fair share of the American dream,” the narrator says in the ad. “Donald Trump calls them great Americans and has always had their backs.”

Mr. Trump has repeatedly criticized the transition to electric vehicles, and in a post on his social media site Truth Social over the weekend, he called it an “Electric Car SCAM.” The radio ad also uses the Biden administration’s support for the transition to electric vehicles to attack Mr. Biden.

The ad does not specifically mention the strike, which began last week against all big three Detroit automakers, and in which [*the union is seeking a 40 percent wage increase over four years*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/17/business/uaw-strike-ford-stellantis-gm.html?name=styln-uaw-strike&amp;region=TOP_BANNER&amp;block=storyline_menu_recirc&amp;action=click&amp;pgtype=Article&amp;variant=undefined).

Ammar Moussa, a press officer for Mr. Biden’s campaign, said in a statement, “Donald Trump is going to Michigan next week to lie to Michigan workers and pretend he didn’t spend his entire failed presidency selling them out at every turn.”

Mr. Biden has [*sided with*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/15/us/politics/biden-uaw-strike.html) the striking workers, sending two top aides to Detroit and saying at the White House hours after the strike began that “workers deserve a fair share of the benefits they helped create.”

The United Auto Workers pointedly [*decided not to endorse Mr. Biden this spring*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/03/us/politics/biden-auto-workers-endorsement.html) ahead of the current labor clash, with the union’s new president, Shawn Fain, expressing concern about the labor elements of the transition to electric vehicles. At the same time, in a memo, Mr. Fain said Mr. Trump would be a “disaster” if he returned to the White House.

In an interview with NBC’s “Meet the Press” broadcast over the weekend, Mr. Trump was critical of Mr. Fain, saying workers had been “sold down the river by their leadership.”

“I don’t know the gentleman, but I know his name very well, and I think he’s not doing a good job in representing his union,” Mr. Trump said. “Because he’s not going to have a union in three years from now. Those jobs are all going to be gone, because all of those electric cars are going to be made in China.”

In a statement after The New York Times reported on Mr. Trump’s Detroit plans, Mr. Fain said that “every fiber of our union is being poured into fighting the billionaire class and an economy that enriches people like Donald Trump at the expense of workers.”

“We can’t keep electing billionaires and millionaires that don’t have any understanding what it is like to live paycheck to paycheck and struggle to get by and expecting them to solve the problems of the ***working class***,” he said.

PHOTO: Former President Donald J. Trump has been at odds with union leaders, and he has been critical of the transition to electric vehicles. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A20.

**Load-Date:** September 28, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Festooned in Glitter, Labour Leader Pledges To Rebuild Britain***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69CB-1V91-JBG3-603J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 11, 2023 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1212 words

**Byline:** By Mark Landler and Stephen Castle

**Body**

Keir Starmer, the leader of the U.K. opposition, brushed off an unexpected onstage protest to make a pitch that his party could rebuild the country after 13 years of Conservative rule.

Buoyed by the polls and brimming with confidence, the leader of Britain's opposition Labour Party, Keir Starmer, declared on Tuesday that he was ready to assume the mantle of power. But first he had to shake the glitter off his suit jacket.

As Mr. Starmer took the stage at his party's annual conference in Liverpool, he was interrupted by a protester who rushed up behind him and showered him with green and blue glitter. It took a full seven seconds for security guards to run onstage and tackle the man, who shouted, ''Politics needs an update!''

Taken aback but not thrown off his stride, Mr. Starmer shed his jacket, rolled up his shirt sleeves, and tried to turn the spectacle into an object lesson about the transformed party he now led.

''Protest or power,'' he said, referring to Labour's lengthy stint in opposition. ''That's why we changed our party.''

After the police dragged the protester from the stage, Mr. Starmer vowed to rebuild a Britain that he said had been broken by 13 years of Conservative rule, a project that he suggested would take two terms -- a decade -- in government.

''What is broken can be repaired; what is ruined can be rebuilt; wounds do heal,'' Mr. Starmer said to a cheering crowd. ''Today we turn the page, answer the question 'why Labour?' with a plan'' for what he grandly proclaimed a ''decade of national renewal.''

He offered no new announcements, but outlined an ambitious commitment to change planning laws to help build 1.5 million new houses, add more police officers, and overhaul the ailing National Health Service. He also promised to end preferential tax treatment for residents of Britain with non-domiciled status -- a longstanding Labour goal but one with particular relevance given that the wealthy wife of Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, Akshata Murty, claimed that status until last year.

For Mr. Starmer, 61, an intense, serious-minded but charisma-challenged former prosecutor, the conference was vivid evidence of how far he has been able to pull his party out of the wilderness since he took over as leader after Labour's crushing defeat in the general election in 2019, its worst performance since 1935.

Once torn by divisions between its hard-left and centrist factions, Labour projected near-lockstep unity in Liverpool, with little of the backbiting or protests that used to interrupt its gatherings. Once contaminated by anti-Semitism in its far-left ranks under Mr. Starmer's predecessor, Jeremy Corbyn, the party this week expressed robust support for Israel in the aftermath of the bloody incursions into Israeli territory by Hamas fighters.

''I utterly condemn the senseless murder of men, women and children -- including British citizens -- in cold blood by the terrorists of Hamas,'' Mr. Starmer said, to a standing ovation.

Except for a handful of activists waving Palestinian flags outside the conference hall, there was little evidence of the rancorous battles over the Middle East that used to rage at these gatherings.

Since becoming leader in 2020, Mr. Starmer has taken a ''zero tolerance'' approach to anti-Semitism, including purging Mr. Corbyn, who now sits as an independent lawmaker and will not be allowed to run as a Labour candidate in the next election.

At a panel on Palestinian rights held on the sidelines, the mood was cautious and subdued. Chris Hoyle, the director of the Council for Arab-British Understanding, warned the audience he would not tolerate ''shouting and screaming.''

Labour's decisive victory in a Scottish parliamentary election on Friday contributed to a sense of hopefulness, even inevitability, among the party faithful.

In a speech on Monday, Rachel Reeves, who leads economic policy for the party, said she looked forward to addressing the next conference as Britain's first female chancellor of the Exchequer. She won a video endorsement from the former governor of the Bank of England, Mark Carney.

''You cannot trust the Tories with our economy ever again,'' Ms. Reeves declared, pointing to the markets chaos that followed Liz Truss's brief stint in office as prime minister last year.

Yet some worried that Labour's confidence risked edging into hubris. While the party has an 18 percentage point lead over the Conservatives in polls, analysts warned that this lead is fragile, having to do more with voter frustration with the Tories than excitement about Labour.

Mr. Starmer has not reached anything like the levels of popularity that Tony Blair, another Labour leader, achieved before his landslide election victory in 1997. According to one recent survey, only a quarter of those asked said they were very or fairly clear about what Mr. Starmer stands for.

That partly reflects his decision to abandon some of the pledges on which he ran for the party's leadership in 2020, including the nationalization of public services like water, energy and rail companies.

Mr. Starmer has also struggled to project a clear image to British voters. Opponents in the Conservative Party like to refer to his full title, ''Sir'' Keir Starmer, which he received for his ''services to law and criminal justice'' in 2014, but which they use to cast the Labour leader as a member of the elite.

On Tuesday, he played up his ***working-class*** roots, talking about how he was raised by his father, a toolmaker and his mother, a nurse. And he recalled how his dreams were incubated in his family's semidetached house in Surrey, not far from London.

''That pebble-dashed semi was everything to my family,'' he said.

The lineup of Labour speakers -- all singing from the same song sheet -- underscored Mr. Starmer's ironclad control over the party. It contrasted starkly with last week's Conservative Party conference, where Ms. Truss and an ambitious home secretary, Suella Braverman, seemed to be competing openly with Mr. Sunak to be the future of the party.

Mr. Starmer has moved swiftly to take control of Labour's power structures, junking most of the polices of Mr. Corbyn, the most left-wing leader of the party in decades.

With the party under his thumb, he has developed a warm relationship with Mr. Blair and brought his former aides back into the fold. One of them, Peter Mandelson, a member of the House of Lords, said Britain's economic woes would present a huge challenge for Mr. Starmer, if he wins power.

''The country is in a state of pessimism bordering on depression at the state of politics, given everything we have gone through in recent years,'' Mr. Mandelson said. ''He's got to give them hope mixed with realism.''

Mr. Starmer struck that balance, warning that a Labour victory in 2024 would require equaling the achievements of great Labour victories in 1945, when a Labour government rebuilt Britain after World War II; 1964, when it modernized Britain's sclerotic economy; and 1997, when Mr. Blair set about fixing crumbling public services.

''Britain can, Britain must, and Britain will get its future back,'' Mr. Starmer said, the glitter sparkling in his hair. He received a rapturous ovation from the activists of his rejuvenated party.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/10/world/europe/uk-labour-party-keir-starmer.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/10/world/europe/uk-labour-party-keir-starmer.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Keir Starmer was showered in glitter as he took to the stage to deliver a speech on the third day of the Labour Party conference. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTOPHER FURLONG/GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page A5.

**Load-Date:** October 11, 2023

**End of Document**



[***What Would It Take for One Party to Dominate America Again?; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67WS-2KF1-DXY4-X539-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 30, 2023 Thursday 17:06 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1124 words

**Byline:** Michael Kazin

**Highlight:** Even without a financial debacle or outbreak of civil conflict, there may be ways for a party to achieve at least short periods of dominance.

**Body**

Not since Joe Biden first claimed his desk in the Senate half a century ago have either Republicans or Democrats governed the nation through more than one or two election cycles. The score in the past dozen presidential contests is a flat-out tie — six to six. Control of one or both houses of Congress has ping-ponged back and forth since the 1980s as well.

The longest stretch of partisan parity in U.S. history has trapped us in a political stalemate with little hope of breaking out. As a result, problems that have long plagued the nation — economic inequality, undocumented immigration, climate change, the undermining of democratic values — persist.

A true realignment could shake us from the festering gridlock. But what would it take for one party to dominate American politics again?

From the 1820s, when mass elections began, there have been just three periods of prolonged one-party dominance: the Democrats under Andrew Jackson and his disciples; the Republicans for long stretches from McKinley to Hoover; then the Democrats again, for extended periods from Franklin Roosevelt to Lyndon Johnson. The first was unique, fueled by a populist appeal to ordinary white male voters and support for Southern slaveholders. But each of the other two was brought on by a profound, utterly gutting economic crisis: a prolonged depression in the 1890s and another one just under four decades later.

These were consequential eras. Jackson killed the central bank, and one of his Democratic successors, James Polk, provoked a war with Mexico. During the early 20th century, Republicans enriched homegrown industries and turned the federal judiciary into a dedicated foe of unions. New Deal and Great Society Democrats embraced a growing labor movement and enacted such pillars of the welfare state as Social Security and Medicare, while moving to dismantle racism under law.

In many ways, however, our politics remain stuck in the long 1960s. Progressives and conservatives still battle over some of the big issues that roiled the nation half a century ago — affirmative action, the right to abortion, rights for gay men and lesbians, environmental protection and the content of education — with little lasting movement in either direction.

Ending our current partisan stalemate may require a crisis on the scale of those that began or ended the earlier sway of majority parties. But even without, say, a financial debacle or outbreak of civil conflict, there may be ways for a party to achieve at least short periods of dominance.

Back [*in 1952*](https://catalog.loc.gov/vwebv/holdingsInfo?searchId=24135&amp;recCount=25&amp;recPointer=0&amp;bibId=10247333), the pollster Samuel Lubell argued there was a “sun” party that set the nation’s agenda and a “moon” party that “shines in reflected radiance of the heat thus generated.” Ronald Reagan’s two landslide victories did not thrust the Democrats into lunar orbit — they ran the House throughout his tenure and took back the Senate in 1986 — but Mr. Reagan did install his brand of conservatism at the center of the political solar system for the next quarter-century.

Both George Bushes gained the White House running on Mr. Reagan’s three-part message of a strong defense, a smaller welfare state and “traditional” values. After Democrats lost the House in 1994, Bill Clinton embraced much of that economic gospel too. Famously declaring, “The era of big government is over” and calling for a balanced budget, he signed a “welfare reform” bill that cut back payments to single mothers in need and repealed the law that protected against stock speculation and other risky financial ventures. Not until the Great Recession of 2008 did most Democrats begin talking more like New Dealers and less like budget hawks.

To achieve what Mr. Reagan did, a presidential nominee today would most likely have to break with some aspects of his or her party’s orthodoxy, taking stances that would surprise and appeal to voters they have failed to win over before.

A project like this has already begun in some corners of the right. Stung by losing the popular vote in the past four presidential contests (and seven of the past eight), a growing number of Republicans now lambaste corporate power in tones that would have shocked Mr. Reagan and his allies in the Chamber of Commerce. “Big business is no friend to conservatives — that’s been clear for years,” Senator Josh Hawley of Missouri recently charged. “And it’s increasingly no friend to America.” The influential right-leaning magazine Compact has published articles opposing abortion and transgender rights, as well as pieces endorsing unions in language Bernie Sanders would appreciate. If enough ***working-class*** voters across racial lines are happy with this blend of cultural conservatism and economic populism, the G.O.P. might be able to secure a majority again.

To accomplish the same, Democrats might have to emphasize a tougher stand on curbing violent crime, an issue that greatly concerns ***working-class*** voters of all races. But to do so would estrange progressives, who have increasing clout in the party. So Mr. Biden may have to rely on scaring both Democratic loyalists and independents about the dangers posed to the nation if they fail and the Republicans take back the White House and the Senate.

Violence by supporters of Donald Trump following a possible indictment in New York City and perhaps elsewhere would help them make that case, as would Republican candidates around the nation afraid of saying anything to anger the ex-president’s zealous admirers. Would this be enough to bring about a new era in American politics? Probably not. But it could allow Democrats to bind their opponents to the legacy of a failed and unpopular figure as their New Deal predecessors once did to Herbert Hoover.

History has few true lessons to teach, but attention should be paid to continuities. The Civil War and two of the longest depressions in U.S. history caused immense pain and left their mark on the nation for years to come. The partisan politicians and social movements that best explained why a crisis took place and compelled the government to respond to it effectively were able to define the next political era, whether for good or for ill. The 2024 election will provide a good test of which party’s leaders, if any, are equipped for that challenge.

Michael Kazin ([*@mkazin*](https://twitter.com/mkazin)) is a professor of history at Georgetown University and the author, most recently, of “What It Took to Win: A History of the Democratic Party.”

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PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** April 1, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Is Trump’s MAGA ‘Superpower’ Actually His Kryptonite?; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B8R-3071-JBG3-600W-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 7, 2024 Wednesday 15:59 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 2585 words

**Byline:** Thomas B. Edsall Thomas B. Edsall&amp;#160;has been a contributor to the Times Opinion section since 2011. His column on strategic and demographic trends in American politics appears every Wednesday. He previously covered politics for The Washington Post.

**Highlight:** Biden isn’t the only one who wants to know.

**Body**

What does President Biden have to do to catch up to Donald Trump?

According to [*Michael Podhorzer*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer), a former political director of the A.F.L.-C.I.O., exposing and clarifying Trump’s 2025 agenda will be crucial to Biden’s success or failure:

Donald Trump will lose the election to the extent that voters accurately understand what [*his plans for a second term would be*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer). Not only are most voters now [*not paying attention*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer) [*to Trump’s legal troubles*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer); they know next to nothing about what he’s said on the campaign trail about [*what he will do if elected again*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer), let alone the very [*specific and chilling agenda*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer) Trump allies have assembled in the event Trump wins a second term.

Podhorzer argued in an email:

It is necessary but far from sufficient for voters to hear that from Biden and congressional Democrats. Unless the media and other trusted nonpartisan civil society institutions are forthright in affirming that the 2024 election is not a contest between two politicians, Donald Trump and Joe Biden, but a virtual constitutional referendum, Trump could win.

In support of his argument, Podhorzer wrote:

Since 2016, MAGA has lost nearly every important election in which voters understood this, including 23 of the 27 statewide elections in Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, while picking up a dozen House seats in California and New York in the midterms when voters did not.

The most recent [*NBC News poll*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer), conducted at the end of January, has Trump favored over Biden by a substantial 47 percent to 42 percent.

The responses to detailed questions were brutal.

Voters said Trump would do a better job than Biden on immigration and border security (57 to 22), on the economy (55 to 33), on crime and violence (50 to 29), on competence and efficacy (48 to 38) and on possessing the required mental and physical stamina for the presidency (46 to 23). Note the 23-point gap on that last one.

A glimmer of hope for Biden emerged toward the end of the survey: “If Donald Trump is found guilty and convicted this year of a felony — with Donald Trump as the Republican candidate and Joe Biden as the Democratic candidate — for whom would you vote?”

In this hypothetical circumstance, Biden pulls ahead of Trump, 45 to 43.

The damage a conviction might inflict on the Trump campaign was highlighted in a [*Bloomberg/Morning Consult survey*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer) of 4,956 registered voters, conducted from Jan. 16 to 22 in seven battleground states: Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. Six of these states — all but North Carolina — voted for Biden in 2020. Trump now leads Biden in all seven of them.

But when asked, “How willing would you be to vote for Donald Trump if he is convicted of a crime?” 53 percent of registered voters surveyed said they would be “unwilling” to do so, with 46 percent “very unwilling” and 7 percent “somewhat unwilling.”

Bloomberg/Morning Consult asked respondents whether they would be unwilling to vote for Trump if he was “sentenced to prison”: 55 percent said unwilling, 48 percent very unwilling, and 7 percent said somewhat unwilling.

Should Trump’s trials be postponed until after the election, Biden could still capitalize on the [*91 felony counts in four indictments*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer) that have been filed against the former president.

In Biden’s favor, a [*YouGov survey*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer) of 1,000 adults, conducted from Jan. 30 to Feb. 1, found that almost half of voters are not yet fully aware of the 91 felony counts Trump has been charged with.

YouGov found that 45 percent of respondents were either unaware or uncertain that Trump had “been charged with falsifying business records to conceal hush money payments to [*Stormy Daniels*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer), a porn star” and that Trump “had been found liable for sexually assaulting and defaming writer [*E. Jean Carroll*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer).”

It could also work to Biden’s advantage that a Manhattan jury ordered Trump to pay $83.3 million to Carroll, who established in court that he destroyed her reputation as a trustworthy journalist by denying that he sexually assaulted her.

In addition, [*YouGov*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer) found that substantial percentages of voters are unaware or unsure that federal and state grand juries have charged Trump “with [*taking highly classified documents*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer) from the White House,” that he has “been charged with [*conspiring to overturn*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer) the results of a presidential election” and that he has “been charged with attempting to [*obstruct the certification*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer) of a presidential election.”

[*Joe Trippi*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer), a Democratic operative who managed Howard Dean’s 2004 presidential bid and Doug Jones’s two Senate campaigns in Alabama, told me in a phone interview that his major concern is that the Biden campaign should take the threats posed by third-party candidates “more seriously.”

“If Trump wins in November, it will be because of third parties getting a significant number of people,” Trippi argued. “No one who is a MAGA Trump supporter is going to vote for a third party. Most of it comes off Joe Biden.”

Polling supports Trippi on this score.

In the [*RealClearPolitics compilation*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer) of recent polls pitting Trump against Biden, Trump led by 2.1 points, 46.7 percent to 44.6 percent.

In the RealClearPolitics [*compilation of polls*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer) that add Robert Kennedy Jr., Cornel West and Jill Stein to the mix, Trump’s lead over Biden more than doubles, to 4.8 points, 41.6 to 36.8 percent. Kennedy gets 13 percent, and West and Stein each get 2.1 percent.

Along with the threat posed by third-party candidates, two major crises — immigration and the Israeli assault on Hamas in Gaza — have become significant liabilities for the Biden campaign.

Voters, as I mentioned earlier, overwhelmingly favor Trump over Biden to handle immigration and the southern border. Biden’s backing of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s prosecution of Israel’s war against Hamas in Gaza has weakened Democratic support, especially among young voters who were crucial to Biden’s 2020 victory.

A Dec. 10 to 14 [*New York Times/Siena poll*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer) found that young voters, ages 18 to 29, favored Trump over Biden 49 to 43. These voters said they trusted Trump over Biden “to do a better job on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict” 49 to 30. In the 2020 election, Biden beat Trump among 18-to-29-year-old voters by 24 points, 60 to 36, [*according to exit polls*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer) — by far his biggest margin in all age groups.

Even so, Biden has the potential to regain ground on both immigration and the Gaza war.

In the case of immigration, Biden has endorsed [*a hard-line, bipartisan border security bill*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer) — backed by most Democrats and some Republicans — that may be voted on in the Senate this week, emphasis on “may.”

Many of the provisions of the act were endorsed by conservative Republicans in the past, but the bipartisan measure is opposed by Trump and House Speaker Mike Johnson on explicitly political grounds. They want to keep public anxiety over immigration festering through Election Day, and they do not want to give Biden a victory on the issue.

“A Border Deal now would be another Gift to the Radical Left Democrats,” Trump declared in a [*post*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer) on Jan. 25 on Truth Social. “They need it politically, but don’t care about our Border.”

Trump and his allies have provided Biden the opportunity to counter the Trump-Johnson strategy by portraying himself as a proponent of vigorous border enforcement and Trump as a politically motivated politician who doesn’t actually care about the border.

While the odds may not favor this strategy, Biden is going all in. “If you believe, as I do, that we must secure the border now, doing nothing is not an option,” Biden said on Feb. 4:

Working with my administration, the United States Senate has done the hard work it takes to reach a bipartisan agreement. Now House Republicans have to decide. Do they want to solve the problem? Or do they want to keep playing politics with the border? I’ve made my decision. I’m ready to solve the problem. I’m ready to secure the border. And so are the American people. I know we have our divisions at home, but we cannot let partisan politics get in the way of our responsibilities as a great nation.

Biden’s stance has received support from some unexpected sources.

Noah Rothman, on Feb. 5 in National Review, “[*A Hawkish Bill Meets a Dovish G.O.P.*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer),” contended that “Republican opposition to the Senate border deal is bad politics and bad policy,” adding that for Republicans, “border security was the sine qua non upon which any broader immigration legislation must be based. The compromise legislation [*released last night*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer) appears to fit that bill.”

At the same time, the National Border Patrol Council, the union representing 18,000 border agents and support personnel, [*announced its support*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer) of the Biden-backed Senate bill on Feb. 5, declaring that the measure is “far better than the status quo.”

In 2020 the border guards’ union [*endorsed*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer) Trump. Brandon Judd, the president of the National Border Patrol Council, was a sharp critic of Biden, commenting at the time of the Trump endorsement:

In Joe Biden’s America, control of U.S. immigration law will be ceded to multinational criminal cartels. In Joe Biden’s America, U.S. borders will become nothing more than an imaginary line in which crossing it illegally carries no penalty, where lawlessness will reign and where enforcement of laws will become a pastime.

According to [*Jonathan Cowan*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer), a co-founder of Third Way, a centrist Democratic think tank, Biden’s current strategy on immigration is a step in the right direction.

“To win in 2024, Biden will need to convince voters that he is still the proud moderate they voted for in 2020,” Cowan wrote by email. “He has a lot of evidence on his side, but he still has a lot of convincing to do.”

The opening to win over swing voters, in Cowan’s view, “is there, including the blocs of soft Republicans and gettable independents we saw looking for someone else other than Trump in the New Hampshire G.O.P. primary.”

But, Cowan continued, “to ensure he is perceived as the same moderate who voters picked in 2020, he and his team will have to politely but firmly resist the election-season demands and pressure of the far left and their interest groups.” Instead, Biden’s showing “middle- and ***working-class*** voters that he understands their values and takes seriously their concerns around crime, immigration and the economy — which, as polling makes clear, are often dramatically different and far more mainstream and centrist than those of college-educated elites who staff much of Washington — is the only way to win.”

Moving from the U.S.-Mexico border to Gaza: There is a path for Biden to mute or minimize the damage to his campaign resulting from the war between Israel and Hamas.

In a column on Jan. 31, “[*A Biden Doctrine for the Middle East Is Forming. And It’s Big*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer),” my colleague Thomas L. Friedman argued that “we are about to see a new Biden administration strategy unfold to address this multifront war involving Gaza, Iran, Israel and the region — what I hope will be a ‘Biden Doctrine’ that meets the seriousness and complexity of this dangerous moment.”

A key element of this doctrine, Friedman wrote,

would be an unprecedented U.S. diplomatic initiative to promote a Palestinian state — NOW. It would involve some form of U.S. recognition of a demilitarized Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip that would come into being only once Palestinians had developed a set of defined, credible institutions and security capabilities to ensure that this state was viable and that it could never threaten Israel. Biden administration officials have been consulting experts inside and outside the U.S. government about different forms this recognition of Palestinian statehood might take.

According to Friedman, “If the administration can pull this together — a huge if — a Biden Doctrine could become the biggest strategic realignment in the region since the 1979 Camp David treaty,” what amounts to “a strategy that could force a reckoning inside Iranian politics, inside Palestinian politics and inside Israeli politics” — not to mention inside American politics.

There are some further developments working to Biden’s advantage.

While bitterly criticized by many liberals, the Supreme Court [*decision*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer) last year to ban affirmative action in public and private colleges will in fact reduce the salience of an issue that has historically worked to build support for Republicans.

Just before the court released its decision, a [*June 2023 Pew survey*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer) found that 50 percent of voters disapproved of “selective colleges and universities taking race and ethnicity into account in admissions decisions in order to increase the racial and ethnic diversity at the school,” while 33 percent approved.

The court’s decision does not eliminate the issue of racial preferences as a campaign issue, but it helps defuse it, which can only work to the advantage of Democrats.

Another factor that might be useful to Biden is Nikki Haley’s sustained assault on Trump as the Republican primary contest continues. On Jan. 25, she [*publicly derided*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer) Trump, calling him “totally unhinged” after a failed attempt by one of his allies to push the Republican National Committee to declare him the party’s presumptive nominee. Haley has escalated her attacks on Trump’s mental acuity, describing him as a politician who “throws an absolute temper tantrum, talking about revenge.”

“Rightly or wrongly,” Haley added, “chaos follows him.”

Virtually all of Haley’s comments are on [*videotape*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer), a gold mine for Biden strategists putting together television commercials designed to shift the burden of aging from Biden to Trump.

On that score, Biden’s biggest ally in defusing the age issue, along with a host of other issues, is Trump himself. Trump, on camera, has [*confused*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer) Nancy Pelosi with Nikki Haley, claimed to [*have beaten Barack Obama*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer) and suggested that Biden would lead us into “[*World War II, very quickly*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer).”

While pessimism has characterized much of the analysis of the Biden campaign in the media, the tenor has, to a degree, changed of late.

[*Douglas Schoen*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer), a center-right Democratic operative and frequent critic of his party, [*wrote*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer) in the Feb. 2 edition of The Hill that “evidence is beginning to emerge that Biden has, at the very least, stabilized the race and that the ‘Trump surge’ has cooled off.”

Schoen concluded: “As for Biden’s chances one month into this election year, there is a lot of work to be done. However, if I were the Biden campaign, I’d be more pleased with the road ahead than just a few months ago.”

[*Michael Meehan*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer), a longtime Democratic campaigner who now runs [*Squared Communications*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer), a public relations, political consulting and media firm, succinctly voiced his optimism in an email:

Trump plays the grand master grievance piano like a full symphony all by himself. No one better at that game. Yet his superpower with the MAGA base is his kryptonite with the independents and reasonable Republicans. The Biden campaign will just need to keep their foot on his head while he drowns with these voters.

The biggest danger facing the Biden campaign is the possibility that Trump will rein himself in. The chances of that happening, however, are virtually nil.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer). And here&#39;s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://substack.com/@michaelpodhorzer).

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PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Photo Illustration by Rachel Stern for The New York Times; photograph by Doug Mills/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** February 8, 2024

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[***Fearing Faltering Economy, Arizona Voters Sour on Biden***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69MT-5141-JBG3-60TN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 15, 2023 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1340 words

**Byline:** By Jack Healy

**Body**

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

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

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

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

His anger helps explain why Mr. Biden appears to be struggling in Arizona and other closely divided 2024 battleground states, according to a recent poll by The New York Times and Siena College.

Surveys and interviews with Arizona voters find that they are sour on the economy, despite solid job growth in the state. The Biden administration also fails to get credit for a parade of new companies coming to Arizona that will produce lithium-ion batteries, electric vehicles and computer chips -- investments that the White House hails as emblems of its push for a next generation of American manufacturing.

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

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

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

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

A majority of Arizona voters in the recent New York Times/Siena survey rated the country's economy as poor. Just 3 percent of voters said it was excellent.

Arizona experienced some of the worst inflation in the country, largely because housing costs shot upward as people thronged to the state during the pandemic. Average monthly rents in Phoenix rose to $1,919 in September from $1,373 in early 2020, a 40 percent increase according to Zillow. Average rents across the country rose about 30 percent over the same period.

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

Arizona's economy sprinted out of the pandemic, but economists said the speed of new hiring and consumer spending in the state has now eased. The state unemployment rate of 4 percent is about equal to the national average, and the quarterly Arizona Economic Outlook, published by the University of Arizona, predicts that the state will keep growing next year, though at a slower pace.

Arizona has added 280,000 jobs since Mr. Biden took office, according to the federal Labor Department, compared with 150,000 during Mr. Trump's term. Phoenix just hosted the Super Bowl, usually a high-profile boost to the local mood and economy.

Barely a week goes by without Arizona's first-term Democratic governor, Katie Hobbs, visiting a groundbreaking or job-training event to talk up the state's economy or the infrastructure money arriving from Washington.

Mr. Biden was even farther behind Mr. Trump in another poll being released this week by the Phoenix-based firm Noble Predictive Insights. That survey of about 1,000 Arizona voters said Mr. Trump had an eight-point lead, a significant swing toward Republicans from this past winter, when Mr. Biden had a two-point edge.

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

''Economists say, 'Look at these indicators' -- People don't care about that,'' Mr. Noble said. ''They care about their day-to-day lives.''

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

His ***working-class*** friends and extended family don't share the same concerns. These days, the political conversations with them usually begin and end with the price of gas (now falling) and eggs (still high).

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

Camille Baker contributed reporting.Camille Baker contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/14/us/arizona-biden-voters-economy.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/14/us/arizona-biden-voters-economy.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: President Biden's popularity in Arizona has slipped since he took office, polls indicate. Right, voters waited in line to cast their ballots at dawn in Guadalupe in 2020. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETE MAROVICH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

ADRIANA ZEHBRAUSKAS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A20.

**Load-Date:** November 15, 2023

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[***New York's Era of Overspending Ends With a Shudder***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69RS-RPF1-JBG3-600B-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 29, 2023 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1476 words

**Byline:** By Mara Gay

**Body**

After years of heady spending, the budget cuts announced by Mayor Eric Adams last week hit New York City like a punch to the gut: Most libraries would be closed on Sundays. The expansion of the city's signature prekindergarten program would be delayed. So would efforts to improve New York's notoriously dirty streets and keep rats at bay. The city's police force would be pared down in coming years.

Fiscal reality has caught up with a stunned city. The brutal cuts come as Mr. Adams scrambles to fill a $7 billion budget deficit in the next year. The Citizens Budget Commission, a nonpartisan watchdog group, estimates that the budget gap could be significantly higher, closer to $10.6 billion. New Yorkers may want to brace themselves. Much deeper cuts to city services could be ahead.

How did the nation's largest city get into this fix? Over the past decade, city government grew significantly, as did the size of its budget. Former Mayor Bill de Blasio hired tens of thousands of workers, expanding government services after years of relative austerity under former Mayor Michael Bloomberg during the Great Recession. Some of this spending went to important investments, like creating the city's free prekindergarten program. Other funds were put to far more questionable use, like a disastrous $1 billion mental health initiative that never got off the ground. Mr. Bloomberg had also left office with unsettled labor contracts in the city's municipal work force. Mr. de Blasio settled them, giving the workers significant raises.

The heavy spending far outpaced inflation but was made sustainable, for a time, by a flood of revenues that poured into City Hall from Wall Street, high income taxes and tourism, which boomed. Then the pandemic hit, bringing the economy to a standstill. Federal Covid relief kept the city going, but over the past year those funds began to dry up, and the city's economy didn't recover as quickly from the pandemic as other regions' did. At the same time, thousands of migrants began arriving at the city's doorstep in need of shelter.

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

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

New York mayors regularly overstate the size of deficits while underestimating revenue. The tradition is politically useful, helping mayors slash programs they don't like, drum up support for those they do and test the public's tolerance for certain cuts over others. Some New Yorkers are skeptical, for example, that Mr. Adams's proposed cuts to the police department would ever really take place.

What is all too certain is that, unlike in previous years, the budget gaps are immediate and large. Across New York City, officials and independent budget experts are scouring the nearly $113 billion budget, hunting for savings that will preserve the most essential programs. This is a vital exercise.

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

The council speaker, Adrienne Adams, and the finance chair, Justin Brannan, called Mr. Adams's cuts ''too blunt'' and said the administration could find much-needed savings by using nonprofit groups to provide services to migrants instead of private contractors. That is admittedly a heavy lift, especially in a city with a housing crisis. But with basic services on the line in New York, it's worth it.

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

So far, no one has more clearly articulated the danger of these cuts than the rapper and former New Yorker Cardi B. ''What's going to happen to my nieces, what's going to happen to my nephews, what's going to happen to cousins, my aunts, my friends that's living in the hood?'' Cardi asked in an Instagram Live video on Sunday.

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

Recovery has been slow. The unemployment rate in New York remains nearly double the national average. At the same time, the bureaucratic hiring process throughout much of the city's municipal government has resulted in thousands of unfilled jobs in human services agencies, leading to extended wait times to receive vital federal benefits for food stamps and other assistance. This is unacceptable and is something Mr. Adams needs to fix. More than 89,000 people are living in city shelters. One-third of renters are spending at least half of their income on rent.

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

Adams administration officials say New York has spent $2.7 billion over the past 20 months to house migrants crossing the southern border, and the city expects to spend up to $11 billion through fiscal year 2025, which begins in July. Mr. Adams has vehemently demanded the White House reimburse the city for these ongoing expenses, and asked for much more help from the state. He's right. Though the migrants didn't create the city's budget crisis, the cuts to city services would be far less steep if New York was properly reimbursed for them.

Helping New York City would be good business for Washington. In 2022 alone, New York City's economy made up 4.7 percent of the country's economic output, according to the Citizens Budget Commission. In the five years before the pandemic, taxpayers in New York State sent $142.6 billion more to the federal government than they received. Now is the time for the federal government to return the favor.

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

''I don't have the answers today on what we'll do, other than I know we'll be there to help the city once again,'' Ms. Hochul said at a news conference. Since it is New York City that drives the state's economy, fills its coffers and funds the bulk of its regional transit system, it should be in Ms. Hochul's interest to do everything she can to find the city some relief.

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

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**Graphic**

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

**Load-Date:** November 29, 2023

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[***Biden Loves Labor, but It Might Not Love Him Back***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66B1-PRJ1-JBG3-62X8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 6, 2022 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2022 The New York Times Company

**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 21; FARAH STOCKMAN

**Length:** 1424 words

**Byline:** By Farah Stockman

**Body**

DETROIT -- This city is known as a capital of organized labor; a legendary 113-day auto strike here in the 1940s helped make health care coverage and pensions the gold standard for employers nationwide. But this year, a notable strike in Detroit happened in a coffee shop, not a car factory.

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

Their strike was part of a flurry of new union activity across the country that Democrats hope will translate into more votes in November. Since President Biden took office, there has been an uptick in petitions to form unions, and today public approval of unions is at its highest since 1965.

Mr. Biden, who pledged to be ''the most pro-union president you've ever seen,'' deserves some credit for that. He isn't shy about using the bully pulpit to promote organized labor and wasted no time putting labor-friendly members on the National Labor Relations Board. In August, an emergency board he appointed helped reach an agreement that would award 15,000 railway workers a hefty raise.

But that doesn't mean that Middle-Class Joe from Scranton is winning back the blue-collar hearts that fell for Donald Trump, or has reversed the decades-long exodus of ***working-class*** white people from the Democratic Party. Much of the new labor organizing is taking place among white-collar professionals who already lean toward Democrats.

Architects in New York, graduate workers at Yale and employees of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee on Capitol Hill have all attempted to establish collective bargaining units. (Workers at an architecture firm in New York on Thursday formed what may be the industry's only formal private-sector union in the country, the Yale graduate students are still trying, and the Democratic staff members are part of the Teamsters now.)

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

Mr. Trump exploited rifts between union leaders and the rank and file, positioning himself as a champion of blue-collar workers even as he attacked union leaders. ''Spend more time working -- less time talking,'' Mr. Trump tweeted at the president of a steelworkers union in Indiana in 2016. ''Reduce dues.'' He promised to bring factories back to the United States, even if it meant killing unions and cutting wages and taxes and rolling back hard-won safety regulations.

It worked. Internal polling from the United Automobile Workers union found that more than 30 percent of its members bucked its leadership and voted Republican in the three presidential elections before 2020.

Overall support of Republicans by union households is almost back up to where it was under Ronald Reagan, who won two landslide elections, says Jarrett Skorup, the senior director of marketing and communications at the Mackinac Center for Public Policy, a nonprofit institute that advances the principles of free markets and limited government.

He also noted that although union organizing has experienced an uptick this year, the trend has been a steady decline. The number of unfair-labor-practice and new representation cases filed has dropped since 2015 -- from 2,822 to 1,638 in 2021, according to data from the National Labor Relations Board.

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

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

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

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

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

The trouble is that people without degrees outnumber the college-educated. There are only so many blue-collar workers a party can afford to lose before being tossed from power. That might be why President Biden has continued many of Mr. Trump's economically populist policies, retaining a 25 percent tariff on a range of Chinese imports, from baseball caps to bicycles.

He has also gone further than Mr. Trump in many ways when it comes to taking steps to rebuild America's manufacturing base. His administration championed both the infrastructure bill and the CHIPS and Science Act, which provides subsidies and tax credits for manufacturing advanced computer chips in places like Ohio and Arizona. At every turn, Mr. Biden has championed unions, recognizing the role they played in creating the middle class.

And yet there's no guarantee that workers will care. Some workers have been disillusioned by unions because of scandals, like the greed and corruption (including stories of siphoned union dues) that have embroiled the U.A.W. in Detroit. Most American workers aren't in a union, and most nonunion workers don't want to be, according to a recent Gallup poll.

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

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

But even with a champion in the White House, unionizing is still a grind. Lex Blom, a 29-year-old who spearheaded the effort at the Great Lakes Coffee Roasting Company, told me that it took months to get a hearing at the National Labor Relations Board. By that time, the coffee shop owners opted to close the store forever rather than bargain with a union.

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

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

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

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

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**Graphic**

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Ryan Garza/Detroit Free Press, via ZUMA Press Wire FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** September 6, 2022

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[***The Day Disco Was Demolished***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69H6-H3F1-JBG3-64WH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 29, 2023 Sunday 14:06 EST

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**Section:** ARTS; television

**Length:** 1349 words

**Byline:** Chris Vognar

**Highlight:** “The War on Disco,” a new PBS documentary, explores the backlash against the genre and the issues of race, gender and sexuality that informed it.

**Body**

“The War on Disco,” a new PBS documentary, explores the backlash against the genre and the issues of race, gender and sexuality that informed it.

The plan was simple enough: Gather a bunch of disco records, put them in a crate and blow them to smithereens in between games of a doubleheader between the Chicago White Sox and Detroit Tigers at Comiskey Park. What could possibly go wrong?

This was the thinking, such as it was, behind Disco Demolition Night, a July 1979 radio promotion that went predictably and horribly awry. The televised spectacle of rioters, mostly young white men, storming the field in Chicago, sent shock waves through the music industry and accelerated the demise of disco as a massive commercial force. But the fiasco didn’t unfold in a vacuum, a fact the new “American Experience” documentary “The War on Disco” makes clearer than a twirling mirror ball.

Premiering Monday on PBS, “The War on Disco” traces the rise, commodification, demise and rebirth of a dance music genre that burned hot through the ’70s, and the backlash against a culture that provided a safe and festive place for Black, Latino, gay and feminist expression. Originating in gay dance clubs in the early ’70s and converted into a mainstream sensation largely through the 1977 movie “Saturday Night Fever,” disco engendered simmering resentment from white, blue-collar kids who weren’t cool enough to make it past the rope at Studio 54 and other clubs. The film details disco’s role as a flashpoint for issues of race, class, gender and sexuality that still resonate in the culture wars of today.

“These liberation movements that started in the ’60s and early ’70s are really gaining momentum in the late ’70s,” Lisa Q. Wolfinger, who produced the film with Rushmore DeNooyer, said in a video call from her home in Maine. “So the backlash against disco feels like a backlash against the gay liberation movement and feminism, because that’s all wrapped up in disco.”

When the Gay Activist Alliance began hosting feverish disco dances at an abandoned SoHo firehouse in 1971, routinely packing 1,500 people onto the dance floor, the atmosphere was sweaty and cathartic. As Alice Echols writes in her disco history book “Hot Stuff,” gay bars, most of them run by the mob, traditionally hadn’t allowed dancing of any kind. But change was in the air largely because of the ripple effect of the Stonewall uprising in 1969, when regulars at a Greenwich Village gay bar fought back against the latest in a series of police raids. Soon discos were popping up throughout American cities, drawing throngs of revelers integrated across lines of race, gender and sexual orientation.

Some of disco’s hottest artists were Black women, including Gloria Gaynor and Linda Clifford (who is a commentator in the film). Many of the in-demand DJs, including Barry Lederer and Richie Rivera, were gay. In its heyday disco was the ultimate pop melting pot, open to anyone who wanted to move through the night to a pulsating, seemingly endless groove, and a source of liberation.

“The club became this source of public intimacy, of sexual freedom, and disco was a genre that was deeply tied to the next set of freedom struggles that were concatenate with civil rights,” said Daphne Brooks, a professor of African American studies at Yale University who is featured in the film, in a video interview. “It was both a sound and a sight that enabled those who were not recognized in the dominant culture to be able to see themselves and to derive pleasure, which is a huge trope in disco.”

All subcultures have their tipping points, and disco’s began in earnest in 1977. The year brought “Saturday Night Fever,” the smash hit movie about a blue-collar Brooklynite (a star-making performance from John Travolta) who escapes his rough reality by cutting loose on the dance floor. Inspired by the movie, middle-aged thrill seekers began dressing up in white polyester and hitting the scene. The same year saw the opening of Studio 54 in Manhattan, which became famous for its beautiful-people clientele and forbidding door policy.

“There was this image of the crowd outside the door on the news, with people being divided into winners and losers,” said DeNooyer, the “War on Disco” producer. “And the majority were losers because they didn’t get by the rope. It was an image that spoke powerfully, and it certainly encouraged a view of exclusivity.”

At least one man had reason to take it all personally. Steve Dahl was a radio personality for Chicago’s WDAI, spinning album rock and speaking to and for the white macho culture synonymous with that music. On Christmas Eve in 1978 Dahl lost his job when the station switched to a disco format, a popular move in those days. He didn’t take the news well. Jumping to WLUP, Dahl launched a “Disco Sucks” campaign and, together with the White Sox promotions director Mike Veeck, spearheaded Disco Demolition Night.

Organizers expected around 20,000 fans on July 12, 1979. Instead, they got around 50,000, some of whom sneaked in for free. Admission was 98 cents (WLUP’s frequency was 97.9), leaving attendees plenty of leftover cash for beer. Located in the mostly white, ***working-class*** neighborhood of Bridgeport, Comiskey Park had a built-in anti-disco clientele.

During the first game of the doubleheader, fans threw records, firecrackers and liquor bottles onto the field. By the time the crate of records was blown up, the place was going nuts, with patrons storming the field and rendering it unplayable. The White Sox had to forfeit the second game.

There were other anti-disco protests around the country in the late ’70s, but none so visible or of greater consequence. As the film recounts, reaction was swift; radio consultants soon began steering toward nondisco formats. “Disco Demolition Night was a real factor, and it did happen very quickly,” DeNooyer said. “And we hear from artists in the film who experienced that.” Gigs started drying up almost immediately.

Commercial oversaturation didn’t help. Disco parodies were becoming rampant, including [*a memorable one*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5WXVaChA3Q0) in the 1980 comedy “Airplane!,” and novelty songs had been around since Rick Dees’ “Disco Duck” in 1976 (followed up by the lesser-known “Dis-Gorilla” in 1977). But the film makes clear that the Disco Demolition fiasco and resultant coverage was a major factor in the death of disco’s mainstream appeal.

“The War on Disco” also features a 2016 interview with Dahl, who insists racism and homophobia had nothing to do with that particular display of anti-disco fervor. Demolition Night attendees who were interviewed for the film echo this sentiment.

“I would not dispute that is their truth,” Brooks said. “But I think one of the insidious ways that white supremacy has done a number on this country is that it permeates every aspect of our cultural lives. People don’t want to be told that they’re entangled in something that’s not entirely of their control.”

It’s also important to note that disco didn’t die so much as its more mainstream forms ceased to be relevant. The music and the culture morphed into other dance-ready genres including house music, which ironically emerged in Chicago. When you go out and cut loose to electronic dance music, or EDM, you are paying homage to disco, whether you know it or not. The beat is still pulsating. The sexual and racial identities remain eclectic. The Who may have bid “Sister Disco” goodbye in their 1978 song, but the original spirit lives on. As Brooks put it, “Its vibrancy and its innovations just continued to gain momentum once the spotlight moved away from it.”

The culture, and its devotees, outlived the clichés. Disco is dead. Long live disco.

PHOTOS: The Disco Demolition Night promotion at Comiskey Park in Chicago quickly spun out of control, with thousands storming the field. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHICAGO HISTORY MUSEUM, VIA PBS); “Saturday Night Fever” took disco from underground clubs to the mainstream.; Studio 54 in 1978. The club was famous for its glamorous clientele and exclusivity. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALAMY, VIA PBS) This article appeared in print on page C3.

**Load-Date:** October 31, 2023

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